

## Senate passes historic trade agreement

WASHINGTON — The Senate overwhelmingly approved a historic 124-nation, tariff-slashing trade agreement Thursday night, bringing to a close a strife-filled 103rd Congress with a rare note of bipartisan unity.

President Clinton called the vote a "victory for America" and said he hopes it is a harbinger of cooperation between his administration and Republicans who soon will assume control of Congress. Final congressional approval to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) came on a 76-24 vote in the Senate. The House on Tuesday had approved the accord, the most sweeping rewrite of global trading rules in four decades.

Congressional leaders, Democrats and Republicans alike, joined Clinton at a victory celebration on the South Lawn of the White House.

"Let's make the GATT vote the first vote of a new era of cooperation," said Clinton. "America's best days are ahead of us."

The president said the GATT agreement would increase world trade, bringing new, high-wage jobs to the United States.

Departing Senate Democratic Leader George Mitchell said the vote sends a signal to the world that America and its workers remain the world's leaders. "We do not fear competition; we welcome it. We do not shrink from the future; we welcome that," Mitchell said.

Republican Leader Sen. Bob Dole, who will assume Mitchell's post as majority leader in January, said the

vote was an example of how bipartisanship can work.

"This was not about some new world order," Dole said.

"This was about jobs and opportunities for Americans. It was all about trade. All about the future. All about America. And all about our place in the world."

Just minutes before the final vote, the Senate voted 68-32 to waive its own budget rules and remove the last procedural standing in the way of GATT's passage. Sixty votes were needed for the crucial budget waiver. On it, the accord was supported by 31 Republicans and 37 Democrats

and was opposed by 15 Republicans and 17 Democrats.

Clinton, badly in need of a congressional victory to lift his battered fortunes following the November elections, had worked throughout the day to convince wavering lawmakers to support the deal.

Opponents charged that the approval of the global trade agreement was a serious setback to American workers and could cause middle class voters to turn against both parties.

"I think today's vote will mark the turning point in the breakup of the two-party system by new political forces soon to be unleashed," con-

sumer activist Ralph Nader said.

"This vote has to be seen as a repudiation of the majority of the American people and a victory for global corporations."

The 124-nation trade agreement cuts tariffs by an average of 38 percent worldwide, and for the first time extends GATT rules to such new areas as reduction of trade-distorting agriculture subsidies, lowering trade barriers in service industries, such as banking and clamping down on copyright piracy.

It also creates a more powerful World Trade Organization to referee trade disputes and eliminates the one-

country veto that a losing nation could use to block an adverse ruling.

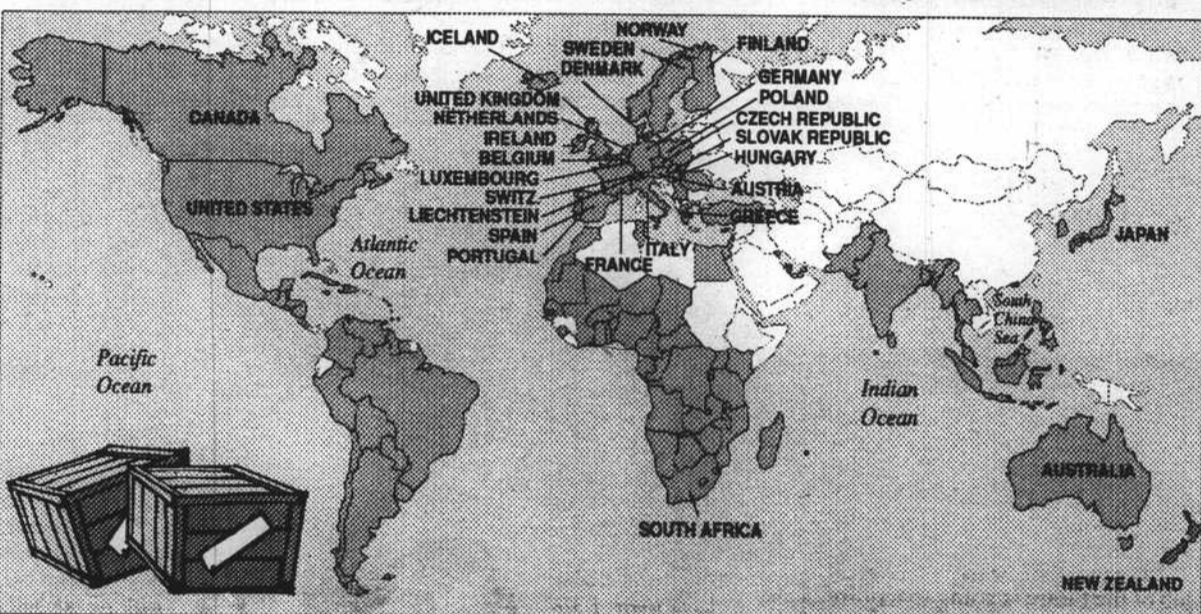
Supporters said the agreement, by cutting the border taxes Americans have to pay while at the same time lowering barriers U.S. businesses and farmers face overseas, would provide a tremendous boost to the U.S. economy.

The Clinton administration estimated this would create a half-million new jobs and mean an annual increase of \$150 billion in U.S. economic growth a decade from now, when the deal is fully implemented. That extra growth would put \$1,700 more a year in the pockets of the average family, the administration said.

However, opponents charged that the WTO represented a dangerous encroachment on U.S. sovereignty. They said that seven previous GATT negotiating rounds to lower trade barriers have not cured America's chronic trade deficit nor stopped the hemorrhage of manufacturing jobs overseas. They warned that in textiles alone, one of America's most protected industries, 1 million jobs could be lost.

Sen. Ernest Hollings, a Democrat from South Carolina, a leading textile state, said during floor debate. "The reality is that we are in decline. Everybody knows that."

The administration was anxious for a healthy bipartisan victory margin as a way to show that a Democratic White House will be able to work next year with the first Republican-controlled Congress in four decades.



## Rwanda strives, rebels thrive

KIGALI, Rwanda — Tons of food and donated goods from around the world are resupplying and fattening Rwanda's exiled, genocidal Hutu regime as it plots a bloody return to power.

The new government, meanwhile, is bankrupt and powerless.

"I'm stumped. And I think it's just scandalous," said Chris Hennemeyer of Catholic Relief Services. "Either there is a massive conspiracy to keep Rwanda down ... or the world community is incredibly incompetent."

Whatever the intent, international

actions since the holocaust began in this tiny Central African nation have consistently helped the killers:

— When Rwanda's president, a Hutu, was killed in a suspicious plane crash April 6 and order collapsed, the United Nations withdrew most of its troops. That freed the Hutu army and its affiliated militias to butcher an estimated 500,000 people, mostly ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

— In July, the Tutsi-led rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front toppled the remnants of the Hutu-dominated government, which promptly urged

more than a million countrymen to flee with it into neighboring Zaire. In the ensuing four months, relief groups have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to feed, shelter and care for the survivors and perpetrators of the bloodletting.

— Of the \$1.5 billion spent so far on the Rwanda crisis, \$850 million has gone to help refugees outside the borders. The millions earmarked for rebuilding in Rwanda are controlled by the aid organizations for chosen programs; Rwanda's bankrupt government is powerless to help itself.

## Navy retains lesbian officer

SAN FRANCISCO — In a surprising decision, a Navy tribunal decided Thursday that Lt. Zoe Dunning's career in the Reserves should not end with the statement "I am a lesbian."

A board of inquiry unanimously ruled that Dunning had proven she would not engage in homosexual acts, in line with the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. "The board of inquiry recommends retention in the Navalservice," said Capt. Thomas Berns, senior member of the board. Dunning stood while the findings

were being read, her hands clenched. Afterward, she smiled briefly as she clasped lawyer Greg Bonfiglio's hands.

Dunning's attorneys had maintained that when she made the statement "I am a lesbian" at a January 1993 rally, she was not broadcasting her intentions to practice homosexuality, but merely indicating her sexual orientation.

"She felt that to continue to hide who she was would be a lie," Bonfiglio said.

He had warned the board that dis-

charging Dunning would mean "needlessly destroying the career of a dedicated, distinguished officer."

Dunning, 31, has been working one weekend a month as a supply officer at the Naval Aviation Depot in Alameda.

Co-workers and supervisors testified Wednesday she is an excellent officer whose discharge would be the Navy's loss. They said her sexual orientation, and the controversy surrounding it, has not affected unit cohesion.

## Nebraska senators disagree on GATT

OMAHA — Nebraska's two Democratic senators split as the U.S. Senate Thursday night approved a 124-nation, tariff-slashing trade pact to close the 103rd Congress.

"As the largest but already the most open economy in the world, the United States has something to lose but certainly much to gain as we reduce our trade barriers still further..." Kerrey said on the Senate floor. In turn, the United States secures from other GATT nations "the obligation to provide even greater access to their markets."

Kerrey also said the United States would see more employment, income and tax revenue under the GATT.

The agreement would slash tariffs, or border taxes, by an average of 38 percent worldwide on thousands of food and manufactured products. The Clinton administration has said this represents the largest global tax cut in history, a reduction in customs duties of \$744 billion.

A permanent World Trade Organization would enforce rulings in trade disputes.

In agriculture, the GATT would reduce government supports to farmers that currently cost taxpayers in wealthy countries an estimated \$160 billion a year. Supporters say U.S. farmers will find their products more competitive on overseas markets.

Exon said he isn't so sure.

"While many farm groups support passage of this agreement, it seems we have been down this road before," he said. "The promise of a pot of gold for American farmers in foreign markets has been a promise unfulfilled."

Exon also criticized the agreement's ban on exports made

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**JIM EXON**

Senator, D.-Neb.

by prison labor while allowing exports of goods made by children who work for 50 cents per hour.

"Now that's something that we all can be proud of. We protect criminals but not the kids," Exon said on the Senate floor.

Exon said he didn't like the structure of the world trade organization.

He cited a hypothetical dispute between the United States and Bangladesh that would go to a three-nation panel for a binding decision.

Exon said such situations would "stack the deck" against the United States "since most countries want unlimited access to the coveted U.S. market."

But Kerrey said there needed to be "some teeth" in the enforcement of settling international trade disputes. He also said he wasn't completely happy with the pact.

"For example, nothing in the agreement prompts the United States and its trading partners to cooperate in a deliberate way to develop the environmental and labor standards that we have" to avoid environmental degradation and worker exploitation, he said.

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FAX NUMBER 472-1761

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