

China, U.S. sign breakthrough agreement

BEIJING (AP) — After 13 years of fitful talks and six days of grueling bargaining, Chinese and U.S. negotiators signed a breakthrough agreement yesterday that would remove trade barriers and clear the biggest hurdle to China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The agreement obligates China to cut tariffs an average of 23 percent and promises greater access to the relatively closed Chinese market for U.S. banks, insurers, telecommunications firms and Hollywood film exporters, according to a statement released by the U.S. Embassy.

None of the terms will take effect until China gains entry to the WTO and most would be phased in over five years or longer.

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and China's foreign trade minister, Shi Guangsheng, signed the agreement. They then

shook hands and were joined in a champagne toast by President Clinton's special economics adviser, Gene Sperling and Long Yongtu, China's lead WTO negotiator.

Barshefsky then went to the Communist Party leadership compound and met Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

"Where there's a will, there's a way," Jiang told Barshefsky after the signing.

In Ankara, Turkey, Clinton said the agreement was "a profoundly important step" in relations between Washington and Beijing and a boom for the global economy. China's admission to the WTO has been a major foreign policy and economic goal of the Clinton administration.

"In opening the economy of China, the agreement will create unprecedented opportunities for American farmers, workers and

Trading with China

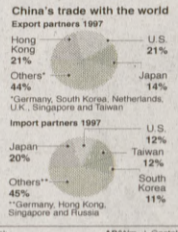
The U.S.-China trade deal signed Monday will obligate Beijing to cut tariffs and grant greater access to China's market.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, CIA World Factbook

China's 1998 balance of trade

Exports: \$193.8
Imports: \$140.2



AP/Wide World

companies to compete successfully in China's market, while bringing increased prosperity to the people of China," Clinton said.

"This is a profound and historic moment in U.S.-China relations," Barshefsky said.

China's Shi called it a "win-win" deal that was "mutually satisfactory for both countries."

Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands under hurricane watch

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Hurricane Lenny lost some strength yesterday but threatened Haiti and the Dominican Republic — where the expected heavy downpours could cause flooding.

The southern coasts of the two countries that share the island of Hispaniola were under a hurricane watch, as were Puerto Rico and the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

Lenny passed south of Jamaica yesterday, and a hurricane watch there was canceled.

Noting the hurricane's unusual eastbound route, the U.S. National Weather Service warned, "Do not be fooled. This is a potentially very serious situation."

Meteorologist Ronnie Semexant

of Haiti's weather bureau said people on the south coast were being asked to evacuate to higher ground.

"The land is already saturated from heavy rains, meaning that the slightest rain will cause flooding," Semexant said.

Even before Lenny arrived, police said two toddlers were killed in mudslides before dawn yesterday in Santo Domingo, when saturated earth collapsed onto mud houses in shantytowns surrounding the city.

Lenny was moving east near 15 mph yesterday afternoon, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Its maximum sustained winds went down from 100 mph to 85 mph and extended 30 miles from



Source: AccuWeather

the center with tropical winds another 145 miles.

The storm could drop inches of rain on Haiti, winds could whip up waves, forecasters said.



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