

Bahrain Pact Signed by Bush

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 11 - President Bush signed a bill on Wednesday establishing a free trade agreement with Bahrain, the first such pact with a Persian Gulf country.

The agreement requires Bahrain to eliminate its already low tariffs on American consumer and industrial goods and most agricultural products. In turn, the United States will eliminate tariffs on Bahraini goods. Annual trade between the two countries totals about \$800 million.

The pact commits Bahrain to a further opening of its market to American banks and other services and to strengthen copyright and patent protections.

Bahrain, a small island country on the Saudi border, is home to the United States Fifth Fleet.

Mr. Bush has now signed trade deals with Singapore, Chile, Australia, Morocco and, most recently, six countries in Central America and the Caribbean: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. Other Arab countries that have free trade status with the United States are Morocco and Jordan.