Trade Route To Riot

March 1, 2000 By Shana Naomi Krochmal

The media dubbed it the Battle of Seattle. More than 50,000 wildly colorful, mostly peaceful demonstrators (left) crashed the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks that began on November 30 in the port city. But the situation quickly deteriorated into mayhem with riot police using tear gas and rubber bullets (center), 600 arrests, a little trashing and looting and the arrival of the National Guard (right). Separately, on the meeting's second day—in response to activists' push for access to anti-HIV meds for developing countries—President Clinton announced that the U.S. will take into account "emergency" health conditions when setting trade policy. This means that trade rep Charlene Barshefsky will now consult with the Department of Health and Human Services on a "case-by-case" basis. "It's still more restrictive than WTO guidelines," said Sydney Levy, of the International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission. "We went from terribly bad to so-so."

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