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I. United States

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1. Four-Party Peace Talks

The Associated Press (Alexander G. Higgins, "SOUTH, N. KOREA STILL NEGOTIATING," Gruyeres, 03/19/98) and Reuters (Elif Kaban, "KOREA NEGOTIATORS CONTINUE TALKS ON SWISS MOUNTAIN TRIP," Geneva, 03/19/98) reported that negotiators at the four-party peace talks in Geneva visited the village of Gruyeres in the Swiss Alps on Thursday, traveling in a luxury bus whose seats were arranged around tables. The ROK's deputy negotiator, Yoo Myong-hwan, said that the delegates had not reached any agreement on the bus but had had a chance to clarify points and build "personal confidence." PRC assistant foreign minister Chen Jian, chairman of the meeting, said he expected an agreement to set up a single subcommittee, which will work on details and report back to the full four-party talks. He also said that he expects this session of talks to wind up Friday. He stated, "This afternoon we will try on the bus, on the basis of what our deputies have been working on, to make an agreement. There are difficulties on both sides." Negotiators planned the

trip to relax the atmosphere, which DPRK chief negotiator Kim Gye-gwan described as "serious." Asked if the DPRK had brought up the issue of food aid on the sidelines of the Geneva negotiations this week, Li Gun, DPRK Ambassador to the UN, said the subject had not been discussed.

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2. DPRK Military Exercises

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA CONFIRMS WARTIME MOBILIZATION ORDER - KYODO," Tokyo, 03/19/98) reported that Japan's Kyodo News agency said that a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed Thursday that the DPRK has issued a wartime mobilization order throughout the country aimed at coping with a reorganization of US forces in the ROK. In a report broadcast by the Korean Central News Agency, the spokesman said, "With the Iraqi incident as an occasion, the United States additionally deployed up-to-date military equipment in South Korea and reorganized the U.S. 8th Army Command present in South Korea and the 3rd Army based in the mainland into a field military system simultaneously. To cope with the U.S. war preparation positively, the DPRK some days ago issued a wartime mobilization order throughout the country and hurled all the armed forces including the People's Army into military exercises."

Dow Jones Newswires (Alex Keto, "WHITE HOUSE: N. KOREA MOBILIZATION NOT OUT OF THE ORDINARY," Washington, 03/19/98) reported that an anonymous White House official said that the DPRK's decision to issue a wartime mobilization order was "not out of the ordinary." He stated, "This is something they do periodically. What we have seen is not out of the ordinary."

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3. US Military in ROK

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA CONDEMNS U.S. TROOP REORGANISATIONS," Tokyo, 03/19/98) reported that a broadcast by the Korean Central News Agency quoted a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying that recent US reorganization of its ROK-based troops was intended to pressure the DPRK for concessions in the four-party peace talks in Geneva. The spokesman stated that the Iraqi situation gave the US an excuse to deploy additional equipment and reorganize its forces stationed in the ROK, and that this proved that US "preparations for war have entered the final stage." He called the move "a foolish design to get something at the talks by posing threats." He added, "The United States must act with discretion, mindful that the policy of strength is not almighty in solving issues."

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4. US-PRC Relations

The New York Times (Tim Weiner, "U.S. MAY OFFER DEAL TO CHINA ON SATELLITE LAUNCHES," Washington, 03/19/98) reported that an unnamed senior government official said Wednesday that the US is considering allowing US satellite manufacturers to buy launching services from the PRC in exchange for the PRC creating a system to stop sales of Chinese missile technology to nations like Iran. He added that the new proposed policy is solely about expanding commercial and scientific space cooperation, and contains "no consideration about helping China's military." He strongly disputed a report by the Washington Times Wednesday that said the policy would permit the PRC access to US missile technology. [Ed. note: See PRC Missile Purchases in the US Section of the March 18 Daily Report.] He stated, "The emphasis is on peaceful space cooperation. This is an area where we can engage in additional scientific cooperation with the Chinese in ways that are

purely peaceful." Meanwhile, the US Congress on Wednesday allowed to stand the Clinton administration's certification that the PRC is not engaging in nuclear proliferation, paving the way for peaceful nuclear cooperation between the US and the PRC.

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5. US-Russian Relations

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("YELTSIN SPOKESMAN: RUSSIA WORKING FOR SUMMIT WITH CLINTON," Moscow 03/19/98) reported that Russian presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky said Thursday that the government is working toward a mid-year summit in Russia between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and US President Bill Clinton. Yastrzhembsky stated that the "path to this summit lies through the ratification of the START II treaty." However, on Tuesday, Viktor Ilyukhin, the head of the Russian Duma's security committee, said that the Duma was still not ready to ratify the treaty.

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6. US Nuclear Policy

The New York Times Magazine carried an analytical article (Brian Hall, "OVERKILL IS NOT DEAD," 03/15/98, 42) which said that, despite the end of the Cold War, US nuclear policy continues to call for maintaining the ability to prevail in a protracted war with Russia. The article quoted independent nuclear analyst William Arkin as saying, "In essence, Stratcom [Strategic Command] has been able to manipulate ... reductions to retain the core, which is the ability to take out all strategic Russian forces and command and control; i.e., a first strike." The article said that, even if START II is ratified and START III is adopted, by 2008 the US will still have 2,000-2,500 nuclear warheads aimed at Russia. Bruce Blair of the Brookings Institute stated, "The situation is more unstable than it has been, ever since the early 60's. The Russians are very vulnerable." The article added that US expansion of NATO is making negotiations with Russia on nuclear reductions more difficult. The author called for de-alerting of US nuclear weapons, a declaration of no-first use, and pushing forward the START process.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Inter-Korean Talks

The DPRK has indicated its willingness to resume bilateral talks with the ROK, ROK Foreign Minister Park Chung-soo said on March 18. Park said in a cabinet meeting that the DPRK had revealed its intention in Geneva, where the second round of the four-party Korean peace talks is being held, to resume inter- Korean dialogue. The minister said the inter-Korean contact in Geneva was made between Li Gun, the deputy chief of the DPRK delegation, and Yu Myung-hwan, a director general of the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Korea Herald, Chon Shi-yong, "DPRK WILLING TO REOPEN SOUTH-NORTH TALKS; NORTH DELEGATE AT GENEVA MEETING TELLS SEOUL OFFICIAL," 03/19/98)

A high DPRK official denied ROK media reports about the resumption of inter-Korean talks. Lee Han, DPRK deputy ambassador to the UN, during an interview with AFP news, branded ROK media's allegations as "nonsense." (Kyunghyang Shinmun, "DPRK DENIES RESUMPTION OF INTER-KOREAN TALKS," 03/19/98)

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2. Nautilus DPRK Energy Project

Green Korea, an ROK environmental group, said Thursday that the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development plans to build a 15 kilowatt wind power plant in Onchon County in the DPRK. Nautilus Institute recently reached agreement on the project with the DPRK's Anti-Nuclear Peace Committee. The ground for the project will be broken in May. A Green Korea official stated, "The envisaged wind power plant is relatively small in scale, so the construction could be completed within this year." The project grew out of a visit to Berkeley last year by DPRK energy specialists. [Ed. note: See DPRK Renewable Energy Delegation Visits U.S.] Dr. Peter Hayes, co-director of the Nautilus Institute, plans to visit the ROK at the end of this month before going to the DPRK, to discuss ways to create more cooperation between the two Koreas in the field of energy development. Hayes was quoted as saying, "North Korea faces serious problems like acid rain, deforestation, and pollution by gasoline." Chang Won of Green Korea said that such problems pose as great a risk to the DPRK population as the food shortages. (Korea Herald, "U.S. GROUP TO HELP SET UP WIND POWER PLANT IN NORTH KOREA," 03/20/98)

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3. ROK-Japan Relations

The foreign ministers of the ROK and Japan will hold talks in Seoul March 21 aimed at improving the strained ties between the two countries, Japanese officials said March 18. Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi will fly into Seoul for his first meeting with his ROK counterpart Park Chung-soo. Obuchi is also scheduled to meet ROK President Kim Dae-jung and acting Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil before leaving for Tokyo March 22. The Park-Obuchi talks are expected to focus on the resumption of bilateral fisheries talks. (Korea Herald, "FOREIGN MINISTERS OF KOREA, JAPAN TO MEET SATURDAY," 03/19/98)

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