

mean life terms for nearly 700 three-strike... ties coping with violent street gangs... Martin Kasindorf contributed to this story...

**NATION BRIEFS**

status is to be ex-  
 -ministration is to re-  
 -trade status in May or

ing, a senior Foreign Min-  
 -official said that if Washington  
 -ds the trade privileges, which  
 -lower tariffs on many Chinese  
 -ducts, China would respond by  
 -voking U.S. trade privileges.

**Koreas to Reopen  
 Talks on Envoys**

South Korea agreed to the Com-  
 -unist North's offer and will re-  
 -open talks this week about ex-  
 -changing presidential envoys, a  
 -South Korean official said.  
 -The resumption in dialogue by  
 -the two Koreas, estranged since  
 -World War II, will set the stage for  
 -new round of high-level talks be-  
 -tween North Korea and the United  
 -States and the cancellation of U.S.-  
 -South Korea military exercises.

**Nations Invited  
 To Join Europe Bloc**

The European Union threw  
 -open its doors to three new mem-  
 -bers yesterday, inviting Sweden,  
 -Finland and Austria to join in a  
 -move that would extend the bloc  
 -east to the Russian border and  
 -north beyond the Arctic Circle.  
 -Norway, the fourth applicant in-  
 -volved in marathon talks in Brus-  
 -sels with the 12-nation bloc had al-  
 -ready indicated that it would  
 -postpone further high-level discus-  
 -sion until an EU foreign ministers'  
 -meeting Monday.  
 -The three appeared at one  
 -point on the brink of packing  
 -bags and returning

**D'Amato Wants  
 Probe on Briefing**

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato said yester-  
 -day that the Senate Banking  
 -Committee should place Clinton  
 -administration officials under oath  
 -to testify about a briefing given to  
 -top White House officials on the  
 -Whitewater real estate affair.  
 -D'Amato, the panel's ranking  
 -Republican, said sworn testimony  
 -is needed because administration  
 -officials have provided "a fairy tale  
 -version" of the briefing by Deputy  
 -Treasury Secretary Roger Altman.  
 -Altman disclosed last week that  
 -he gave the White House counsel  
 -and other senior officials a "heads  
 -up" on the Resolution Trust  
 -Corp.'s Whitewater investigation.  
 -Altman, who is acting head of the  
 -RTC, said the briefing was limited  
 -to procedural matters.

**King's Assassin  
 To Seek Parole**

The confessed killer of the Rev.  
 -Martin Luther King Jr. will go be-  
 -fore the Tennessee parole board for  
 -the first time, seeking an early re-  
 -lease from his 99-year prison sen-  
 -tence.  
 -James Earl Ray confessed in  
 -1969 to killing King in Memphis,  
 -Tenn., where the civil rights leader  
 -was helping to organize a strike by  
 -sanitation workers.  
 -Ray has tried often without suc-  
 -cess to take back his guilty plea  
 -and get a new trial.

**HIV Rape Said  
 Attempted Murder**

An HIV-positive man was found  
 -guilty Monday in Miami of attempt-  
 -ed murder for raping a boy, with the  
 -prosecutor arguing that his AIDS virus  
 -was the cause of the boy's death.  
 -The man was sentenced to 30 years  
 -in prison on a Dade County

...Circuit Court jury took less than  
 -an hour to convict Ignacio Perea  
 -Jr., 32, of attempted murder.  
 -It was the first prosecution of an  
 -HIV-positive rapist for first-degree  
 -attempted murder in the United  
 -States, according to Allan Terl, an  
 -attorney who studies AIDS issues.  
 -Sentencing was set for March  
 -24; Perea faces at least 25 years

**Hillary's Brother  
 Starts Senate Race**

Hugh Rodham kicked off his bid  
 -for the Senate yesterday in Talla-  
 -hassee, Fla., amid questions on his  
 -brief experience in the voting  
 -booth.  
 -"We've got our work cut out for  
 -us, I guess," said the president's  
 -43-year-old brother-in-law, who is  
 -seeking the Democratic nomina-  
 -tion to challenge Republican in-  
 -cumbent Connie Mack.

**Fla. Senate Panel  
 OKs Castration Bill**

Twice-convicted rapists in Flori-  
 -da could be punished by chemical  
 -castration under proposed legisla-  
 -tion approved yesterday by a state  
 -senate committee.  
 -The measure also provides for the  
 -death penalty for rapists convicted  
 -a third time.  
 -Under the proposal, judges in  
 -Florida would be allowed to order  
 -twice-convicted rapists to undergo  
 -periodic injections of a synthetic fe-  
 -male hormone to decrease their sex  
 -drive. The hormone diminishes  
 -penile erections and decreases  
 -sperm production.  
 -State Sen. Robert Wexler, spon-  
 -sor of the bill, said chemical castra-  
 -tion is reversible once the hormone  
 -injections are halted.

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