

Soviet, Cuban leaders begin planned talks

HAVANA -- Presidents Mikhail S. Gorbachev and Fidel Castro went behind closed doors Monday for marathon talks expected to air their ideological differences and highlight the problems of Third World nations.

A Soviet spokesman, asked whether Gorbachev would offer to forgive Cuba's massive debt to the Soviet Union, said that subject was not discussed specifically, although the leaders did talk about the "enormous debt plundering the economies" of Latin American countries.

The spokesman, Gennady I. Gerasimov, said Gorbachev's initial discussions with Castro and the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee were held in a "friendly atmosphere."

He also said Gorbachev reported on the Soviet Union's recent multi-candidate parliamentary elections, which were seen as a popular victory for the party's reformers. Castro, who has never allowed competitive elections in his 30-year rule, has openly criticized Gorbachev's reforms for

borrowing too much from the capitalist world.

After the ceremonial laying of a wreath at the monument to Jose Marti, the father of Cuban independence, Castro escorted his guest to the Palace of the Revolution to begin their discussions, which were scheduled to continue on and off through the day and evening.

Gorbachev's wife, Raisa, visited a day care center, a Cuban-Soviet friendship center and planned to tour the home of the late American author

Ernest Hemingway, who lived for many years on an estate outside Havana that is now a museum. Both Mrs. Gorbachev and her husband have mentioned reading Hemingway, a writer whose works have been translated into Russian and are popular in the Soviet Union.

Gerasimov said Gorbachev and Castro, in their opening talks, exchanged views on the March 26 Soviet elections and discussed problems in Latin America, particularly those of indebtedness and the drug trade.

The spokesman observed that Latin American countries are increasingly becoming drug suppliers to North America while at the same time increasingly becoming drug consumers.

The debt is only one aspect of the economic ties between the Soviet Union and Cuba. Soviet economic aid to Cuba is estimated by Western sources at between \$4 billion and \$7 billion annually, substantially more per capita than U.S. assistance to any Latin American country.

Hawaii clean-up to take three weeks

HONOLULU -- A cleanup crew has finished scrubbing oil from a 10-mile stretch of Molokai Island's shoreline, but it will take at least three more weeks to clean Lanai Island beaches soiled by a mysterious spill, authorities said.

Coast Guard spokesman Keith Spangler said Sunday that a nine-member crew on Molokai would join the effort on Lanai, where the bulk of the bunker fuel oil has washed ashore.

The Coast Guard has yet to determine the exact size or source of the spill, but it appeared to be at least

10,000 gallons, Spangler said.

Far more oil has washed onto Lanai than soiled Oahu beaches when the tanker Exxon Houston ran aground March 2, according to Rusty Nall, vice president and general manager of Pacific Environmental Corp., contracted by the Coast Guard to perform the cleanup.

The spill has sullied 10 miles of Lanai's northern coast with tar balls and small puddles, Nall said. The grounded Exxon Houston spilled 30,000 gallons of oil that polluted two miles of shoreline outside of

Honolulu.

The latest spill was first spotted March 26 in the ocean between Lanai and Molokai, two of Hawaii's most undeveloped islands.

Hoping to find the source of the spill, the Coast Guard has taken oil samples from five vessels in Hawaii, including the Exxon Houston, Spangler said. Lab tests are expected to be done in 45 days.

Spangler said it was unlikely that oil from the Exxon Houston could reach Lanai and Molokai, about 60 miles southeast of Oahu.

Record number of Vietnamese leave for U.S.

BANGKOK, Thailand -- A record number of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants left for the United States last month under the Orderly Departure Program, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok said Monday.

The embassy put the number of refugees at 3,662 - 1,401 more than January's previous monthly high.

Among those leaving in March were 2,071 Amerasians, those children fathered by American soldiers during the Vietnam War, and their relatives, the embassy said.

Since the program was established in 1979, 84,483 Vietnamese have resettled in the United States, the

embassy said.

The U.N.-sponsored program is intended to provide an alternative to the exodus by boat. Thousands of Vietnamese "boat people" have drowned or been attacked by pirates en route to neighboring Asian countries.

Michigan wins NCAA title 80-79

SEATTLE - Rumeal Robinson made two free throws with three seconds left in overtime to give Michigan its first national championship and cap the improbable ride of interim head coach Steve Fisher with an 80-79 victory over Seton Hall Monday night.

Fisher had taken over the Michigan team just two days before the NCAA tournament began and coached them to the six victories needed for the national championship.

The championship game was the fifth to go into overtime and the first since Loyola, Ill., beat Cincinnati 60-58 in 1963.

Glen Rice was the player who carried Fisher and the Wolverines to the title with 31 points in the final, giving him an NCAA tournament record of 184, breaking the 24-year-old mark of 177 set by Bill Bradley of Princeton.

Robinson, who finished with 21 points and 11 assists, got his chance to be the hero when he was fouled by Gerald Greene, who had missed the front end of a one-and-one with 1:17 remaining and Seton Hall leading 79-76.

Terry Mills hit a turnaround jumper with 56 seconds left to bring the Wolverines within one with 56 seconds remaining. Seton Hall

worked the 45-second shot clock down and John Morton, who finished with 35 points, tossed up an airball with 11 seconds left.

Michigan brought the ball downcourt and Robinson began a drive to the basket when he was fouled before shooting. Robinson nailed the free throws and, after two Pirate timeouts, a final desperation 3-pointer banged off the glass and rim and Michigan had its first national championship in three title-game appearances.

Michigan had a chance for victory in regulation, but Rice missed a long jumper with two seconds to play.

in brief

NEWS

Town dons black arm bands

CORDOVA, Alaska -- After a massive oil spill fouled Prince William Sound, Linden Colour O'Toole searched the town's few stores for dye to make hundreds of black armbands.

"We wore the armbands because we wanted the world to know that for this town, the spill is a death in the family," said O'Toole, who fishes the sound with her husband.

Unable to find enough dye, she ripped up old black clothes she found in her church basement.

She did her part to help this town on the edge of Prince William Sound prepare for an invasion of network TV crews that began after an Exxon Corp. oil tanker ran aground 25 miles from Valdez, the southern end of the Alaskan pipeline.

Job turned down at threat

ROME -- A man approached the judge outside his house in Sicily and quickly made his message clear.

"Judge, you have a lovely family, so united," he told Gianfranco Riggio. "Why go and work with Sica in Rome? . . . Your wife goes every morning to school, she stops at the same traffic light."

The encounter, reported in the Corriere della Sera newspaper, convinced Riggio his wife and two daughters would be in danger if he took the job as a special assistant to High Commissioner Domenico Sica, who leads a team of anti-Mafia investigators.

Riggio said he felt he could risk his own life - but not the lives of his family.


The reported threat came amid widespread concerns the state has lost momentum in its fight against the Mafia. Despite convictions of hundreds of Mafia bosses, including some top figures, investigators say the mob has reorganized and begun to develop more sophisticated schemes to launder drug profits.

Congress returns from break

WASHINGTON -- Congress returns from its Easter recess poised to weigh legislation that would yank the government into the middle of the month-old Eastern Airlines strike.

Legislators also plan to consider boosting the minimum wage and a bill that would require states to close their polls at the same moment nationwide in presidential elections. Meanwhile, the ethics investigation of House Speaker Jim Wright resumes behind closed doors on Tuesday.

The Senate on Tuesday will resume debating the Eastern legislation, a measure labor leaders have fought hard for since shortly after the March 4 start of the walkout. The bill would force President Bush to name an emergency board, which would have up to 26 days to suggest a way to end the strike.



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