

KIEV, U.S.S.R. — Kzyvda Fedorovich stood in front of a large mural of Lenin that dominated the conference room at the state farm 45 minutes outside Kiev and tried to explain to 20 American congressmen how his Soviet cattle breeding operation worked.

"What kind of cattle do you breed here?" asked Rep. Tony Coelho, the California Democrat who grew up on a dairy farm.

"Black and white," Fedorovich replied after listening to his translator.

"What kind of cows?" Coelho persisted.

"Dairy," the farm manager answered.

"What breed? What breed? Ask him what breed," said Rep. Wes Watkins, an Oklahoma Democrat.

"Are they Holsteins?" Coelho asked.

"Black and white dairy," came the reply.

"Let's go see some cows!" said House Speaker Jim Wright of Fort Worth, whereupon a thundering horde of congressmen, aides and Soviet hosts toured the cattle barns.

The exchange, and the tour featuring grown men looking silly in white smocks so the cattle wouldn't catch an infection from them, were highlights of an 11-day, three-nation trip by 20 members of Congress.

Such tours are often criticized as nothing more than junkets taken when Congress is in recess. Members often travel to seemingly exotic destinations. The tab — as in the case of the Wright trip — is usually high and difficult to tally because so many governmental departments foot the bill.

Still, the travelers do work long, hard hours. This spring was no exception. At least 10 separate congressional tours involving more than 60 senators and representatives left Washington, for all or part of the Easter recess.

The destinations included Spain, Germany, Poland, Guam, the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil, South Korea, Grenada, Paris, Brussels, Hong Kong, Lisbon and Stockholm as well as the Soviet Union.

All of the trips included official visits, legitimate congressional business and ceremonial functions, such as the presentation of a resolution at the Congress Hall in Berlin.

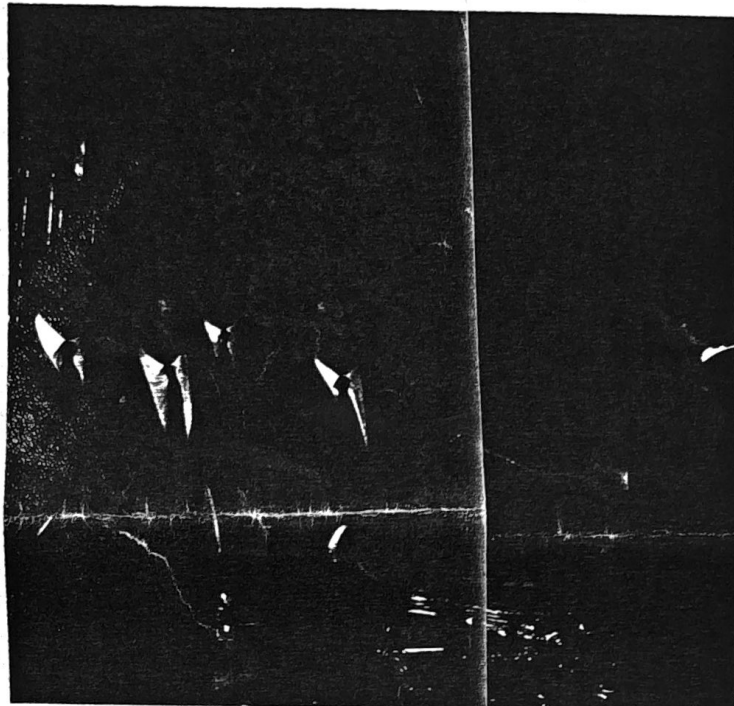
But many included enough free time for congressmen and senators to sample the pleasures offered in various locales. For example, the Wright group spent a minimal amount of time at the European Parliament, a Common Market legislative body, and managed to attend a bullfight and a flamenco show at a restaurant in Madrid.

The trip to the Soviet Union was the trip of the recess, both in interest and importance. Wright had been invited by members of the Supreme Soviet, the body most closely resembling the U.S. Congress. The speaker also had official engagements in Madrid and Berlin —

Notes from Abroad

The road to Moscow. If it's Monday, this must be Kiev

By Mark Nelson



Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., right, meets Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev as House Speaker Jim Wright, D-Fort Worth, and a translator look on.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK NELSON

the other legs of the trip.

Wright had carefully selected the members who would go along, including several personal friends such as Rep. James Howard, the New Jersey Democrat who is chairman of the House Public Works Committee.

But he also invited Majority Leader Tom Foley and Majority Whip Coelho, representing the leadership of the U.S. Congress; arms control experts Reps. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., Norm Dicks, D-Wash., and Tom Downey, D-N.Y.; and Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. It was a broad-based group representing a number of interests.

What follows is a brief diary of CODEL (congressional delegation) Wright,

the official name for the trip the Fort Worth Democrat led to Madrid, Kiev, Moscow and Berlin.

■ Friday, April 10

9 a.m. — Seventeen congressmen and their wives (three other congressmen will join them later), seven congressional aides, two State Department officials, six Air Force escorts (including three colonels and a major) and four journalists board an Air Force jet at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington. The aides include two employees of the House Recording Studio, who brought a television Mini-cam and shot 15 hours of tape documenting the trip.

The group is in a buoyant mood, looking forward to a change of pace

from debating the federal budget and overriding President Reagan's veto of the highway bill.

Seats are assigned by seniority. The speaker and his wife, Betty, and Howard and his wife, Marlene, sit in big captain's chairs at tables in the front cabin, as does Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Houston.

Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, a Republican from New York, and his wife, Marianne, sit one row ahead of Ed Fox of the State Department's congressional affairs office, and his wife, Julie. Two Air Force colonels and three reporters are in the last row.

"I remember when I had to sit back there," Boehlert tells a reporter. Since his election in 1982, he has moved up only two rows.

Wives were invited "for protocol purposes," with members paying the tab.

1 p.m. — Over the Atlantic, Wright swears in Sgt. Jon Sams to another four-year hitch in the Air Force. Sams' enlistment expired Monday, and the speaker presided over the ceremony at the suggestion of a commanding officer. Sams, who is part of the Air Force support contingent that includes a military doctor and two colonels, was honored that Wright administered the oath.

"It's a good way to start the next four years," he says.

11 p.m. — Palace Hotel, Madrid. CODEL Wright will spend two days in the Spanish capital attending sessions of the European Parliament. In the control room at the hotel, set up by the U.S. Embassy and staffed 24 hours a day by embassy and Air Force personnel, members can find beer, liquor, coffee, tea, soft drinks, snacks and fresh fruit. The hotel television also carries Cable News Network in English.

"Each CODEL takes on its own personality," says Rep. Richard Cheney of Wyoming, the ranking Republican on the trip. "It takes a few days for it to shake out. This looks like it will be a good one. There are a lot of serious people here. This isn't a shopping trip. I've been on those and I don't go on them anymore."

Delegation members each get \$118 a day for hotel and meals in Spain, where hotel rooms average \$107. Other expenses are paid out-of-pocket, but banquets and scheduled events help defray costs. Senators and congressmen do not starve when they travel abroad. The per diem will be slightly higher in Moscow — \$120 a day.

■ Saturday, April 11

Noon — Carole Woodward of the State Department forgets to tell the spouses they are invited to attend a luncheon with European Parliament members. Betty Wright had been invited to sit at the head table, but does not attend after her husband tells her, incorrectly, that she will be the only one

there. When Wright learns of the foul-up later, he is unhappy and asks Ms. Woodward for an explanation. The mix-up sends Ms. Woodward into hiding, and she emerges only after the group leaves the Soviet Union.

■ Sunday, April 12

4 p.m. — About 35 people sign up to see a bullfight. The seats are in the front row, paid for by General Electric, which, along with Bell Helicopter, is sponsoring a dinner and flamenco show this evening. The GE and Bell lobbyists "just happened" to be in Madrid at the same time as 20 important congressmen.

As the matador parades back and forth, very erect, Dicks remarks that he looks "just like (Rep.) Charlie Wilson," the Lufkin Democrat. The members get a big hoot out of that, but they don't like the bullfight, which they contend isn't very sporting.

While some members attend the bullfight, the Boehlerts are walking four blocks from the hotel when two college-age men approach, grab her purse, pulling her to the ground, and run. Boehlert briefly gives chase, but they escape. Mrs. Boehlert is shaken but not hurt. Besides money, she loses some jewelry, including a watch her husband bought her on their honeymoon.

The Boehlerts go to the police station, but the police say there is little they can do. U.S. Embassy officials are aghast, and U.S. Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew personally apologizes.

■ Monday, April 13

10 a.m. — Two Soviet navigators board the plane at the Madrid airport for the trip to Kiev, and Rep. Ralph Regula, R-Ohio, passes out Mickey Mouse cras-

able slates so members can have secret conversations. Everyone is a little paranoid about recent disclosures of security leaks at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

4 p.m. — The delegation meets with Vladimir Shcherbitski, first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, who gives a chamber of commerce speech on the Ukraine. Aspin asks Shcherbitski about rumors he may be ousted from power because of a falling-out with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Shcherbitski denies it, and the delegation anoints Aspin with the Sam Donaldson award for tough questions.

■ Tuesday, April 14

9 a.m. — Wright lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier before the delegation boards a bus for the trip to the cattle breeding farm.

Watkins asks the Soviets if they castrate the bulls. He is told that the process isn't used.

"You're missing the best part," Watkins exclaims. "Calf fries are good eating."

"I want to talk about castrating missiles, not cows," says Rep. Jim Moody, D-Wis.

2:30 p.m. — The group tours Kiev, including a war memorial that features a huge statue high on a hill overlooking the city. Inside, Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., poses for a picture in front of a large bust of Lenin.

"Is that for your newsletter?" Regula asks, laughing.

Hoyer grimaces and walks away. "I don't want my picture taken in front of that," Mrs. Regula says.

"I don't either," says Regula. "What that man did to this society!"

Boehlert tells his wife the memorial is "kind of

stark."

"I don't think so," she says. "It's not as bad as the Baseball Hall of Fame."

The baseball shrine, in Cooperstown, N.Y., is in Boehlert's district.

7:15 p.m. — The delegation arrives in Moscow.

■ Wednesday, April 15

9:40 a.m. — The delegation cuts to the front of a mile-long line of tourists waiting to get into Lenin's tomb in Red Square. The group files solemnly into the darkened building. Young Soviet soldiers stand guard and forcibly remove people's hands — including those of some delegation members — from their pockets. No cameras are allowed.

The delegation also tours the Kremlin wall where other Soviet heroes are entombed and visits the Memorial to the Unknown Soldier, where Wright and ranking-Republican Cheney lay another wreath.

5 p.m. — A meeting with Gorbachev originally scheduled for Saturday morning has been moved to this afternoon. As the group mills nervously about an anteroom in the Kremlin waiting for the Soviet leader to appear, everyone is checking his camera and arranging to photograph one another.

Wright and Cheney are ushered into another room for a brief meeting with Gorbachev. They return and the delegation begins shaking hands with the Soviet leader.

Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., is not an official member of the CODEL, but has been allowed by Wright to sit in on the meetings. He earnestly shakes Gorbachev's hand and then mugs shamelessly toward the cameras, which fire away.

(Continued on page 32)

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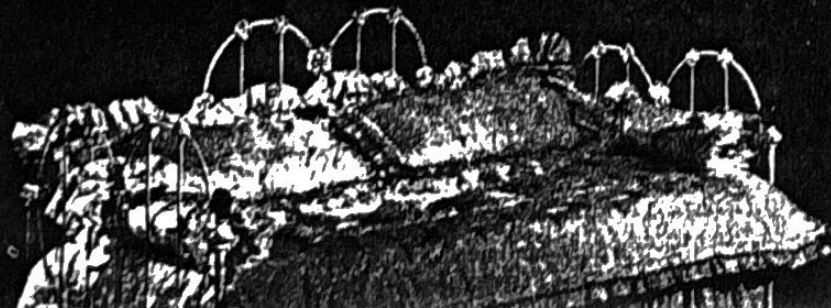
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NOTES FROM ABROAD
(Continued from page 16)

"I know a photo opportunity when I see one," he says later. "I don't think I'll be back here next week. You have to make a good picture when you can."

■ *Thursday, April 16*

8 a.m. — U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock gives the members an off-the-record briefing on the talks between Secretary of State George Shultz and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in the control room of the delegation's hotel. Matlock doesn't say anything significant, guarding against the fact that the room is probably bugged.

9:40 a.m. — At the Kremlin, the delegation breaks up into four working groups to discuss arms control, human rights, and bilateral and regional matters with Soviet officials.

Near the end, AuCoin finally gets his chance to speak.

"I wanted to have a more comprehensive statement but so much has already been covered. But I think a few crumbs are left for me," he says.

After about 12 minutes, he makes his "final point." Then he makes another one.

"Oh," says the Russian translator, "so that was your final point."

"I usually have several final points," AuCoin says.

4 p.m. — Hoyer and Reps. James Scheuer, D-N.Y., and Lawrence Coughlin, R-Pa., return

to the embassy in a van after a meeting with refuseniks — residents who have been refused permission to leave the Soviet Union. The van stops at a security gate. No one is there, but the driver assures Hoyer a television camera is focused on the license plate and that a Marine guard is checking it.

"Isn't anyone looking at you?" Hoyer asks. "What if I have a gun on you. What if I'm lying down behind you with a bomb? What if I have stolen the license plate and put it on another truck? Outrageous! It doesn't make sense."

The gate opens after a woman going from one part of the complex to another sees the van and pushes a button.

"Does she know you?" Hoyer asks the driver. "I guess so," he says.

■ *Friday, April 17*

11:30 a.m. — After a Kremlin meeting with Central Committee Secretary Yegor Ligachev, Wright is confronted in the hotel lobby by a Soviet television crew and a Russian doctor who demands that Leonard Peletier, an American Indian who was convicted of killing two FBI agents during the siege of Wounded Knee, S.D., in the 1970s, be allowed to come to the Soviet Union for medical treatment.

Hoyer, who is chairman of the Helsinki Commission and the human rights spokesman in the delegation, calls the Soviet fixation with Peletier "propaganda" and suggests Wright agree to let them send a doctor if they agree to let the United States treat Soviet cancer patients.

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■ **Saturday, April 18**

1 p.m. — At the last meeting of the trip, AuCoin presents Shevardnadze with a "peace quilt" made by 8-year-olds from a Portland, Ore., school. AuCoin asks Shevardnadze to pose for a photograph "for the children." Shevardnadze agrees, saying, "Let's think about those children."

1:30 p.m. — Wright tapes a speech to be televised on Soviet national TV. He invites the viewers to write to him at the U.S. Capitol in Washington and offers to send anyone who writes a small lapel pin that shows crossed U.S. and Soviet flags. After a news conference in the Foreign Ministry's press center, the delegation heads to the Moscow airport for a brief lunch.

3:42 p.m. — The Air Force charter lifts off to loud applause and cheers, and the group breaks into a chorus of *America the Beautiful* and *God Bless America*. The hardest part of the trip is over.

2:40 p.m. (Berlin time) — The delegation arrives in Berlin, and their bus is escorted to the hotel. Leland plays a rock 'n' roll tape on the bus stereo and starts singing and dancing. Everyone joins in, releasing the tensions of six days in the Soviet Union.

People along the motorcade route stare in astonishment at a busload of Americans clapping, dancing and singing. Leland does his impression of a tent revival minister and cracks up the group. The delegation is very loose, but the bus driver, Gus Schmidt, is not. He keeps turning down the volume.

■ **Sunday, April 19**

Noon — CODEL Wright enjoys the best meal it has had in more than a week when the U.S. Embassy mission in Berlin hosts a lunch at a rustic restaurant on Wannsee Lake. Members of the group take a brief tour

of the walled city, including a stop at Gleinecker Bridge, famous for its spy trades. The group also stops at Berlin City Hall to look at the plaque honoring John F. Kennedy, who stood on the steps in 1963 and, in German, declared: "I am a Berliner."

5:30 p.m. — The members leave the hotel for a two-hour briefing by U.S. Ambassador Richard Burt. There is a lot of complaining about the ambassador asking them to sit through an Easter Sunday briefing before dinner.

■ **Monday, April 20**

9 a.m. — The schedule has been changed. CODEL Wright is going home today instead of tomorrow, much to the relief of everyone on the tiring trip. But first there is a visit to the Reichstag, a former government building and museum overlooking the Berlin Wall, a stop for a plaque dedication at Congress Hall, and a lunch at Charlottenburg Palace.

Wright signs the Golden Book, a collection of signatures from notables who have visited the city. During the official photo session of the ceremony, Rep. Carroll Hubbard, D-Ky., is standing directly behind Jim and Betty Wright, who are seated at the table. Hubbard, a longtime friend and political ally of Wright, was added to the trip only after a last-minute personal appeal. He has not been much in evidence, except for an uncanny ability to get into virtually every photograph.

Later, Leland is playing Willie Nelson on the bus stereo and seems to have won over the driver. "Let's thank Gus for letting us ride his bus," Leland says. Everyone applauds, and Gus looks pleased.

2 p.m. — The lunch ends and the delegation heads for the airport. Berlin is history. Next stop:

Shannon, Ireland, for refueling. Is it a coincidence that Shannon has the best duty-free shop in the world? Probably not.

On the flight home, Ed Fox, assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs, explains why he believes CODELS are useful.

"I never met a member who didn't open his mind a little bit to the complexities of foreign policy and the decision-making process as a result of one of these trips," he says.

Fox says foreign travel for members of Congress also emphasizes the differences between the American way of life and system of government and those in other countries around the world.

"Our philosophy is not the natural state of man on earth as we know it today," Fox says. "It is the small minority. It is important to understand these factors when dealing with other countries. We sometimes adopt attitudes that if it isn't done our way, it's wrong, and the more exposure members have to other forms of government, the better. There's too much at stake to have them voting out of ignorance."

7:14 p.m. — CODEL Wright arrives at Andrews Air Force Base. During a news conference, Hubbard makes virtually his first remarks of the trip and praises Wright for his performance:

"Someone should say what we're all thinking, and that is that Republicans and Democrats alike on this trip would say to the American people that all Americans can, and should be, very proud of House Speaker Jim Wright, who performed for our country in a very articulate and skillful way."

Mark Nelson is a staff writer in the Washington bureau of The Dallas Morning News. ■