

Mayor Elated Over Arts Pact With Soviets

By DARRELL DAWSEY,
Times Staff Writer

Closing out an oft-criticized but apparently successful 18-day quest in the Soviet Union for works to display in her proposed Soviet arts festival, Mayor Maureen O'Connor returned to San Diego Tuesday evening with a contract that she says will make the city a "cultural power."

"I'm more than satisfied," she said of her attempt to borrow artworks to kick off the festival, tentatively planned for 1989. "We were in competition with Seattle, the Smithsonian . . . New York, and we won. There's no question, for once San Diego was first."

O'Connor stunned a lot of San Diego fine-arts experts and city officials Tuesday when she pulled off a deal with Soviet officials that may bring a collection of Soviet artworks—including rare 19th- and 20th-Century Faberge eggs—to the city next year.

Critics Called Trip a Waste

Critics of the trip said she was wasting time in the U.S.S.R. when she had more pressing duties in San Diego, which is grappling with growth-management issues and possible ballot measures concerning a police review board and district elections.

"The whole point that the mayor should stay home is ridiculous," she responded. "People that say that don't know the process. The polls showed that San Diegans wanted this festival and their artworks."

O'Connor said the trip is pivotal in turning San Diego into a fertile cultural community.

"This was a crossroads for the city," she said at an impromptu press conference outside the Pan American airlines gate where she deplaned. "It means we are going from an also-ran city to a cultural power."

But, before O'Connor's festival can become a reality, it must gain approval of the City Council by the end of September.

San Diego art groups expressed excitement at O'Connor's apparent success in landing the eggs and other artworks and performances.

"I'm surprised and pleased that something this exquisite will be on display for the people of San Diego," said Nancy Ames Petersen, director of the Timken Art Gallery, which has in its collection a number of Russian icons. "The eggs are



DON BARTLETT / Los Angeles Times

Soviet principal Leonid Milgram impressed U.S. students with glasnost.

Soviet School Principal Paves Way for Visit by S.D. Students

By DAVID SMOLLAR, Times Staff Writer

If the students at Moscow School No. 45 reflect even a little bit the sense of humor of its principal, Leonid Milgram, their pen pals from La Jolla and San Diego high schools are in for an unusually good time during a precedent-setting visit to the Soviet Union next month.

"We're not going to try to make Marxists out of them, for sure," Milgram said, laughing, during an interview Tuesday in San Diego. "From my experience, kids are kids, and those from both countries will find much more in common than they have in differences."

And the 20 sophomores and juniors from the two San Diego high schools, whom Milgram met Sunday at one of their homes, will have few problems understanding their colleagues from school No. 45, which specializes in foreign language instruction, especially English.

"I think the only person in the entire school who doesn't speak English is me," the expansive Milgram said with a smile as he spoke through an interpreter. "But I do know one phrase," he added, lapsing

native, who has headed the school for 30 years, mixes in with his ready wit and willingness to poke fun at himself.

"What is happening between my school and [those] in San Diego is like a tiny drop that symbolizes what is happening in the world between our two countries," he said. "I'm an old man, I've seen different relationships between our two nations, from the World War II when I ate American canned food and drove bombs and army supplies in a Studebaker, to the Churchill speech [talking of an Iron Curtain] and the Cold War."

"And now the climate is changing again, getting warmer, getting close to the California climate," he said, laughing and wiping a bead of sweat from his brow as he good-naturedly talked of San Diego's temperatures and arched his eyebrows in disbelief when told that residents find the current weather a bit cool.

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school who doesn't speak English is me, the expansive Milgram said with a smile as he spoke through an interpreter. "But I do know one phrase," he added, lapsing into English: "I love you, baby."

Not that there isn't a serious, contemplative side that the 67-year-old Moscow

Milgram's school is considered one of the better facilities in Moscow. Its 700 students range from 7 to 17 years old and attend classes from first through 10th grade in a typical Soviet-style school

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