

Sofia Warns U.S. Officials on Safety

By HENRY KAMM

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SOFIA, Bulgaria, May 3—A high Bulgarian official said today that the safety of United States diplomats in this country might be in danger because of a deeply felt public revulsion against American policies.

The official, Purvan Chernev, head of the Foreign Ministry's Americas department, softened the thinly veiled warning by declaring that he did not expect trouble. Bulgaria is conscious of her responsibility for the safety of diplomatic personnel, he said, and is taking all possible protective measures.

But incidents are possible, he added in an interview, and he said that diplomats and journalists should exercise caution.

United States diplomats were surprised and puzzled by the bluntness of the warning and the fact that it came through nondiplomatic channels.

Mr. Chernev said that he was considering discussing the issue with Richard E. Johnson, the United States chargé d'affaires, but did not think it immediately necessary.

The United States Legation in central Sofia has been attacked and stoned on three occasions in the recent past. The most serious attack took place in December, 1963, during the trial of a Bulgarian diplomat alleged to have spied for the United States.

Mr. Chernev's warning came after the Bulgarian official had

sharply criticized the attitude of the United States Government and its representatives here toward Bulgaria.

Speaking sometimes in English and sometimes through an interpreter, Mr. Chernev accused the United States of an "incorrect" view of the Bulgarian people and its Government. The United States refuses to believe, he said, that Bulgaria is an independent and sovereign country.

This attitude, the official said, hurts Bulgarian pride and prevents the development of good relations. The United States should realize, he said, that Bulgaria can live and develop without such relations.

The United States does not appreciate the depth of feeling that ties Bulgaria to the Soviet Union, he said. Echoing a phrase heard in many conversations with Bulgarian officials, Mr. Chernev declared:

"The Bulgarian people would overthrow in 24 hours any regime that wants to lead them away from the Soviet Union."

The official charged that American diplomats had bluntly told Bulgaria that if she wanted dollars, she would have to cut her links with the Soviet Union. He declined to specify the circumstances of the remark.

It is thought that he may have been referring to the United States' refusal to grant most-favored-nation tariff status to imports from Bulgaria, a particular thorn in Sofia's side. Such treatment would entitle Bulgaria to tariff treatment on her exports to the United States no less favorable than that granted to any other country for the same products.

Mr. Chernev also complained that the United States pavilion at last year's Plovdiv fair was the worst in the show and a purely political endeavor devoid of commercial interest. The United States, he charged, presented nothing but a kitchen in which it made potato chips for

distribution to the Bulgarian people.

Americans here explained that the theme of the pavilion, at the suggestion of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce, had been food-processing machinery. The potato chip machine was sent at Bulgaria's request, and its output was given to Plovdiv's hospitals at the suggestion of city authorities.