

Cuban Official at U.N. Burned by Explosion of Package Sent Through Mail

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UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., April 3 — The acting chief of Cuba's mission at the United Nations was injured today when a package wrapped as a book exploded in his hands at the mission's East Side headquarters.

The Cuban mission protested tonight to Secretary General Thant. Cuban sources said the protest note complained of a lack of adequate protection for diplomats here.

The explosion caused Nicolas Rodriguez Astiazarain, Cuba's ranking diplomatic representative here, superficial burns of

the face, chest and right hand. He was treated at New York Hospital and released.

The package containing the explosive was delivered this morning to the Cuban mission, 6 East 67th Street, by regular mail. It was addressed to Mr. Rodriguez. When he opened the package at about 1:30 P.M. it exploded with a flash of flame.

'Deep Regret' Voiced

The United States mission issued a statement affirming that the Cuban mission was "entitled to full protection and respect" and declaring that "the New York police are investigating the incident."

The United States note was

signed by William B. Duffum, deputy permanent representative at the United Nations. It said:

"We deeply regret that Nicolas Rodriguez, counselor to the Cuban mission to the United Nations, was injured in an incident reportedly caused by the explosion of a package received through the mail.

"New York City authorities are already investigating the incident and making every effort to identify the source. They have promised to keep us fully informed."

"The Cuban mission, like every other mission to the United Na-

tions and respect stemming from its diplomatic status and United States laws.

"Any violations found within United States jurisdiction will be vigorously prosecuted."

Mission Guarded by Police

Cuban sources said this was the first time that the United States mails had been used for an attack on the mission or its members. Last year a Molotov cocktail consisting of gasoline in a bottle was thrown against the mission headquarters, which is protected by policemen posted outside the entrance.

There are many Cubans in New York who oppose the regime of Premier Fidel Castro, and there have been various demonstrations and incidents involving the mission.

The most sensational was a bungled attempt by Cuban exiles to lob a mortar shell across the East River at the United Nations headquarters during an appearance at the 1964 General Assembly by Ernesto Che Guevara, then Cuba's Minister of Economy.

The Cuban protest note was presented to Mr. Thant by José Raul Viera, first secretary of the Cuban mission. The meeting at Mr. Thant's office lasted 15 minutes. A United Nations spokesman said Mr. Thant had expressed concern over the incident and referred the note to Constantin Stavropoulos, the United Nations legal counsel.

If normal procedure is followed, Mr. Stavropoulos will request a report from the United States mission here on the police investigation and Mr. Thant will inform the Cuban mission of the findings.

Mr. Rodriguez, aged 30, is in charge of the mission in the absence of Ricardo Alarcon Quesada, Cuba's permanent representative, who is in Havana for consultations with his Government. The chief of mission is expected to return here for the opening of a special session of the General Assembly on April 21.