BULGARIA

EVENTS LEADING TO THE SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BULGARIA IN 1950

874.404/2-1249 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, February 18, 1949—5 p.m.

52. Urtels 119 and 120, Feb 12. You are authorized transmit note to FonOff substantially as follows:

"On instructions from my Govt, I have the honor to refer to the published indictment against 15 Protestant pastors in Bulg, who are charged with 'espionage, treason and currency operations' involving US Govt officials formerly on duty in Bulg.

"Such charges are unfounded and ludicrous. My Govt can only consider their formulation a blatant terrorist effort, in cynical disregard of the facts, designed to intimidate the small, respected Protestant religious denominations in Bulg and to discredit their sincere religious leaders.

"In the circumstances, my Govt reserves its rights under the Treaty of Peace with Bulgaria, and requests that facilities be made available for representatives of the US Leg to attend the trial."

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1 For previous documentation on relations between the United States and Bulgaria, see Foreign Relations, 1943, vol. iv, pp. 279 ff.

2 Neither printed; they transmitted excerpts from a summary of an indictment filed in a Sofia court against fifteen members of the Supreme Council of the United Protestant Churches in Bulgaria. The indictment had been published on February 11 (874.404/2-1249). An unofficial translation of the full text of the indictment was transmitted to the Department as an enclosure to despatch 28, February 12, from Sofia, not printed (874.404/2-1249). The indictment is printed in Press Department, Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Trial of the Fifteen Protestant Pastors—Spies (Sofia: 1949), pp. 1-18.

In his telegram 116, February 11, from Sofia, not printed, Chargé (Counselor of Legation) Sidney E. O'Donoghue reported that he had that morning called on George Andreichin, Special Assistant in the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, to express his personal disgust at the publication of the indictment against the Bulgarian Protestant pastors (874.404/2-1149). Telegram 35, February 11, to Sofia, not printed, stated that the Department of State's press officer had issued the following statement regarding the indictment:

"Similarity between fantastic accusations being made against Protestant religious leaders in Bulg and those against Cardinal Mindszenty in Hung, whose trial has so recently been concluded, strikingly emphasizes concerted nature of this continuing Commie assault on religious liberties in Eastern Eur."

(874.404/2-1149)

326
Advise when action taken as Dept plans publish note for delivery. Brit state their Chargé Sofia delivered note Feb 16 to FonOff and publication intended.

ACHESON

In his telegram 148, February 21, from Sofia, not printed, Chargé O’Donoghue reported on the delivery of the note as follows:

“In inability to be received by ranking officials Foreign Ministry this morning note exact text Deptel 52, February 18 delivered personally at noon today to Ivanoff an assistant in protocol section. At 12:30 Ivanoff requested Courtney (Raymond F. Courtney, Second Secretary of the Legation at Sofia) by telephone to come to Ministry. When receiving him he returned note saying it had been read by political section which would not present it to Foreign Minister because ‘tone and cynical wording incorrect and not accordance proper diplomatic practice’. Added Foreign Minister and other officials of Foreign Office will be ready any time discuss each question which Legation may wish refer it in a proper manner.” (874.404/2-2149)

For the purposes of record the Department of State considered delivery of the note as having been accomplished. The text was released to the press on February 23; see Department of State Bulletin, March 6, 1949, p. 300.

874.404/3-549: Telegram

The Chargé in Bulgaria (O’Donoghue) to the Secretary of State

Sofia, March 5, 1949—noon.

184. Following comments on general atmosphere trial court 15 pastors:

Accused seated in left front rows of audience seats, each flanked by militiamen. Throughout time in court no accused able talk to his counsel, nor more than make remarks other accused.

Court on high dais with prosecutor and assistant at same level to the court’s right gives effect dominating person standing in witness box below. Court appears generally bored with proceedings, only president has papers before him. Court, usually president, occasionally questions witness or accused quietly, showing little interest in response other than getting all required facts in the record. Questions from prosecutors who look contentedly confident and scarcely more interested are also few in number and seldom asked with any show of

1The trial of the fifteen Bulgarian Protestant pastors (see telegram 52, February 18, to Sofia, supra) was held in the Sofia District Court, February 25-March 8, 1949. All were found guilty of various charges of treason, espionage, and black-marketing. Four of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment while the remainder received various lesser sentences. Reports on the progress of the trial are included in file 874.404. Substantial portions of the testimony of the accused and the statements of the prosecution are presented in The Trial of the Fifteen Protestant Pastors-Spies (cited in footnote 2 to telegram 52 to Sofia, p. 326).
verve or attempt browbeating. In conjunction with court, defense counsel and accused, they all seem interested in assuring that final record of trial is satisfactory according to the initial plans.

Defense counsel, consisting 18 attorneys, selected from screened lawyers of Communist cooperatives must, from their appearance, not inspire confidence in accused. They sit in sort of huddle around and in front of long table below court and to its left. Few have any papers or documents with them. They appear pay minimum attention proceedings, spending much time going out for smokes or to buffet. One noted remained buried behind large podium throughout session either asleep or disgusted. Counsel bar rarely questions accused or witnesses for either side and at no time have any of them shown any sign of having organized brief for defense. Defense questions generally of nature helpful to prosecution such as to accused "did you know that this act constituted espionage?", etc.

Accused make statements almost without interruption, appear to be well versed in what they are to say not memorized but facts clearly in mind. Most speak from notes. Many practice historia, others use frank and open approach, most are emotional but only few abject all give maximum effort to self-denunciatory peroration and final expression repentance, placing special emphasis on praise USSR and present regime (especially tossing bouquets state security for fine treatment) and on denunciation schemes Anglo-American imperialists.

Witnesses for prosecution numbered over 60; at least 40 not called, presumably shorten proceedings in light satisfactory evidence first called. Witnesses merely make statements, generally without much guidance. Cross-examination virtually non-existent. Most witnesses for prosecution from among persons presently in prison and testimony appears prepared. Prosecutors prompt witnesses with leading questions if they forget their story. Defense witnesses never witnesses on substance but only on character. General effect is they are only present to add form to trial.

Summary: Trial satisfies all civil procedural requirements, technically correct. General impression will conducted stage play, all actors anxious play part well so play effective and final climax logical and according to script. Clue to fact it is not a trial in true sense lies in attitude court, selection defense counsel and their inactivity, eagerness of accused to live up to demands of required confession and lack of effort on part accused or counsel build up true defense. The primary purpose propaganda is shown column-long glorification new regime in Bulgarian press version indictment, emphasis on seeing light in statements by accused and praise for Communism and vilification Anglo-American imperialists in prosecutors summation.

O'DONOGHUE
Sofia, March 17, 1949—3 p. m.

225. Legtel 216, March 15. At reception which I gave last night [Todor] Guenoff, Chief Political Section Foreign Office, and Boev, Chief Protocol, both cornered me for approximately 15 minutes to ask my views on Greenhill case. I said frankly I thought government making big mistake in declaring Greenhill non-grata and I thought charges made by Ziapkov completely false. I stated this connection Ziapkov’s misstatements re his contacts with Beck in 1946 absolutely without basis since Beck did not arrive here until March 1947. (This seemed to surprise them.) I added on basis such misstatement any court in US would have thrown whole thing out. I said also if Ziapkov made misstatements re Beck presumption was he also made them re Greenhill.

At Foreign Office this morning Andreitchin also raised question and I repeated my remarks as above.

I have informed British Minister of these conversations which evidence concern of certain officials over situation. Foreign Office has not yet replied British Minister’s representations but he feels they have gone too far now to back down. He also feels effort may be made to force reduction of his staff here, particularly if British Government retaliates by dismissing two Bulgarians London. I know that Ganovsky, Acting Foreign Minister, expressed concern over size our own establishment and I consider if any excuse given Bulgarian Government will endeavor force us cut down.

O’Donoghue

1 On March 9 the Bulgarian Government declared Denis A. Greenhill, First Secretary of the British Legation in Sofia, persona non grata. Greenhill, together with several former and current members of the British and American missions in Sofia, had been implicated in alleged espionage activities in the testimony of Vasil Georgiev Ziapkov, representative of the United Protestant Churches and one of the major defendants in the trial of the fifteen Protestant pastors (see telegram 184, March 5, from Sofia, supra). The telegram under reference, not printed, reported that British Minister Paul Mason on March 14 presented a strong note to Bulgarian Acting Foreign Minister Sava Ganovsky rejecting the charges against Greenhill and warning of possible retaliation should the Bulgarian Government persist in demanding Greenhill’s recall. Ganovsky was incensed by the British note and insisted on Greenhill’s recall (701.4174/3-1549). Greenhill left Bulgaria in late April. At about the same time the British Government declared Bogomil Todorov, the Third Secretary of the Bulgarian Legation in London, persona non grata.

2 Louis C. Beck, Attaché at the Legation in Sofia, one of the American officers implicated by the Ziapkov testimony (see the previous footnote). Beck was reassigned to the Embassy in Greece in May.
The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

SOFIA, May 10, 1949—7 p. m.

387. Dept 143, May 6. I remarked to Assistant Foreign Minister [Evgenii] Kamenov that I regretted to find on my return to Bulgaria a note asking Legation to reduce its staff. While tone of note was unexceptionable it was against international practice and good relations for a receiving state to attempt to prescribe size and composition of the sending state's diplomatic representation. I said I was without instructions in matter but that I could discuss with Ganovsky and if possible with Foreign Minister Kolarov, now Acting Premier, this and related questions. While I must reject principle of this note I might state that our Government is, of course, interested in economy and had no desire to maintain a larger representation than its interest required. The size of our Government establishment and its interests had grown and diversified and our missions in all countries were accordingly larger than before the war. As regards enlargement of military staff our Government had now three defense departments each of which naturally desired its own representatives. Before war there were only War and Navy Departments.

Our Government made no restrictions on size of Bulgarian staff in Washington and many countries, particularly the Soviets had extremely large establishments in our capital.

Kamenov said he agreed that rigid numerical reciprocity should not be insisted upon, that it was not in accord with good international practice or relation. However, he thought there must be some approximation between diplomatic staffs exchanged by any two governments. French Foreign Office Ministry had refused to allow increase of Bulgarian staff in Paris and had insisted on strict numerical equality on diplomatic staffs of two countries and same proposition had been advanced in House of Lords although not adopted by British Foreign Office. He said he would agree not to press the request but hoped there would be discussions taking into account Bulgarian housing shortage and other considerations which would settle matter without difficulty.

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1 Telegram 353, April 28, from Sofia, not printed, transmitted the text of Bulgarian Foreign Ministry note of April 27 asking for a reduction in the size of the American Legation (124.74/4-2849). Telegram 354, April 28, from Sofia, not printed, observed that the British Legation had received a similar note, but the Soviet Embassy had not (124.74/4-2849). The telegram under reference here, not printed, asked the Legation's views and recommendations upon the note (124.74/4-2849).

2 Minister Donald R. Heath resumed charge of the Legation in Sofia on April 28 following a period of consultation in the United States.

3 Vasil Petkov Kolarov, member of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. It was announced on April 15 that Kolarov had been designated Acting Prime Minister during the illness of Prime Minister Georgi Dimitrov.
I remarked there was always some changes and reduction of staff occurring and observed that Lt. Colonel Yatsevitch (aggressive officer whom Bulgarian Government probably fear because of his long experience in the country and language qualifications) was planning to return to States at end of summer. Question of Colonel Pitchford then arose and Kamenov stated that Government had considered declaring him persona non grata but refrained in order not to worsen relations and because they had mistakenly understood he was to be transferred last fall. I remarked it was desire of Air Department that he finish his time here, to which Kamenov replied that Colonel Pitchford would not be welcome in Bulgaria.

I then observed that Bulgarian Government some months ago had asked US Government to unblock Bulgarian funds at rate of $15,000 a month plus 50,000 to purchase Bulgarian Legation in Washington. I had talked over matter in Washington and had hoped to enter into definite discussion soon after my return, but that unfortunate note asking for staff reduction had naturally held up consideration of this matter. I also remarked that Legation was having difficulty in matter of car licenses and living quarters. Also I had been shocked to find that two native employees during my absence had resigned without explanation or advance notice. I could only attribute these resignations to militia intimidation of our staff—and action which did not correspond with Bulgaria’s professed desire to enjoy good relations and their assertions that human rights were protected in Bulgaria. Kamenov here attempted to argue that in case of one of these employees, her mother and brother had been exiled from Sofia and she had freely elected to go with them. I did not inform Kamenov that we knew that the employee had been warned to leave by the militia by a certain date or face consequences and that further warned not to inform Legation of departure. Nor did I mention that another employee is now under similar threat. He went on to argue that number of our Bulgarian clerks was excessive and I said three chancery translators could not be considered an excessive number.

Kamenov terminated interview by stating we could forget about the note until we had entered into discussion of these and related problems. He thought with good will solution of problems and questions arising from a reduction of staff would be found.  

Heath

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4 Lt. Col. Gratian Yatsevitch, Assistant Military Attaché in the Legation at Sofia.
5 Col. John C. Pitchford, Air Attaché in the Legation at Sofia.
6 Acting on instructions of the Department of State, Minister Heath on May 23 informed Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov that the Legation chancery staff would be limited to a minimum of 25 Americans—a number no greater than that of a year earlier (telegram 481, May 23, from Sofia: 124.74/5-2349).
Department of State Policy Statement

Bulgaria

A. Objectives

The long range objectives of the US toward Bulgaria are a segment of our broad policy goals with respect to the USSR. Their realization is thus dependent upon the success of our general strategy in dealing with the Soviet Union; conversely, progress toward our Bulgarian aims will contribute to this larger purpose. Within this concept our fundamental objective toward Bulgaria is to encourage the eventual replacement of its present USSR-controlled regime by an independent, popularly based state which the US could welcome into the United Nations and which in its external relations would play a constructive role in the Balkans, conduct free foreign commercial relations, and accord to US interests equality of treatment with those of all other states.

B. Policies

1. Political

The great obstacle to the realization of US policies toward Bulgaria lies in the absolute control of this satellite of the USSR by a picked group of Communist agents. Bulgaria is being molded as rapidly as domestic conditions permit into a replica of the USSR. This has entailed the systematic destruction of free and democratic institutions, complete mastery over the national economy, suppression of basic human freedoms, and a rigid control of the individual right to work.

Bulgaria is a police state. No open deviation is allowed contrary to the dictates of the Communist Party, which operates politically through the facade of the Fatherland Front, and in the economic and social fields through state and Party agencies. To intimidate and coerce the people, who are overwhelmingly opposed to the regime, repressive measures of the widest scope, are employed; these include deportation of urban dwellers to rural areas, denial of employment, and prison or concentration camp. Responsibility for these activities rests with the some 30,000 “hard core” Bulgarian Communists, while checking on their operations is an assigned contingent of Soviet personnel believed to number at least 3,000.

Department of State Policy Statements were concise documents summarizing the current United States policy toward a country or region, the relations of that country or region with the principal powers, and the issues and trends in that country or region. The Statements provided information and guidance for officers in missions abroad. The Statements were generally prepared by ad hoc working groups in the responsible geographic offices of the Department of State and were referred to appropriate diplomatic missions abroad for comment and criticism. The Statements were periodically revised.
There was a change in the Communist Party leadership in April 1949 with the removal of Traicho Kostov, who was not of the Moscow clique, from his second highest positions in the Party and Government. Subsequently Premier Dimitrov departed because of mortal illness for an indefinite home leave in the USSR. Despite the naming of Foreign Minister Kolarov as acting premier, his role is that of a figurehead, with real power centered in a small Moscow-trained group of the Politburo in which Dimitrov's brother-in-law, Vulko Chervenkov, assumes increased importance. While the Kostov affair indicates the existence of some opposition among Bulgarian Communists, there is no evidence at this stage that "Titoism" is a significant political force in Bulgaria. The demonstration of the undisputed authority of Moscow over the local regime has strengthened the popular Bulgarian conviction that the people alone cannot cope with the present dictatorship, that the latter would have the unhesitating support of the Red Army if its supremacy were challenged from any source, and that a future war between forces grouped around the US and the Soviet Union offers the only prospect of deliverance from the present tyranny.

Within Bulgaria a formal, organized opposition does not exist. The sole remaining deterrent to the Bulgarian Government's goal of complete communism is the peasants. While the regime is pressing to collectivize the majority of land holdings within the term of the recently instituted economic Five Year Plan, passive resistance as well as technical difficulties are impeding progress toward this goal. The latent hatred of the regime has as yet been ineffective, largely because of the vigilance of state security organs. So hard is the daily

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2 Traicho Dzhuneyev Kostov was a leading member of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Vice President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the State Committee for Economic and Financial Questions. It was announced in Sofia, on April 5, that a session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party had been held on March 26-27 to consider Kostov's "anti-party" activities. A resolution was adopted which condemned Kostov for a number of failings including his pursuit of "an insincere and unfriendly policy with regard the Soviet Union" and toleration of "nationalistic tendencies in the government apparatus". Kostov was dismissed from the Politburo and suspended from his government positions. Later in April it was announced that Kostov had been appointed Director of the Bulgarian National Library. In June he was expelled from the Communist Party.

3 The Bulgarian press announced on April 15 that Georgi Dimitrov, Secretary General of the Bulgarian Communist Party and President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers was on leave of absence because of illness and had gone to the Soviet Union for medical attention. Dimitrov died in the Soviet Union on July 2.

4 On April 23 the press announced the creation of a Bureau of the Ministerial Council consisting of Acting Prime Minister Kolarov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Electrification Kimon Georgiev, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture Georgi Traikov, Vulko Chervenkov, Chairman of the State Committee on Science, Arts, and Culture, and Minister of Interior Anton Yugo. Georgiev was a former Prime Minister (1945-1946) and a leader of the defunct (as of February 1949) Zveno Union. Traikov was Secretary of the Agrarian Union. Chervenkov was First Secretary of the Politburo of the Communist Party and Yugov was a member of the Politburo.
struggle for existence that some observers sense a spreading public apathy. Although there are small clandestine opposition groupings in Bulgaria, the main effort toward organization is being made abroad, through the Bulgarian National Committee headed by Dr. George M. Dimitrov. The Committee includes representatives of all democratic elements in exile, of which the strongest is Dr. Dimitrov’s National Agrarian Union, and maintains contacts within the country. Its purpose is the eventual liberation of Bulgaria from the Communists and the installation of a democratic regime. The National Agrarian Union also is a component of the International Peasant Union, which includes agrarian party leaders and their followers in exile from eastern Europe.

US policies and US interests within the country have been subject to unrelenting attack. Official Bulgarian propaganda denounces our institutions and our policies. Our economic interests have suffered from discrimination and from measures of nationalization without effective compensation. American cultural and educational influence has been attacked in various ways, including prohibition of the opening of the American college at Sofia after the war and the closing of the Girls’ School at Lovetch. So many impediments were put in the way of American social welfare operations, such as CARE, that these were obliged to cease. The recent arrests and fraudulent trials of Protestant ministers were obviously undertaken in order to disrupt the ties of these sects with the west, including the US, and to cast discredit on them and the US. Our Legation at Sofia also has been the target of a series of administrative restrictions and open provocations systematically designed to hamper its operations and to seal it from contact with the public.

In the face of a continuous campaign of vilification of the US by Bulgarian officials, press, and radio, the only rebuttals to reach the Bulgarian people are the short, daily Voice of America broadcasts. These have been a mainstay for Bulgarian public morale by offering the observations of the free world upon Soviet and Bulgarian Communist activities.

US and UK efforts to induce the USSR to honor its international commitments with respect to Bulgaria have proved fruitless and, in the absence of machinery for effective implementation of the Bulgarian Peace Treaty, similar efforts to induce Bulgaria to honor its treaty obligations are making little progress. While Bulgaria has disregarded its Treaty obligations in the economic and military fields, the most flagrant violations have been the systematic denial of human

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*Regarding the activities of the Bulgarian National Committee, see the memorandum of conversation by Melbourne, March 24, p. 279.*

*Regarding the trial of the Protestant pastors in Sofia in February–March 1949, see pp. 326–328.*
rights and fundamental freedoms to the Bulgarian people. The US and the UK, as signatories to the Yalta Agreement,⁷ the Armistice Convention,⁸ and the Peace Treaty,⁹ have constantly asserted the right of the people freely to decide their destiny. In the face of Communist acts, the US and the UK have sought to exert a restraining influence and to make their position clear by official protests, public statements, and, finally, by formal charges of violations of Article 2 of the Peace Treaty, which guarantees the enjoyment of human rights and of fundamental freedoms. These charges are being pressed by invocation of the Treaty procedures for the settlement of disputes.¹⁰

Whenever Bulgaria’s application for membership has been discussed in the United Nations the US, as well as the UK, has presented the record and successfully argued that the Bulgarian Government has shown it is unwilling, despite promises, to observe the obligations expected of members of the UN.¹¹

In the spring of 1949, on the initiative of Bolivia and Australia, a debate was held in the General Assembly of the UN upon the repression of civil liberties, particularly religious freedom, in Bulgaria and Hungary. The GA approved a Resolution expressing serious concern over the charges made against the two countries and concluding with the hope that measures taken under the Peace Treaties would be diligently prosecuted in order to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Resolution also reserved this item for consideration at the next session of the GA.¹²

2. Economic

US-Bulgarian trade has never been important from the American viewpoint, and it is recognized that Bulgarian exports to the US are of little significance. While Bulgaria’s Communist regime has consistently opposed US economic objectives, the US, on its part, continues to support the principle of east-west trade as contributing to the greatest possible expansion of peaceful trade throughout the world. However, in applying the US export licensing program to

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⁸ The Armistice Agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, signed at Moscow on October 28, 1944, Department of State Executive Agreement Series No. 437, and 58 Stat. (pt. 2) 1498. For documentation on the negotiations leading to the signing of the armistice, see Foreign Relations, 1944, vol. iii, pp. 300 ff.
⁹ For the text of the Treaty of Peace with Bulgaria, signed at Paris on February 10, 1947, see Department of State, Treaties and Other International Acts Series (TIAS) No. 1650.
¹⁰ For documentation on the efforts of the United States to assure fulfillment of the human rights provisions of the Treaties of Peace with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, see pp. 229 ff.
¹¹ For material on Bulgaria’s application for membership in the United Nations, see vol. ii, pp. 261 ff.
¹² For the text of the resolution under reference here, dated April 30, see p. 245.
Bulgaria, licenses have been denied for articles which might aid its war potential and that of the USSR. Present practice is to consult our Legation at Sofia on specific commodities, and action is generally taken in accordance with the Legation's recommendations.

The US retains nearly $3,500,000 of blocked or vested Bulgarian Government and private assets, which is greater than the amount of US claims against Bulgaria. We intend to continue to maintain controls over these funds until war claims are satisfactorily met and adequate and effective compensation is assured for the expropriation or other taking of other American property. Such measures are deemed necessary to ensure that the liquidation of the small US investment in Bulgaria, which has been decided on by the Bulgarian Government, will be carried out equitably with due regard for the interests of the American owners. Despite certain difficulties, efforts are being made to seek a solution of this problem through a formal US-Bulgarian general claims settlement.

Our policy on financial assistance to Bulgaria is to refuse any government loans under present conditions and to discourage but not to oppose private loans. So far as is known, no private loans have been made.

Negotiations are in progress looking toward a satisfactory arrangement to cover the operating expenses of our Legation at Sofia. Leva accounts in the name of US and possibly other foreign nationals would be bought by the US at a mutually agreed figure. If Bulgaria agrees to this arrangement, a license would be granted releasing blocked Bulgarian Government funds here to an agreed monthly amount needed by the Bulgarian Legation.

The USSR has aimed at excluding US aircraft from eastern Europe while simultaneously seeking rights for Soviet orbit carriers to operate in the air space of other countries. Our policy has been to restrict the civil air operations of the USSR and its satellites, including Bulgaria, to their territory until the USSR grants air rights in USSR territory on a reciprocal basis to air carriers of the US and other states desiring such rights. Our policy also calls for the denial of aviation equipment and aircraft maintenance facilities to the USSR and its satellites. This Government is seeking the cooperation of other non-Communist states in implementing this policy on a common front basis. This whole policy is now being subjected to review.

As provided for by a decision of the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1946, an international conference was held at Belgrade in August 1948 to draft a new Convention governing navigation upon the

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13 For documentation on United States policy with respect to trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see pp. 61 ff.
14 For documentation on the United States civil aviation policy with respect to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see pp. 184 ff.
Danube. The Soviet bloc, including Bulgaria, outvoted the US and other western participants in approving a Convention which left the USSR in effective control of the river. The necessary instruments of ratification have been deposited and the Convention has been declared in force by the Soviet bloc. The organization of the Danube Commission within the terms of the Convention, however, has not yet been announced. The US does not recognize the validity of this Convention and has charged the USSR and its satellites with responsibility for the absence of freedom of navigation on the Danube.

C. RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

Bulgaria has a foreign policy identical with that of the USSR. In this pattern all eastern European countries subservient to Moscow are bound together by treaties of alliance and commerce, they work together in the Russian sponsored Council for Mutual Economic Aid, and they are members of the Cominform. Toward “capitalist” governments the Bulgarian regime assumes an attitude of hostility the intensity of which is dictated by Soviet instructions. The leading countries of the free world, such as the US, are the objects of virulent propaganda attack.

Yugoslavia is a special object of the Bulgarian regime’s attacks, since, although a Communist country, it has been able to defy Moscow. Relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have deteriorated steadily since the Tito-Cominform rift was announced in June 1948, and have recently become more grave with the resurrection of the old Macedonian issue. This involves, at present, an apparent effort by the Soviets and their Cominform allies to utilize Macedonian nationalism and deep-seated Balkan rivalry over Macedonia as means to weaken the Tito regime. Although not clearly stated by the Communists the apparent objective is to create a union of Macedonian territories now within the confines of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Persistent reports have accompanied these developments in Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations to the effect that Bulgaria would be an eventual springboard for an attack upon the Tito regime in the guise of an organized “Free Macedonia” guerrilla movement.

Undiminished aid by Bulgaria to the Greek guerrillas and its unrelenting propaganda against the Greek Government show that the greatly strained relations between the two countries, never marked by

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16 Regarding the establishment of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid in January 1949, see telegram 212, January 27, from Moscow, p. 1, and the extract from issue No. 188, February 7, of Current Economic Developments, p. 4.
17 Documentation on the attitude of the United States with respect to the Macedonian question is scheduled for publication on volume VI.
cordiality, remain unchanged. A fresh element to exacerbate these relations has been the Communist-sponsored Free Macedonia movement, since its realization would mean an outright cession of present Greek territory. Bulgarian refugees continue to dribble across the frontier and are maintained in camps by the Greek authorities. As for Bulgaria’s obligation under the Peace Treaty to arrive at an equitable settlement with Greece for the restitution of Greek property and to pay fixed reparations, the Bulgarian Government has maintained an intransigent silence. Unsuccessful attempts have been made hitherto through various channels, particularly the UN, to restore normal diplomatic relations and to conclude frontier and minority conventions between Bulgaria and Greece.

While also antagonistic to Turkey, the Bulgarian regime has shown a certain restraint in its dealings with that country. Nevertheless, sporadic incidents occur. Turkish Legation officials have been expelled from Bulgaria, and frontier guards are taken prisoner if they inadvertently stray over the border. Turkey has a policy of asylum for Bulgarian political refugees which, coupled with the derogatory comments of the Turkish press and radio upon Communism, rankles with Sofia. On its side Turkey views Bulgaria as an obvious Soviet base threatening the Straits.

D. POLICY EVALUATION

The actions hitherto taken by the US have not impeded the consolidation of the Bulgarian Communist regime. However, the US has helped maintain Bulgarian public morale through the Voice of America broadcasts and by a forceful and dignified condemnation of those Communist acts which stifle public liberties and which are hostile to the US and its principles. As a result, aside from its effect in Bulgaria, our policy has played its part in alerting the American people and the western world to the true intentions of Soviet directed communism.

Certain present US activities, pursued and intensified, could have effects beneficial to our aims both internationally and within Bulgaria:

1. Consideration should be given to an expansion of Voice of America broadcasts as the most effective counter to the flood of communist propaganda deluging the Bulgarian people and as our most suitable medium to support their morale.
2. The US should continue to employ all means available under the Peace Treaty and the UN Charter to publicize and if possible to secure redress for the Bulgarian regime’s violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. Steady public reference to violations of other important provisions of the Peace Treaty by the Bulgarian Government with the con-
nivance of the USSR, of which the Danube Convention is illustrative, would aid in keeping the Communist regime on the defensive.

4. The licensing program for US exports to Bulgaria should be used as a flexible instrument of policy, as our strategic and political interests require; it can be made even more effective by close liaison with those countries operating under ECA.

5. Pressure should be maintained to satisfy claims by US nationals arising under the Peace Treaty and through the nationalization program of the Bulgarian Government. For this solution our control over assets of the Bulgarian regime in this country gives us an unquestioned advantage.

6. We should maintain the fullest support for the UN Special Committee on the Balkans and all efforts to oblige Bulgaria to desist from supporting the Greek guerrillas.

7. Despite provocations, it is currently in our general interest and that of the Bulgarian people to maintain our Legation in Sofia. It thus can report upon weaknesses in the Communist administration of Bulgaria which may be exploited for our objectives.

8. The US should continue to oppose, in the present circumstances, Bulgaria's application for membership in the UN.

Two other problems may require US policy decisions in the near future:

1. The Macedonian question, which has now emerged through Kremlin instigation as a trouble spot of importance involving Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia, should be carefully watched. The US position toward any Soviet efforts to create an "independent" Macedonia or a South Slav Federation will necessarily depend upon the circumstances and scope of such endeavors, and should take account of our interest in the integrity of Greece and in widening the breach between Yugoslavia and the USSR.

2. The US maintains friendly contact, on an unofficial basis, with the Bulgarian National Committee and the International Peasant Union. In pursuance of its political objectives, the US may have occasion to reconsider its attitude toward these organizations if our relations with the Bulgarian Government further deteriorate or if the exile agencies succeed in organizing an effective opposition among the Bulgarian people.

124.743/8-149 : Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

SOFIA, August 1, 1949—2 p.m.

642. Ivan Secoulov, former Secretary Regency Council of Bulgaria and then translator this Legation until May 12 when Bulgarian security police ordered him with threats to resign (Legtel 395 May 12 and

1A Regency Council ruled Bulgaria in the name of child-King Simeon from August 1943 until the seizure of power by the Communist-dominated Fatherland Front in September 1944.
despatch 107 May 19) died in Sofia prison Thursday July 28, one week after his arrest at Rila where he had obtained employment.

It is known that certificate of death, which is being kept secret by Bulgarians, states death was suicide. It is theoretically possible that he took his own life, although all means of self-destruction are taken from Bulgarian arrestees. But accepting theoretical possibility of suicide, his death shortly after arrest and undoubted mistreatment nonetheless constitutes a police murder as brutal as judicial murder of Nikola Petkov* with whom he cooperated while secretary of Regency Council.

His friends and I knew Secoulov as a determined man of cool courage not of suicidal tendency. Aside from technical services as translator, his calm judgment of events was of great value to this legation in its estimate of situation. He had accepted employment here in full knowledge of personal risk involved hoping that he might thus serve cause of free and decent Bulgaria. He is another martyr of the insane Communist tyranny in its war against human freedom and specifically against US as liberty’s most powerful defender. He is presumably second victim on Legation staff, the first being Joseph Dimitroff who was tried for treason on absolutely baseless charges. Dimitroff’s appeal from death sentence was rejected and according Legation’s information he has been executed (Legtel 471 June 9). Information re Secoulov death absolutely authentic coming from his brother one of whom, undergoing several years imprisonment in Sofia prison, was called in to identify body and sign death certificate alleging suicide. A second brother was notified, in his place of exile in provinces, and allowed to attend interment in suicide corner Sofia cemetery. A third brother is in concentration camp.

For moment news death should be withheld.

It is my belief that this latest incident should at appropriate time be given fullest possible publicity, however, both to enlighten American public opinion, and in justice to this faithful employee. As to manner and form publicity should take, will submit recommendations later.

Heath

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* Neither printed.
* Nikola Petkov, leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union and principal political opponent of the Communist-dominated regime, was tried and convicted in August 1947 of anti-state activity. He was executed in September 1947. For documentation on the arrest, trial, and execution of Petkov, see Foreign Relations, 1947, vol. iv, index entry under Petkov, Nikola.
* Not printed. Joseph Dimitrov (Dimitroff) was a former employee of the American Military Mission in Bulgaria which was disbanded in September 1947. In 1948 Dimitrov and Dragan Peer, another former employee of the Mission, were arrested, and on August 7, 1948, condemned to death following a secret trial to which the American Legation was not allowed to send an observer. It is not clear whether this sentence was actually carried out.
The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

SOFIA, August 5, 1949—2 p. m.

658. Reference Legtel 642, August 1. Through grapevine Secoulov’s death has become fairly widely known in Sofia. Now known that he did not die on July 28 but on July 24, just three days after arrest.

Preliminary step, acting counselor yesterday made inquiry of Bulgarian Chief of Protocol who agreed after some demur, Foreign Office might investigate “rumors” Secoulov’s death. I am of opinion, however, we should delay official protest and publicity while we explore possibility of saving other employees.

In negotiations for reciprocal deblocking of funds and treatment of Legation personnel we have been leading up to request that Michael Shipkov, Legation’s senior Bulgarian employee, and his family be allowed to leave Bulgaria. His loyal services and judgment have been of utmost value. Secoulov’s sudden death after his arrest must be highly unwelcome to Foreign Office and Bulgarian Government. They may have succeeded in extorting a confession from him in the three days of his arrest but it seems most probable that they intended him to testify in a publicized political trial involving opposition political figures now under arrest or in internal exile, under surveillance, in Bulgaria. The testimony of a dead man would be of poor internal propaganda value. Publicity of Secoulov’s death under more than suspicious circumstances would embarrass Bulgarian claims that they respect human rights clauses of peace treaty and are eligible for entrance into UN.

It seems possible that in return for agreement, presumably tacit, that we would not make publicized protest over Bulgarians’ doing away with Secoulov, Bulgarians might permit Shipkovs to leave. The advantage of having a man of Shipkov’s character, courage and intelligence in Bulgarian refugee organization or continuing in some US Government employment outside would be worth our making such concession.

If however Bulgarians decline to let Shipkovs leave, then I think we must make thoroughly publicized protest. It would then be only a short time until security police jailed or killed Shipkov and only way we could save him and family, since no underground railway has yet been perfected, would be to offer them asylum my official residence. There need be no open grant of asylum; I could simply inform Foreign Office that I was using couple, who are both on Legation’s roster, as major-domo and housekeeper. They of course could never leave premises.

1 Supra.
If it came to the point Foreign Office might react violently even if I maintained that they were merely domestic employees and such action, if coupled with publicity of Secoulou’s death, might be followed by new restrictions on this Legation (inevitable in any case) or even my being declared persona non grata, although I find it difficult to believe Soviets would permit Bulgarians to go so far at this time.

I am fully aware of Department’s traditional attitude on political asylum but suggest that time may have come to revise our policy, at least in satellite countries where by treaty we have certain responsibility for human and political rights. We have, in fact, made one exception to our policy giving refuge in 1946 to G. M. Dimitrov whom Barnes was later able to get out of Bulgaria to the good, I believe, of cause of eventual liberation of this country.  

Further if government refuses to allow Shipkovs leave Bulgaria, there arises question of form and publicity to be given to protest over police murder of Secoulou. My present feeling is that I should then insist on interview with Kolarov, point out that despite Foreign Office assurances that Legation was free to employ Bulgarians and that it not be subjected to persecution by secret police, that nevertheless secret police had arrested and baselessly condemned to death two employees (Peev and Dimitrov, Legel 1369 of November 2, 1948 2); thereafter they had forced other employees by threats to resign—that we had absolute proof of militia threats against Secoulou whose resignation I had not accepted but merely placed on leave without pay; that such actions were in flagrant violation of civilized practice, of treaty and of assurances of Foreign Office and accordingly my government must reserve full liberty of action in circumstances. My idea would be to leave aide-mémoire of my observations and this aide-mémoire should be given full publicity in American press and VOA.

It would be appreciated if Department would let me have at earliest date its observations and instructions re foregoing suggestions for action in this situation. If we do not take some effective action, we may be certain that Bulgarian persecution and restrictions on this and other Legations will proceed accelerando. At present time Bulgaria has recently declared one officer western Legation persona non grata while

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2 The reference here is to the extension of refuge at the United States Mission in Bulgaria in 1945 by Maynard Barnes, then United States Representative in Bulgaria, to Georgi Dimitrov, Secretary of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union and chief opponent of the Communist-dominated regime. Dimitrov eventually escaped from Bulgaria in September 1945. For documentation on the Dimitrov case, see Foreign Relations, 1945, vol. iv, pp. 140-314, passim.

2 Not printed; regarding Peev and Dimitrov, see footnote 4 to telegram 642, August 1, from Sofia, p. 340.
declining give reasons. His Minister is debating this action but with scant hopes success.

Heath

124.743/8–549: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, August 10, 1949—7 p. m.

282. Considerations you have advanced re Shipkov have recd Dept’s careful attention (ur 658 Aug 5 ¹). In examining alternative solutions Dept has felt parallel cannot be drawn between present Shipkov problem and sanctuary granted agrarian leader G. M. Dimitrov in 1945 since latter clear case polit asylum while current instance finds Dept seeking means to save life loyal alien administrative employee having no polit party affiliations.

Any effort now to link Shipkov departure to negots for reciprocal deblocking of funds might well overweight our expectations from such agreement, especially in light concrete requests for equitable housing and staffing arrangements. You are, of course, best position judge magnitude and variety concessions obtainable through deblocking agreement. Dept inclined to think, however, Shipkov case currently not easily linked to it following death Secoulov which may induce Bulgs to regard departure request as polit question.

Dept understands Shipkov had ways and means previously available for his departure from country but unwilling to leave family behind. In light current developments has Shipkov revised his thinking? If so, wife might not be molested. Her employment as ur housekeeper, while not guarantee of her safety, might provide sufficient time and opportunity to permit her eventual departure with daughter.

Alternatively Shipkov’s departure cld be broached directly to FonOff linking it at first stage with passing ref to reports re Secoulov. Subsequently idea cld be extended that if Shipkovs granted departure permits US wld not press Secoulov affair. However, for obvious reasons US unable to make flat pledge not to mention it publicly under any circumstances. If you think helpful, you might add Shipkov being transferred in routine assignment.

Proposal both Shipkovs be ur domestics may be reexamined following receipt ur comment upon foregoing. Dept not inclined approve such step which, as you indicate, almost certainly wld lead to further

¹ Supra.
difficulties with Bulg Govt, possible violent incidents, and additional restrictions on Leg.

ACHESON

124.743/8-2249 : Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

SOFIA, August 23, 1949—8 p. m.

705. I delayed answering Department's 282, August 10\(^1\) until I could broach question exit visas for Shipkovs to Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov who saw me at 12:30 August 20 (penultimate paragraph Legtel 700, August 22\(^2\)).

I mentioned rumors death of Legation Bulgarian employee Secoulov\(^3\) and refusal Chief of Protocol Foreign Office to admit Legation request for investigation these rumors. Kamenov seemed shocked and said he would look into it immediately.

I then discussed in general way pending negotiations for mutual limited deblocking of funds, pointed out advantages to Bulgarian Government would be greater than to Legation and finally asked as a personal favor that exit visas for temporary trip Switzerland for medical treatment be given Shipkov and family. Kamenov inquired what guarantee could be given they would return Bulgaria to which I replied I could give no assurances but I was only asking for a temporary visa. Kamenov, while arguing that Bulgaria had legal right to all funds now blocked in States, did not contest statement that agreement would probably benefit Bulgaria more than US and indicated he would give consideration to request for Shipkovs.

Interview terminated 1:30 p. m. and 50 minutes later, Shipkov picked up by militia and his 32 hour interrogation began.

Shipkov's statement transmitted my numbered telegram 702, August 23\(^4\) only partially covers "confession" of utterly imaginary guilt and recitals of events which never occurred and which his interrogators forcibly suggested to him. According to his latter account, of

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\(^1\) Supra.

\(^2\) Not printed; it commented upon the current status of negotiations with the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry regarding the possible terms of an agreement allowing the use of blocked funds for the operations of the American Legation in Sofia and the Bulgarian Legation in Washington (874.5151/8-2249).

\(^3\) Regarding the death of Ivan Secoulov, see telegram 642, August 1, from Sofia, p. 339.

\(^4\) Not printed. On March 4, 1950, the Department of State issued to the press a statement reviewing Shipkov's personal biography, his duties at the Legation in Sofia, the details of his detention and interrogation by Bulgarian police, his stay at the Legation, and the efforts of the Legation to secure permission for him to leave Bulgaria. The Department also made public Shipkov's sworn affidavit describing in great detail the course of his interrogation. For the text of the statement and of the affidavit, see Department of State Bulletin, March 13, 1950, pp. 387–396.
which a stenographic record has been taken, he found himself confirming
accusations against former members of American and British military missions, former and present members of this Legation including
myself, of having formed espionage and sabotage rings. His inquisitors
had evidently outlined in advance the statements and accusations
which they wished him to make. When he got off on the wrong track
he was summarily halted with blows and forced to continue talking
until what with their remarks and questions he invented or confirmed
the stories that they desired.

It appears that Courtney, who was an innocent shooting and walking
companion of Shipkov on weekends, was more heavily accused
than myself but much attention was paid also to getting him to make
statements against Colonel Yatsevitch, also an occasional companion
on walking tours.

In first 24 hours of his inquisition their only promise was that he
would be given life imprisonment instead of death. Then in the last
hours they suddenly brought up the proposition of his returning to
spy on Legation. His own hypothesis and mine is that the militia had
gotten in touch with Foreign Office and learned of my conversation
with Kamenov and my warning remarks as to effect of publicity re
Secoulov’s death. Presumably Foreign Office advised against his de-
tention or execution at this time.

After 32 hours Shipkov was given a glass of water, told to return
to his home, then to meet militia agents at 8:30 the following evening
and warned, of course, not to betray fact of his detention and inter-
rogation. Shipkov worked all day Monday August 22 before going to
meeting, typed his account leaving it in his desk with thought that
if he were again arrested and held that his statement which we would
find would nullify any “confession” they extorted from him. Monday
evening he showed up at appointed place but though he waited for 3
hours was not met. It is known that in the case of other employees who
have been forced by threats to spy on Legation personnel militia
frequently failed to show up for appointments with them.

This morning he managed, although other Bulgarian employees
continually made excuses to enter his office apparently under militia
instructions to observe his actions, to pass his statement to Second
Secretary Courtney.

At 2 today I sent for him and he gave further details of his interro-
gation. We and he noted that one or two militia cars were stationed
not far from Legation. He finally stated that unless we insisted on
his leaving or expelled him he would stay in chancery. He argued,
and I think justifiably, that his conversation with us although it did

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6 Raymond F. Courtney, Second Secretary in the Legation in Sofia.
not take place until after other Bulgarian employees had left would certainly be known or surmised by militia and once again in their clutches, utterly broken as he now is, he would be unable to conceal he had told us of his experiences.

Shipkov's wife and daughter at present in Varna and are not due back until September 4. He argues, and I am inclined agree, that there is a possibility that as a result of further interview with Kamenov Foreign Office might make militia agree to permit the departure of entire family or at least that of his wife and child on the understanding we would not give publicity to Secoulov's death or inquisition of Shipkov. He is willing to surrender himself to almost certain death and certain torture if we could gain permission for his wife and child to leave Bulgaria.

I have not offered Shipkov asylum in chancery. He simply has not left premises after his day's work was completed and with a record of three Bulgarian employees (Peev, Dimitroff and now Secoulov) judicially or otherwise murdered by the militia in past six months, I did not feel that I could order or bodily expel him from chancery. He is staying on third floor to which no Bulgarian and only few members of Legation have access. While militia undoubtedly know by surmise that he must be here the very few members of Legation who know of this will under no circumstances admit he is sheltered in chancery.

Even the case-hardened Bulgarian Government must appreciate seriousness of action against Shipkov following atrocious killings of three other Legation Bulgarian employees. They must know that under normal circumstances such persecution of Legation would have led to a break of relations which cannot be the desire of Bulgaria (read the Kremlin) at this juncture.

During my interview with Kamenov tomorrow I intend to press the issue of the Shipkov visas without, of course, giving evidence of any knowledge of what has occurred.

Will advise Department further following interview.\*  

*Telegram 305, August 25, to Sofia, not printed, informed Minister Heath that his action in the Shipkov case had the Department's full support (124.743/8-2349).

124.743/8-2649 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, August 28, 1949—11 a.m.

308. Since it seems to Dept speed in handling Shipkov case is vital, unless your approach to Kamenov (urtsels 705 Aug 23\* and 718

\* Supra.
Aug 26 2) brings immediate concrete results you are given discretionary authorization to request urgent FonOff interview preferably with FonMin. At meeting you cl'd indicate knowledge of police pressures against Shipkov, state this Govt views with greatest repugnance unwarranted police action against Bulg employees of Leg, and that you entertain grave concern for Shipkov's personal safety, adding info you have recd on fate Secoulov buttresses this view. Under circumstances, FonMin shld consider justified a request for exit visas for entire family. Refusal wd'ld of course leave US no alternative to giving widespread publicity to entire subject, whereas acceptance your proposal cl'd be on understanding that US wd'ld not publicize militia handling Shipkov and Secoulov cases unless other similar cases shld occur. Dept leaves to ur judgment handling of this point, knowing you appreciate absolute pledge cannot be given to maintain silence in all circumstances. You may state satisfactory settlement this case necessary to restore some degree of international comity to US-Bulg relations already strained by unfriendly Bulg attitude and actions toward US Leg. We are considering authorizing you take tougher line and hope telegraph further tomorrow. Pending further instructions you shld be guided by foregoing.

It wd'ld be unfortunate complication if Mrs. Shipkov were taken into militia custody (ur 721 Aug 27 3). Hence you may retain her soonest (with child) as housekeeper.

ACHESON

9 Not printed: it reported that Bulgarian Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov had informed Minister Heath that the request for visas for Shipkov and his family had not yet been taken up with the newly designated Foreign Minister Vladimir Poptomov (124.743/8-2649).

9 Not printed. It reported that Mrs. Shipkov had appeared at the Legation that day in a state of extreme agitation over the disappearance of her husband. Minister Heath felt it best not to inform Mrs. Shipkov of her husband's whereabouts for fear that the Bulgarian police would extract such information from her (124.743/8-2749).

124.743/9-349: Telegram

_The Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria_

TOP SECRET NIACT WASHINGTON, September 5, 1949—2 p. m.

318. While delay by FonOff in receiving you appears deliberate and may be intended to test seriousness of our instruction to press this matter, Dept considers (ur 745 Sept 3 1) you must be judge in timing

1 Not printed; in it Minister Heath reported that he had sought for six days to obtain an appointment with Bulgarian Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov (124.743/9-349).
approach as mentioned Dept 308, Aug 28 and whether you shld insist on seeing Kolarov instead of FonMin.

In evaluating Shipkov case light of present state US-Bulg relations Dept desires your views as to whether it is fundamentally (1) isolated police initiative; (2) attempt to discover limits of pressure US will countenance before evoking possibility of break in relations; or (3) incident in series calculated to lead to dipl rupture. We realize decision on (2) or (3) one which is made in Moscow rather than Sofia.

If incident is within category (1) or (2) Dept cd share hope (urte 726 Aug 29) Bulg Govt wd restrain overzealous militia and seek unpublicized solution. Possible that you might be able induce Bulg to grant exit visa to Shipkov, who we assume is still in chancery, or at least to obtain promise not to persecute him further. Your approach to FonOff, with affair not publicized and thus not involving all-important public "prestige" of Commie state, coupled with Bulg desire to gain something from Leva-dollar negots, wd seem to offer at least prospect for successful conclusion immed problem.

While Dept inclined to point (2) as basic Bulg motivation and explanation for recent actions and restrictions against Leg re visas, travel, radio, implication of Leg in "spy trials", attitude on leva-dollar negots and persecution local employees, interpretation (3) above merits attn as possible explanation for same series of actions. If Sovs contemplate using Bulg for guerrilla or other armed activities against Yugo, they may feel it essential initially to eliminate US Leg and possibly other Western Legs as sources of intelligence re Sov plans. On this assumption if Shipkov case does not provide required pretext, we may be sure others will follow.

If decision has been taken to force us to point of breaking relations, we will have no choice. If on other hand plan is merely to subject Leg to series of indignities and restrict its activities to point where it cannot properly serve US interests, Dept must weigh seriously advantages and disadvantages of maintaining relations under such conditions. Ur considered views this point wd be appreciated.

ACHESON

Supra.

As a result of reorganizations of the Bulgarian Cabinet announced on July 20 and August 7, Vasil Kolarov had become Prime Minister but had been relieved of his duties as Foreign Minister. The new Foreign Minister was Vladimir Popomov, member of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party and editor of the newspaper Rabotnichesko Delo, the organ of the Party.

4 Not printed.

5 The reference here is to the continuing negotiations over the Bulgarian blocked assets in the United States and the American financial claims against Bulgaria.
Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Perkins) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration (Peurifoy)

TOP SECRET  [WASHINGTON,] September 7, 1949.

I share the feeling expressed in your memorandum of August 30 1 concerning the treatment of our local employees in Sofia and the effects which it has on the US position in Bulgaria and other satellite countries. When our employees are subjected to threats and tortures, and some of them even killed, it is a very serious situation calling into question the desirability of maintaining relations with those countries under such conditions.

We never expected our diplomatic relations with the Soviet satellite countries to be conducted on the plane of international comity and decency characterizing our normal relations with other countries; we have felt that, in spite of this situation, we had more to gain than to lose by maintaining our representation. As in our dealings with the USSR itself, we have had a continuous series of restrictions and interferences with the work of our Embassies and Legations in the satellite states. Bulgaria has been the most flagrant example, indicating that the Soviets may be using that country to test our reactions and see how much pressure we will take.

As you may have seen by our recent telegrams to Sofia, we are trying to reach an early and unpublicized settlement of the present case of persecution of a local employee by getting agreement to his departure from the country. If no agreement with the Bulgarians proves possible, we shall have to review the entire situation. We are now undertaking to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining relations with Bulgaria (and approximately the same situation exists in Rumania) in the light of the increasingly severe restrictions placed on our Mission and the indignities to our personnel. A principal factor in the picture, as you know, is the information which we get from our representatives in these countries. . . .

GEORGE W. PERKINS

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1 Not printed; in his memorandum Peurifoy suggested that drastic action was required to protect American employees, even if it meant the severance of relations (124.743/8-3049).

124.743/9-849: Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET  PRIORITY  Sofla, September 8, 1949—7 p. m.

764. ReLegtel 754, September 7. 1 I opened my talk with Kamenov today with résumé of police persecution of Legation’s Bulgarian em-

1 Not printed.
ployees which, with death of Secoulou, had culminated into very grave situation. I remarked on necessity of prompt amicable solution to restore some degree of comity to Bulgarian-American relations. I was about to outline disadvantages to Bulgaria of publicity on treatment of these employees and concern of government, when he interrupted by saying he had taken up case of Shipkov personally with Christosov, new Interior Minister. Christosov had replied he had nothing in principle against granting the request. Such visas had been granted before, and it was only necessary for Shipkov to make application and Christosov thought it quite possible that exit permits would be forthcoming.

I said that in view of what had happened to other employees this Legation, could he give me any assurances with respect to Shipkov’s safety. He replied that while he could not now give definite assurances, since there might be charges pending against him, he would inquire and let me know within few days whether in fact there were any charges pending against Shipkov. As regards my fears of having him go to militia to make application for passport, he thought it was unnecessary for Shipkov to make personal appearance—it was sufficient to write a request and send photographs. I thanked him for his attitude and said I thought favorable action on my personal request, which had support of my government, would contribute toward Bulgarian-American relations.

He terminated interview by asking what action US was going to take on human rights clause of treaty, now that his government had declined to take part in arbitral commission we had proposed. I said I was not informed just what action was contemplated, but was certain matter would have to be considered in next General Assembly of UN. I will not be sure that Shipkov will in fact receive exit visas until Kamenov advises me whether there are charges which may be presented against him. It is, of course, possible that even if Kamenov does informally promise Shipkov’s safety, thwarted police may at last moment proceed to arrest latter, or even attack him as they did his brother, but that is a risk he will have to run.

As regards questions raised by Deptel 318, September 5, I do not regard Shipkov incident as isolated police initiative. Foreign Office

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*Rusi Gospodinov Khrisostov, General of the People’s Militia and Assistant Minister of Interior and member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party was named Minister of Interior on August 6 in succession to Anton Yugov who had earlier been named Deputy Prime Minister (on July 20).

*a For documentation on the efforts of the United States to assure fulfillment of the human rights articles of the treaties of peace with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, see pp. 223 ff.

*Ante, p. 347.
must know in general and approve of campaign to force Bulgarian employees of diplomatic missions to act as spies or, in case of refusal, to force them to resign or arrest them. In this case, however, I believe Foreign Office was not consulted in advance by militia. What happened was that militia went too far and fast and bungled case. They thought they had so broken Shipkov by torture and “interrogation” that he would be a willing spy. They did not foresee his regaining enough courage to inform us of plot.

Neither do I believe his arrest was an incident in series calculated to lead to diplomatic rupture. I cannot believe that Moscow wants US to sever relations with Bulgaria at this precise time. Neither is it quite correct to say that action against Shipkov was attempt to discover limits of pressure we will countenance before invoking possibility of breaking relations. Police will go just as far in their campaign of persecution and restriction of Legation as they can without precipitating such an event. Police and Foreign Office have been encouraged in their persecution this mission by fact that we have so far not resorted to effective publicity, protest or retaliation. As regards suggested solution that Bulgarians promise not to persecute Shipkov further, such assurances would only have temporary, if any, validity. Kolarov personally promised former British Minister that Shipkov’s brother could continue employment in British Legation without molestation, all of which did not prevent his being beaten to a pulp by disguised militiamen and his subsequent imprisonment in a concentration camp without trial a few months after.

Department will note that Kamenov did not raise question of whereabouts Shipkov who is remaining in Chancery. Am writing Kamenov that Shipkov had previously made application for passport and exit permit which is on file in militia.

HEATH

124.743/10-1249: Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

SOFIA, October 12, 1949—11 a. m.

Re Legtel 856, October 11. I saw FonMin [Poptomov] yesterday afternoon and for half an hour argued that permission for

1 In his telegram 842, October 5, from Sofia, not printed, Heath reported upon a conversation that day with Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov regarding the Shipkov case. Kamenov informed Heath that he had, at the instruction of Foreign Minister Poptomov, taken up with Minister of Interior Khristosov the matter of the police mistreatment of Shipkov. Khristosov allegedly had ordered an investigation and punishment of those responsible. Deep regret was expressed for the action against Shipkov which was characterized as not being in accord with Bulgarian policy (124.743/10-549). In his telegram 856, October 11, from Sofia, not printed, Heath reported being informed by Kamenov the previous evening that “nothing could be done for Shipkov” (124.743/10-1149).
Shipkovs to leave Bulgaria was necessary to restore some degree of comity to American-Bulgarian relations and to avoid inevitable and most damaging publicity for Bulgaria. FonMin did not attempt to counter my arguments and stated that maltreatment of Shipkov was absolutely against policy of Government and investigation was underway. He implied, without stating as positively as Kamenov had, that those responsible would be punished. He had recommended to Interior Minister to grant passports and exit visas but latter had insisted that there were “reasons”—not specified—against such action. I cited case of former Bulgarian officer married to Swedish woman who, 48 hours after request was made of Dimitrov² by Swedish lawyer who had defended latter at Leipzig trial,³ had received passports and had left Bulgaria.

I said I attached such importance to this case that I must place it before PriMin Kolarov. FonMin said he had no objection to my taking the matter to PriMin and that FonOff would try to arrange for me to see Kolarov in next day or two.⁴ Our conversation was friendly in tone throughout and I am inclined to believe that as he asserted, FonMin had asked Interior Minister to let Shipkovs leave but certainly in no very insistent manner.

HEATH

²The late Prime Minister Dimitrov.
³The 1933 trial of those accused of the bombing of the German Reichstag.
⁴In his telegram 868, October 13, from Sofia, Heath reported being informed by the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry that the state of Prime Minister Kolarov’s health would not permit an audience (124.743/10–1349).

124.74/10–1249: Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

RESTRICTED.

SOFIA, October 12, 1949—5 p. m.

864. In interview with Foreign Minister [Poptomov] yesterday I referred to Bulgarian note suggesting Legation American staff be reduced to 20 including personnel of Military Attaché’s office.¹ Foreign Minister said they did not intend to dictate size of staff nor

¹A copy of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry note verbale under reference here, dated October 5, was transmitted to the Department of State as an enclosure to despatch 244, October 13, from Sofia, neither printed (124.74/10–1349). Minister Heath commented upon the note in his telegram 847, October 7, from Sofia, not printed (124.74/10–749).
advance theory that mission’s staff in Washington and Sofia should be equal in size, although, he added with smile that would be simplest formula. He repeated old argument about housing shortage, food, etc., and said that government could not see necessity of such large staff in view of limited travel, cultural and commercial exchange between two countries. Foreign Office was receiving continual objections from “Bulgarians” inquiring why necessary for UK and certain other countries maintain such large staff and whether in effect these countries were trying to build up a system of “capitulations.”

I laughed this off and I do not think Foreign Minister expected me to take these arguments seriously. I said a staff of 33 for chancery alone which we proposed to maintain here was a very small staff for a diplomatic mission. His figure of 20 was completely out of question. I then stated that with minimum staff of counselor, secretaries, Cultural and Commercial Attachés and guards minimum chancery staff alone must exceed 20. He did not seem inclined to dispute my explanations and only asked why it was necessary to have a second code clerk and second accountant. Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov who was present then interrupted to say surely two Military Attachés were sufficient. I answered that already one assistant Military Attaché had left and another was scheduled to leave without replacement.

Foreign Minister made some jocular remarks to effect that vaunted American efficiency and labor productivity should enable us to do our work with less personnel. I replied in kind that administrative requirements necessitating additional personnel were not by any means unknown to Bulgarian Government. It seemed to me that Foreign Minister was not ready to come to settlement of issue at this meeting so I arranged that prior to my departure for conference at London to talk with Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov. I think we can take it for granted that unless we get some new leverage Bulgarian Government will never agree to chancery staff of 33. On other hand, I believe that Foreign Office does not expect Legation to accept figure of 20.

Am sending today reply to Bulgarian Government re size of Legation as instructed Department’s 357 October 10.

Heath

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²Not printed; it authorized Minister Heath to reject the principle that the Bulgarian Government could determine the size of the Legation staff and the specific figure of 20 and to recall that it already had been stated that the Legation chancery required a minimum staff of 33 (124.74/10-749). A copy of the Minister’s note of reply, dated October 13, was transmitted to the Department as an enclosure to despatch 244, October 13, from Sofia, neither printed (124.74/10-749).
Memorandum Prepared in the Office of Eastern European Affairs, Department of State

TOP SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] October 20, 1949.

US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS

PROBLEM

To determine what course of action the Department should take as a result of the Bulgarian refusal to permit Michael Shipkov, local employee of the US Legation, to leave Bulgaria.

BACKGROUND

[Here follows a review of the efforts by the Bulgarian Government to restrict the operation of the United States Legation. Particular attention is devoted to the developments in the Shipkov case (see telegram 658, August 5, from Sofia, page 341 and following).]

DISCUSSION

In the light of the delaying tactics employed by the Bulgarian Foreign Office, it seems likely that the Shipkov case was referred to Moscow. There does not appear to be any further possibility that the Bulgarian Government will act favorably on our request to have Shipkov leave Bulgaria. Making allowances for the possible sincerity of the Bulgarian Foreign Office's protestations that the arrest of Shipkov was a mistake and against the policy of the Bulgarian Government, the unpleasant facts in the matter at this point are:

1) Shipkov was arrested and forced to make false confessions of espionage and sabotage activities against the Bulgarian Government, implicating fellow Bulgarian citizens and officers of the Legation;
2) His signed confession is in the hands of Bulgarian authorities;
3) The Bulgarian Government has been informed that unless Shipkov and his family were allowed to leave Bulgaria the United States Government would be forced to make public all the informa-

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1 This memorandum was drafted by John C. Campbell, Officer in Charge of Balkan Affairs, Office of Eastern European Affairs, and by Charles E. Hullick, Jr., of the Office of Eastern European Affairs. On October 21 Campbell transmitted the memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs George W. Perkins and to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Llewellyn B. Thompson, under cover of a memorandum dated October 21. In his transmittal memorandum, Campbell observed that the Department of State had to take a decision whether to consider the negotiations in the Shipkov case at an end and to publicize the affair or to continue to hope for a quietly negotiated solution to the controversy. Campbell further observed that the Office of Eastern European Affairs had refrained from recommending in positive terms any of the alternatives presented in this paper, but it was inclined to favor the third alternative—early publication of the facts in the Shipkov and preceding cases.
tion in its possession concerning this and other acts of mistreatment of its employees by the Militia; and

4) Shipkov is being given what amounts to sanctuary in the Legation at the present time.

Possible Next Moves by the Bulgarian Government

In view of the facts outlined above, it can be anticipated that the Bulgarian Government will follow one of three courses:

1) Make public Shipkov’s confession, branding him as a traitor and enemy of the country, and issue a warrant for his arrest in an effort to discredit in advance any information which the US Government may make public. Such action might take place so as to be utilized in connection with the pending trial of Traicho Kostov, the former number two Communist in Bulgaria.

2) Present the US Legation in Sofia with an unpublicized diplomatic note asking that Shipkov be turned over to the Bulgarian authorities.

3) Bide its time and withhold for the moment a request for the release of Shipkov, in order to see if the US Government will make the affair public and will risk breaking relations over an issue such as this.

If the Bulgarian Government is aware that Shipkov is staying in the Legation, it has given us no indication to that effect. However, police have made a visit to Shipkov’s apartment in Sofia where his wife and child are staying.

It is difficult to estimate, on the basis of information available, which course of action the Bulgarians will follow. Whichever is adopted, the fundamental considerations bearing on our own choice of a policy remain the same.

Possible Courses of US Action and Issues Involved

The following courses of action are open to the Department:

1) To allow the Bulgarian Government to take the initiative, releasing Shipkov if requested to do so, and make public his statement together with related material in the form of a formal protest only if he is brought to trial, imprisoned or killed.

2) In the absence of precipitate Bulgarian action, to continue to pursue the matter through diplomatic channels, awaiting an opportunity for Minister Heath to see Premier Kolarov. If still unsuccessful in obtaining consent to Shipkov's departure, the Legation might ask for a written pledge that Shipkov would not be arrested or persecuted.

3) To put out without delay a press release exposing the recent acts of the Bulgarian Government against the Legation and its personnel, including Shipkov's signed statement, and revealing his presence in the Legation; and refuse to turn him over if and when the Bulgarian authorities so demand.

The major questions of policy affecting the decision to be taken are whether the position and prestige of our Legation in Sofia (not to
mention humanitarian considerations) will permit us to accept the
Bulgarian conduct in this case without a vigorous reaction at this
juncture, and whether we are prepared to embark on a course which
might lead us, without possibility of retreat, to a break in relations.

Apart from the primary necessity of having a listening post for
the collection of intelligence information of a military, political and
economic nature and the necessity of protecting residual American
interests in Bulgaria, one of the major political considerations for
maintaining a Legation at Sofia has been to provide a means of
exerting the influence of the US Government and to serve as a symbol
to the Bulgarian people of the continuing interest of the United States
in their struggle to resist Soviet and Communist domination.

In view of the ever increasing restrictions placed upon the Lega-
tion, the quantity and quality of intelligence information is becoming
more and more limited. Similarly, although a United States Legation
has been maintained in Bulgaria since the conclusion of the peace
treaty, its influence has not been sufficient to save from imprisonment,
torture or death the democratic leaders who have opposed the present
government, the Protestant ministers, or its own local employees such
as Peev, Dimitrov and Secoulou. It has not been able to exert any
influence with regard to the holding of free elections, the mainte-
nance of freedom of the press, speech and public assembly, or the observ-
ance by the Bulgarian Government of other Peace Treaty obligations.
Certainly it is open to question, in the light of these circumstances, whether
the Legation in Sofia will be looked upon with respect either by the
Communist authorities or by the Bulgarian people and whether it can
serve as a beacon of hope and encouragement to the people irrespective
of what it allows to happen to its employees and of the restrictions and
indignities to which it is forced to submit.

The first course of action mentioned above, which would leave the
initiative to the Bulgarians, would be predicated upon several con-
siderations: that the persecution of local employees, a practice not
confined to Bulgaria, is not in itself sufficient cause to provoke a crisis
likely to lead to a break in relations; that the US Government has no
right, on the basis of international law, to shield Bulgarian citizens
from Bulgarian law enforcement (see the opinion of L/P on this point
in the attached memorandum); and that the national interests of
the US and the advantages we gain from maintaining a Mission in
Sofia cannot be jeopardized because of humanitarian considerations
for individual Bulgarians even though their personal sacrifices are the
result of their employment by the US Government and their loyalty
to the democratic cause. Under this course of action, the Department
would endeavor to persuade the Bulgarian Government that it would

* Memorandum under reference here not attached to source text and not further
identified.
be against its interests to arrest Shipkov. However, if it insisted that Shipkov must be given up, he would be released. If he were then imprisoned or killed, with or without trial, the statement which he has made available to the Legation would be published as further evidence of the US Government’s charge that the Bulgarian Government has flagrantly disregarded its treaty obligations to respect human rights.

The second course of action involves a probably hopeless attempt to gain our point by further negotiation. If Minister Heath, after his return from London, is able to see Kolarov, he could renew the request for an exit permit for Shipkov, which is not likely to be granted. He could then ask for written assurances that Shipkov would not be molested further. It is not probable that the Bulgarian Government would give such assurances. If it did not, we should still have to decide whether to adopt alternatives (1) or (3) above. If it did and then violated them—and there is good reason to believe that this would happen, as it did in the case of Shipkov’s brother who worked for the British Legation in Sofia—we would have an additional broken promise and to add to our public statement of Bulgarian misdeeds. On the other hand we would have failed to save Shipkov, and the Bulgarian Government would be encouraged in the belief that we would continue to put up with almost any restrictions and indignities in order to maintain official representation in Sofia.

In following this second course we would be playing out the string of negotiation to the end, in the hope that something might develop to make possible a solution that could be accepted by both sides. If the Bulgarians, knowing that we have the full story of what the Militia did to Shipkov, wished to let the matter die down and not ask the Legation to hand him over, it might be desirable to do nothing for a while. If nothing further developed, we would have at some point to decide whether to keep Shipkov in the Legation, openly giving him sanctuary, or tell him to return to his home with the consequent risk of death. In any case we probably cannot keep him hidden indefinitely (presumably his presence in the chancery attic is known only to a few American employees, as reported in Legtel 883, October 18 ¹).

The third course of action outlined above, although involving the risk of a rupture in diplomatic relations, would place the US Government on the offensive. It would present to the world clear and strong evidence of the Bulgarian Government’s cynical disregard for solemnly incurred treaty obligations with respect to human rights. At the same time it would serve as a means of ascertaining whether the Kremlin desires to have Bulgaria, and possibly the other satellite nations, break relations with the US. A decision to force the issue by publicizing the Shipkov case and refusing to give up Shipkov himself would

¹Not printed.
involve jumping the gun on the study now being made under S/P guidance with the purpose of formulating a considered policy on the entire question of maintaining diplomatic missions in Soviet satellite countries. If we are to take this action we should do so promptly, without awaiting completion of the study, since if the Bulgarians act first—and they may act at any time—we shall have lost much of the advantage to be gained by this course. It must be recognized, of course, that if a break in relations results, the existing sources of intelligence information within Bulgaria, even though they are becoming noticeably more restricted, would be completely cut off. This is a matter of concern to the National Military Establishment. However, even without a break in relations, it is believed that serious consideration must be given at this time to developing sources other than the official personnel stationed in Sofia for the collection of information on Bulgaria.

This course would involve giving asylum to a Bulgarian citizen who probably would be charged with serious crimes. As L/P’s memorandum points out, there is no justification in international law for doing so, although it might be possible to claim diplomatic immunity for Shipkov as an employee of the US Legation. This would be a difficult position to maintain. Should we decide not to give up Shipkov, probably our justification should be based on political grounds and the extraordinary situation of our Legation in Bulgaria where the practices of the Government and its attitude toward foreign diplomatic missions do not conform to the standards of normal diplomatic relations and international comity.

CONCLUSIONS

There is increasing evidence that the Bulgarian Government intends to utilize every means available to intimidate and to isolate completely the US Legation and its personnel, so long as this Government indicates its unwillingness to adopt strong measures of retaliation. To date, it has brought about the death of three US local employees and it has arrested and intimidated many others. The possibility of a fourth employee being killed is imminent.

In an effort to save the life of Shipkov, the Legation has informed the Bulgarian Government that the US Government would make public the facts in its possession surrounding the death of Seculov and the arrest and intimidation of Shipkov if the latter were not permitted to leave Bulgaria. If, following the refusal of the Bulgarian Government to accede to this request, the Department does not make public the information available to it, the Bulgarian Government will naturally conclude that we are willing to accept any amount of

* Regarding the role of the Policy Planning Staff in the review of policy with respect to staffing problems in the missions in Eastern Europe, see the editorial note, p. 26.

* In the source text the phrase “most likely in Heath’s absence” is crossed out.
intimidation and restrictions in order to maintain a Legation in Bulgaria.

While there are ample reasons for not pushing ahead with alternative (3) above if it is considered desirable to maintain our Legation in Sofia at all costs, or in any case pending a policy decision on that point as a result of the S/P study, there are on the other side obvious political reasons justifying an offensive course of action. It should enhance the prestige of the US, whereas a passive course of action could result in considerable damage to the position of the US and its reputation for good faith in the eyes of the Bulgarian people. When the full story became known, a passive attitude might well be difficult to defend before Congress and the US public, which is not likely to favor the continuance of diplomatic relations if it means sacrificing one by one the lives of all the local employees and accepting further indignities on the part of a Communist government. Course (3) above should force the Bulgarians (and the Russians) to show their cards as to whether or not they wish to proceed to a break in US-Bulgarian relations, putting the burden on them to take that step or to give our Legation better treatment. Moreover, by taking the risk of a break with Bulgaria we might indirectly bring about better treatment of our missions in other satellite states.

124.74/11-1049: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria

RESTRICTED PRIORITY WASHINGTON, November 10, 1949—7 p. m.

382. Re ur 932 Nov 9.1 Subj ur concurrence Dept feels time appropriate inform FonOff along fol lines orally or by note, whichever method you consider most appropriate: 2

1) BulGovt has demonstrated conclusively through public and official actions desire restrict relations between US and Bulg to narrowest concept conceivable sufficient only maintain official channel communications between respective govt.

1 Not printed; it reported that Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov had renewed the Bulgarian demand for a reduction of the personnel in the Legation (123 Colligan, William J.).

2 In his telegram 947, November 15, from Sofia, not printed, Minister Heath reported that he had expressed orally to Bulgarian Assistant Foreign Minister the observations contained in the six numbered paragraphs presented here. Heath reported as follows on Kamenov’s reactions:

“Kamenov demurred rather violently at the phrase ‘Bulgarian Government’s hostile attitude toward Legation’ and also insisted that it is not desire of Bulgarian Government to restrict relations between countries and Legation to narrowest concept conceivable. He asserted that Bulgarian Government, on contrary, was anxious to develop cultural and commercial relations and he added smilingly and surprisingly, with an improved relationship between two countries ‘Bulgaria would welcome development of military relations’. He would not explain what he meant by latter phrase.” (124.74/11-1549)

452-526-77——24
2) Since BulGovt desires such severely restricted relationship rather than one aimed promotion increasingly broader understanding between Bulg and Amer people US Govt has desired for some time reduce Amer staff Leg to size conforming more realistically to restricted pattern.

3) US Govt unable implement planned reduction Leg staff due BulGovts hostile attitude toward Leg and its personnel and unprecedented policy Bulg FonOff refusing act over extended period time upon visa applications Amer personnel assigned Leg. Due excessive admin burden resulting directly actions BulGovt and owing uncertainty issuance Bulg visas Amer personnel Dept has had great difficulty maintaining balanced Leg staff. BulGovt not justified in complaints about situation resulting largely from own unwarranted actions.

4) As soon as BulGovt acts upon pending visa applications (Dept assumes you will not require all presently assigned personnel and will wish indicate FonOff certain of pending requests will be withdrawn) and Leg is assured its normal operations will not be hampered and future visa applications for replacement personnel will be processed promptly, US Govt will proceed implement plans for smaller staff.

5) Point out FonOff shld appreciate, no matter how large or small staff may be in order maintain proper balance, essential replacement personnel receive visas without undue delay, and reiterate Leg note 491 Oct 13 8 US Govt position that specific number personnel assigned any given time matter for determination US rather than BulGovt.

6) In conclusion emphasize US Govt looks forward time when BulGovt will deem advantageous adopt broader concept basic purposes maintaining friendly relations with US.

Subj receipt ur comments and recommendations upon staffing pattern study discussed London Conf, 4 Depts present thinking wld indicate ultimate size ur staff will be somewhere between figures 24 and 30. While Dept considers inadvisable make commitment BulGovt re specific number personnel deemed necessary, you might let BulGovt know informally that total will be under 33.

WEBB

874.00B/11-1649 : Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State 1

TOP SECRET

SOFIA, November 16, 1949—6 p. m.

954. The ceaseless purges which have been taking place in all ranks of Bulgarian Communist Party since fall of Traicho Kostov, 2 and

1 The substance of this telegram was contained in a circular telegram of November 18 to various missions in Europe (800.00 Summaries/11-1849).

2 Regarding the fall of Kostov, see footnote 2 to the Department of State Policy Statement on Bulgaria, July 1, p. 333. During September and October 1949 the Legation in Sofia reported frequently on the dismissal or disappearance of an increasing number of high Communist officials.
clear intimations in speeches by Chervenkov, Poptomov and other currently powerful officials that these purges will continue, has created in entire Communist structure a state not too far removed from panic. Never entirely secure in their positions or their lives, Bulgarian Communist officials in all echelons are now filled with unprecedented anxiety, fear and distrust of each other.

Though there is little doubt in my mind that a majority of Bulgarian Communists would welcome greater degree of independence from Kremlin, that many may sympathize with Traicho Kostov and have a sneaking admiration for Tito, I do not believe that even the basis of a plot has been organized. Elements of the plot, however, were there and Soviets have shrewdly taken precautionary measures to frustrate their coordination into an organized threat. But arrest of potential deviationist leaders will not, I believe, eradicate the swell of Communist resentment against Kremlin as long as Tito holds out and life here continues to be hard and insecure partly as a result of Soviet exploitation and domination. That the present wave of intra-party terrorism has by no means run its course is indicated not only by words of leaders, but by strain of violence in Bulgarian character, and in Bulgarian Communist Party in particular, which, following September 9, 1944 a annihilated thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands of its "enemies" in comparison with smaller numbers disposed of by Communist parties in other satellite states. And many of those threatened by purging now were, after September 9, in a position to know only too well how thorough going a Bulgarian Communist purge can be.

Under more favorable circumstances, this feeling of personal insecurity and fear, combined with resentment of Kremlin domination, might be developed into a Titoist rebellion. Unfortunately, such a development is not likely for two reasons: One, that Tito is presently not yet in a position to concentrate on an organization to bring about such a rebellion, and two, the general belief here that Russian troops would immediately occupy country in event of a coup.

This situation, however, by no means precludes opportunities for exploiting the schism, adding to confusion and strain of government by playing on individual fears, and further shaking the not too steady structure of party. . . .

Encouragement of a Titoist development in Bulgarian Communist Party, though of great importance and necessity, can, however, in nowise replace or overshadow the most necessary and urgent task of all—the too long deferred erection of a carefully selected anti-Communist passive resistance network within Bulgaria through aid and counsel to refugee resistance organizations abroad.

Sent Department, repeated Belgrade 64.

Heath
Sofia, November 29, 1949.

My Dear Mr. Perkins: The London meeting under your good chairmanship, was a valuable and stimulating gathering. I have just received the conclusions and recommendations of the conference and with one important and a couple of minor exceptions, concur in them.

My principal exception is to the statement towards the end of page 4 that the group ‘unanimously endorsed’ the S/P top secret paper of August 29 and its conclusions which include the assertion ‘We should, as the only practical immediate expedient, seek to achieve this objective through fostering Communist heresy among the satellite states, encouraging the emergence of non-Stalinist regimes as temporary administrations, even though they be Communist in nature.’

At the meeting I took exception to this particular conclusion as phrased, in so far as Bulgaria is concerned. . . .

I will not in this letter detail my ideas regarding political resistance in Bulgaria but would refer to your letter to me of September 17 last in which you enclosed a photo-copy of an article by Julian Amery entitled ‘Of Resistance’. The concluding paragraph of that article has, I feel, great application to Bulgaria. It reads: ‘The vital need is to build up a powerful Resistance network behind the Iron Curtain and in the threatened areas. Exactly how that network should be used would be, of course, a matter of high policy. But in face of the challenge of the Russian ‘cold war’ we can only postpone its creation at our peril.’

As regards the conclusions on East-West trade, I would suggest that, as far as Bulgaria is concerned, a third effect of trade restrictions has been to lower the quality of output and the future potential of Bulgarian industry. Not only do economic restrictions increase economic strain between Moscow and the satellites, but they contribute to continued economic distress within the satellites, thus providing a fertile field for the development of malcontents who, it may be hoped, will, in their disillusionment over the glories of Communism, turn to the West in their search for a way out.

The recommendations of the conference on East-West trade are logical and generally applicable to the satellite area. As I said in the meeting, however, they are not necessarily applicable to Bulgaria. For

1 The reference here is to Policy Planning Staff Paper No. 59, “United States Policy Toward the Soviet Satellite States in Eastern Europe”, not printed. For the final version of this paper as subsequently amended by the National Security Council and approved by the President, see NSC 58/2, December 8, 1949, p. 42.

*Not printed.*
example, whereas it may be "impossible of attainment and also undesirable to endeavor to cut off trade between the East and the West in Europe," this does not mean that it might not be quite practicable to do so in the single case of Bulgaria. The Legation has collected figures which indicate that, with the possible exception of western Germany, there is no western European nation appreciably dependent on Bulgaria for imports not freely obtainable elsewhere, whereas Bulgaria is in many instances markedly dependent on its imports from the West. Despite restrictions, Bulgarian trade with the West still amounts to several million dollars annually, and generally in goods most important, if not vital, to the Bulgarian economy. We could, without advertisement, stop or greatly reduce Bulgarian imports of necessitous goods from the West. By doing so, we could without much loss to western states seriously damage the Bulgarian economy, work toward the various objectives discussed above, and, in addition, use Bulgaria as an excellent example for the study of the effect of complete curtailment of trade. I outlined this suggestion at the conference and in my despatch No. 248 of October 14.\footnote{The despatch under reference here is not printed. For documentation on United States policy with respect to trade with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, see pp. 61 ff.}

I would also comment on recommendation No. 3 on page 7 that the Voice of America should "avoid . . . too fervent and high flown moral eulogies on the boons and benefits of democracy." I fail to recall that this point was made at the conference. I don't agree with it. I think the comparative record of the democracies justifies the Voice in "plugging" its boons and benefits even more fervently than it is now doing.

With personal regards and best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

DONALD R. HEATH

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Editorial Note

On November 30 the Bulgarian press published the text of the indictment against former Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo member Traicho Kostov and nine others accused of antistate activities, treason, espionage, and sabotage. The indictment included a passage which purported to describe a meeting in late 1947 between Kostov and Minister Heath suggesting Kostov's role, through Heath, in coordinated American-Yugoslav action toward Bulgaria. In his telegram 992, November 30, from Sofia, not printed, Heath reported on the indictment and its reference to his alleged meeting with Kostov. Heath stated that he intended to seek an immediate interview with Foreign Minister Poptomov to deny the allegation and protest its publication. Heath also intended to demand
that the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry print a denial of the accusation. The Minister planned to issue his own denial to local correspondents and news agencies. Heath commented as follows regarding the alleged conversation with Kostov:

"The story is utterly impossible; I have never had any interview of any kind with Traicho Kostov and in fact have never exchanged a single word, oral or written, with him. I have never been in the building of the Council of Ministers [where the conversation was alleged to have taken place], except to call and sign the book for official holidays or birthdays, or to attend official receptions. Anything remotely resembling the statements attributed to me never were made, nor indeed could have been made by me or any member of the Legation to anyone." (874.00/11-3049)

Telegram 405, December 1, to Sofia, not printed, approved Heath’s approach to the Foreign Ministry and stated that the Department had that day issued to the press a brief statement denouncing the absurdity of the references to Heath in the Kostov indictment. For the text of the Department’s statement, see Department of State Bulletin, December 12, 1949, page 911.

Copies of the text of the indictment of Kostov were transmitted to the Department of State as enclosures to despatch 299, December 2, from Sofia, not printed (874.00/12-249). The text of the indictment is included in The Trial of Traicho Kostov and His Group, apparently prepared by the Press Department of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry (Sofia: 1949), pages 5-57.

The trial of Traicho Kostov and his nine codefendants was held in Sofia from December 7 to December 14. The dramatic highlight of the trial was Kostov’s denial of his guilt of espionage on behalf of the British or his participation in a Yugoslav-sponsored antigovernment conspiracy. In the course of the trial, defendant Tsonyu Tsonchev implicated Minister Heath in alleged espionage activities. The court found all the defendants guilty of the charges against them. Kostov was sentenced to death, and the other defendants were sentenced to imprisonment for various periods. Kostov was executed on December 16. The texts of the testimony, the speeches of the prosecution and the defense, the verdict, and certain additional materials appear in the volume The Trial of Traicho Kostov and His Group cited earlier. The trial was reported upon in the world press. The extensive reportage on the trial by the Legation in Sofia is included in file 874.00. A detailed account and analysis of the trial was transmitted to the Department of State as enclosures to despatches 317 and 319, December 23 and 30, respectively, from Sofia, neither printed (874.00/12-2349 and 874.00/12-3049). For a concise and useful account of the Kostov trial, its antecedents, and aftermath, see Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Time (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1956), pages 384-389.
CONFIDENTIAL

SOFIA, December 3, 1949—5 p.m.

1011. Reference Legtel 1009 December 2\(^1\) and Deptel 405 December 1.\(^2\) Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov finally saw me this afternoon. Contrary to his usual friendly manner, he was extremely ill at ease. While friendly enough during our talk, when I rose to go he bade me farewell extremely stiffly and unsmilingly; evidently afraid his secretary might see or overhear him.

I made without change observations contained in my aide-mémoire, text of which was sent in my telegram 1009 December 2. I then asked whether I should send denial which I desired to have published by local press to him direct. He said it should go direct to press section of Foreign Office and that he would discuss with Foreign Minister whether or not Foreign Office would use its good offices to secure its publication in press. I remarked it was obviously Foreign Office’s duty in case where international relations are injured by a false story to use its offices to have such stories corrected. He made no reply.

He went on to say that this was merely a statement in the indictment and that if false—I interrupted to say there could be no doubt in his mind but that it was false—that it would be corrected during trial. I said I could not be as optimistic as he; in the pastor’s trial obviously false testimony was allowed to remain as in article in indictment and sentence. As a minor example a former member of Legation was accused in pastor’s trial of having a conversation with one of defendants, although alleged conversation took place six months prior to former’s actual arrival in Bulgaria.

Kamenov said everyone in Foreign Office had been greatly surprised re story in paper (obviously to convey too that Foreign Office was not consulted re indictment, which is probably true). He then said doubtfully that it might be possible Traicho Kostov had mistaken the identity of his caller. I said that publication of this patently false

\(^1\)Not printed. It reported that Minister Heath had been unable to secure an interview with Bulgarian Foreign Minister Poptomov and was seeking instead to meet with Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov. Heath had prepared an aide-mémoire which he intended to leave with Kamenov. It protested the passage in the Kostov indictment (see the editorial note, supra) alleging a conversation with Heath in 1947, and it asked the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry to arrange for the publication of Heath’s denial of the allegation. The aide-mémoire concluded with the following language previously authorized in telegram 405, December 1, to Sofia, not printed:

“...I am instructed to say that my government takes serious view of Bulgarian Government’s use of unwarranted and false statements concerning US official representatives in Sofia and that in these circumstances US Government cannot be expected to place faith in Bulgarian Government intentions with respect to maintenance of normal and friendly relations between two countries.” (874.00/12-249)

\(^2\)Not printed, but see the preceding footnote.
story had naturally caused me to wonder whether trial would not present some other surprises for members of Legation and it had even occasioned speculation as to attitude of Bulgarian Government toward my continued representation here. In response to last he said rather stiffly that this question “has not yet arisen.” He attempted to soften the obvious implication of this statement by saying that people at Foreign Office had appreciated me and he felt that I had been well received there. Interview ended at this point.

I do not believe Foreign Office has intention or power to cause local press to print my denial of story. It is possible Kostov “concession” of alleged talks with me may be soft-pedaled in trial but I doubt it. During trial there may well be other false testimony directed against me and Legation and I must regard it as likely that Bulgarian Government will request my recall following trial.

I am sending denial to press section of Foreign Office with request it be printed in all Bulgarian newspapers and am issuing similar statement to local correspondents (all Bulgarians) of American papers and press agencies.

Heath

123 Health, Donald R.: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, December 7, 1949—7 p. m.

414. Dept agrees that parallel between Kostov and Rajk trials is such that possibility cannot be excluded that Bulg Govt will declare you persona non grata subsequent to Kostov conviction. The right of any govt to declare reps of another govt persona non grata is well established in international law and we do not wish to question that right. In view, however, of action Bulg Govt in publicizing charges against you contained in Kostov indictment which it knows to be patently false, we are giving serious consideration to interrupting dipl relations with Bulg Govt rather than allow further deterioration in the low standard by which Bulg Govt is guided in conduct of its relations with us, particularly if request for your recall were based upon statements attributed to Kostov. (We assume that since your conversation with Kostov was alleged to have taken place in his office, Bulg Govt has the means available to establish falsity of his statement.) By interrupting relations we mean either withdrawal our entire mission and demand for withdrawal of entire Bulg mission in Wash or reducing both to a single officer and clerk.

Our dilemma is that to await outcome of trial and a demand of your recall wld risk confusing issue with undoubted right of Bulg Govt to demand your recall without giving any reason. On other hand, in-
intentions of Bulg Govt may be merely propaganda and trial itself may fail to substantiate ur involvement to a degree sufficient to furnish a basis for requesting ur recall. We do not ourselves wish to precipitate break in relations, but consider it necessary to endeavor to make clear to Bulg Govt, without making demands which they clearly cannot accept, seriousness with which we view their actions and probable US reaction if they push Kostov affair to point of demanding ur recall.

We are therefore considering authorizing you to present formal note to FonOff making fol points on behalf US Govt:

1. US Govt shocked at irresponsibility of Bulg Govt in publishing indictment containing allegations re US Chief of Mission which it knew to be false, or could easily have checked since visit of US Min to Acting PriMin at his office was certainly be matter of record.

2. This action coming on top of the difficulties which Bulg Govt has placed in the way of operations of the AmLeg in Sofia has caused US Govt to take a most serious view of the recent actions of Bulg Govt.

3. Since Bulg Govt is clearly in a position to establish the falsity of the charges made against US rep, its failure to do so can only be interpreted by US Govt as final indication that Bulg Govt does not sincerely desire maintenance of normal relations between Bulg and US in accordance with internat'l practice and comity.

Dept believes if note presented to BulGovt it shld be followed up by strong oral statement to FonMin.

1. Re-emphasize that US meant what it said in final point of aforementioned note, namely that BulGovt's conduct has forced US to question value of maintaining dipl relations under existing conditions.

2. Recall that crude attempt to implicate US Min in Kostov affair is serious as it is, is not isolated disturbing incident in US-Bulg relations but culmination of long series of acts and policies which have made it virtually impossible for US to maintain dipl mission in Sofia.

3. State that unprincipled action involving US and US Min in supposed plot with Kostov, fiction from beginning to end as BulGovt well knows, goes beyond all bounds and represents last straw in accumulation of unfriendly acts; US Govt has accordingly instructed you to inform BulGovt that US cannot allow matters develop further without telling BulGovt where US stands.

4. Inform FonMin that if the present attitude of BulGovt toward the conduct of relations with US Govt is maintained, US will recall you and ur staff and demand withdrawal of Bul Reps in Wash.

5. Recall that in presenting letters of credence to Kolarov in 1947 you mentioned US desire for friendly relations with BulGovt and ur desire foster friendly relations between Amer and Bulg peoples; this US and its reps in Sofia have constantly endeavored to do despite obstacles put in way by BulGovt, and latter bears full responsibility for lamentable state to which relations between two countries have been reduced.

In reaching a decision on this question Dept believes fol considerations are relevant. Whether approach outlined above results in Bulg
reversal of attitude or leads to interruption in relations or withdrawal of whole Leg staff except possibly one officer in caretaker status, for advantages might ensue:

1. Kremlin and other Satellite Govts wld recognize there is limit to restrictions and indignities to which US Govt willing submit. As consequence our Missions in other satellite countries may receive better treatment at least temporarily.

2. Vigorous US reaction to provocation by Bulg may have deterrent effect in Sov calculations re Yugo and cause them to reassess our intentions supporting Yugo against Sov pressures and aggression.

3. We might have more certain indication of how far Sovs wish to push us in entire satellite area.

Bulgaria is least valuable guinea pig in which US can afford sacrifice official representation since we are now getting very little intelligence from there and it is least difficult to cover for intelligence purposes from periphery.

On negative side Dept recognizes possibility this may set precedent for forcing eventual withdrawal US Missions from all Eastern European countries. On balance, however, Dept inclined feel Moscow not yet ready take responsibility for such a move.

A complete break in relations wld doubtless come as a shock to Amer public, wld necessitate our requesting another Govt to undertake the responsibility of representing US in Bulg, and wld have serious consequences for our alien staff in Sofia. On the other hand, restricting our activity virtually to zero without a dip break might not be effective with Bulg or other Satellite Govts.

Before sending you instrs Dept desires ur comments and those of other Missions to which this tel rptd on proposal and points suggested for inclusion. (Sent Sofia, rptd Moscow, Warsaw, Praha, Belgrade, Budapest, Bucharest.)

View urgency time factor ur inmm comments requested.¹

¹This message evoked a variety of responses from the missions in Eastern Europe. The Embassies in Belgrade and Warsaw endorsed the procedure set forth here (telegram 1631, December 10, from Warsaw; 123 Heath, Donald R. and telegram 1270, December 10, from Belgrade: 874.00/12-1049). The Legation in Romania had doubts both as to the method and the timing of the procedure set forth here. The Legation suggested that current measures be confined to an oral approach in order to allow Bulgaria to have an opportunity to reconsider its attitude and to allow the United States to preserve its freedom of action (telegram 824, December 11, from Bucharest: 124.74/12-1149). The Embassy in Czechoslovakia recommended that some American initiative was urgently required in order to reverse the quickening process of creeping paralysis in United States diplomatic activity in all the Eastern European countries (telegram 1857, December 8, from Praha: 874.00/12-849). The Legation in Hungary opposed any empty gesture and believed that only a complete break in relations with Bulgaria would suffice. The Legation doubted that any American action would cause the Hungarian Government to alter its current attitude (874.00/12-849). See also telegram 3063, December 9, from Moscow, infra, and telegram 1044, December 9, from Sofia, p. 371.
The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET  PRIORITY

Moscow, December 9, 1949—3 p. m.

3063. I cannot disassociate situation in Bulgaria in regard to Kostov trial, with our Minister implicated by name in the indictment, from relationship with Kremlin policy nor fail to see parallel with situation precipitated in Budapest earlier this year; and the probabilities all point to similar results insofar as our mission chief is concerned. We feel it must be accepted as fact that Politburo is giving full support to Bulgarians and has aided and counseled the various steps taken to date against our mission at Sofia. Soviet orbit system is now committed to stand publicly taken. Therefore we conclude it is too late to expect any recantation or that Heath will be exonerated by judicial processes currently in vogue. It appears inevitable our Minister will be declared persona non grata at some stage and as Department points out, though not necessarily for reasons other than exercise of an established right, most probably for propaganda purposes in this instance, some slanderous charge would be levelled.

We are thus faced with several problems stemming from this particular incident. The immediate and short-range question is how to counter what is public affront to our Minister and an aspersion on our diplomatic deportment in Bulgaria. Any counteraction should, if possible, be speedy and should be sharp rejoinder on about same scale of importance as blow we anticipate. Based solely on special circumstances existing in Sofia we would favor seizing initiative and demanding immediate recall of Bulgarian Minister Washington on persona non grata basis with derogatory remarks about his conduct, attitude or otherwise as may seem suitable but given wide publicity and sustained public interest aiming remarks at whole area of satellite governments' comportment against foreign diplomatic missions in general as well as our own in particular. We feel by this [thus] isolating issue to the persons of the two Ministers it will narrow the field of riposte and by acting first in ejecting Bulgaria from Washington we forestall Soviet attempts to force our hand on larger issues.

We assume reaction would be request removal Heath. However should Bulgarians (read Soviets) counter by further step towards breach relations or make breach themselves, as is of course possible, we think we would have accomplished objective of putting onus on them as desired and would also incidentally have made resumption relations later date, should such resumption become advisable, considerably easier.

We estimate Politburo would welcome our decision to sever diplomatic relations with Bulgaria at this time as evidence guilt, plotting
for war, subversive activities and whole gamut hostile propaganda charges. We note with care all you say concerning effect of breaking off diplomatic relations with that nation and some are very cogent. Nevertheless we ask who gains most on balance and on long-term (Soviet, ourselves) from such action and it seems to us here the edge is in favor of the Politburo. We cite precedent for inducing similar withdrawal in Rumania or Hungary; effect in UN regarding election members our choice such as Italy; repercussions in relation Greek problem and UNCSOB membership; loss of listening post and comparison our situation in Albania. Further we view such action as more negative than positive in broadest sense noting that once our mission is withdrawn its resumption would be awkward and probably delayed a long time. Finally we consider that if the Politburo would appear to gain from such an act on our part that is probably the best reason for not doing it.

We are not impressed by thought such action would reinforce Tito or give pause to Kremlin in their policy against him. It seems to us there are better and more direct means that could be employed in that matter.

However in the event other considerations prevail and decision is taken to sever relations we are strongly of opinion such rupture should be complete and all-embracing. We are decidedly against half-way measures. That the Kremlin would be initially surprised by our decision we do not doubt but it nevertheless seems on balance they would be glad to have us out of Bulgaria and would make great propaganda from the event.

In line above thinking we would recommend note and accompanying oral statement envisaged Deptel 895, December 7¹ not be delivered but substance points 1, 2 of note and paragraph 2 (omitting last phrase) and 3 (omitting phrase after US Government, etc.) of oral statement be emphasized in public announcement of request for recall Bulgarian Minister Washington. Seems to us presentation note and oral statement would give impression preliminary skirmishing and in carrying overtone hesitancy would tend detract from determination initiative desired.

Any event re point 5 proposed statement suggest Department check Heath’s reported reference 1947 desire friendly relations “with Bulgarian Government”. Recollection here is that in establishing relations emphasis at least was placed notably in public announcement action on friendly relations “between American and Bulgarian peoples” plus practical benefits maintenance official representation Bulgaria.

Sent Department 3063; Department pass Sofia 57, Praha 61, Warsaw 115, Belgrade 163, Bucharest 43, Budapest 75.  

Kirk

¹ Same as telegram 414, December 7, to Sofia, supra.
The Minister in Bulgaria (Heath) to the Secretary of State

TOP SECRET

SOFIA, December 9, 1949—11 p. m.

1044. Deptel 414, December 7.1 I definitely concur that note and supplementary oral representations proposed in Department’s ref tel should be delivered least possible delay. I suggest however, that they be delivered simultaneously both in Washington and Sofia. To the oral representations might be added the attacks on me in a newspaper article written by Acting Political Department Director of Foreign Office (Legtel 1035, December 9 *) and Foreign Office press section communiqué (Legtel 1040, December 9 *) flatly characterizing Colonel Yatsevitch and myself as “spies”.

It is probable that Foreign Minister himself will not receive me. He told Italian Minister yesterday at function for departing Hungarian Minister that he would be unable to see anyone until after December 18 as he had to return to his home district (Pirin Macedonia) to work for the success of the “elections”.

While I am sceptical that note and representations will have any deterrent effect we must make the try. Otherwise there is little doubt that immediately after close of Kostov trial (probably middle of next week) Foreign Office will ask my recall.

Of course if our representations fail to deter the Soviet rulers of Bulgaria we must promptly break relations. My ideas as to timing and manner of such a step will be given in an immediately following telegram. I favor such a step provided it is followed up at once by effective action which should include: (1) rapid completion of our case against Bulgarian treaty violation with the idea of getting a General Assembly finding that the present Bulgarian regime is illegal and its violations of peace treaty and other actions present threat to peace in this area; 4 (2) intensification of economic restrictions preferably involving some preclusive buying from European suppliers of Bulgaria 5 and, (3) legitimate and effective assistance to a democratic refugee organization if only for the intelligence that such an organization properly guided could obtain from its contacts through the

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1 Ante, p. 866.
2 Not printed. It reported that the article under reference here, written by Todor Guenov and appearing in the newspaper Otchevten Front (the organ of the Communist-dominated Fatherland Front), accused the American and British Governments of engaging in espionage and subversive activity through the official representatives (123 Heath, Donald R.).
3 Not printed.
4 For documentation on the efforts of the United States to assure fulfillment of the human rights articles of the Bulgarian Peace Treaty, see pp. 228 ff.
5 For documentation on the United States policy with respect to trade with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, see pp. 61 ff.
Curtain. The mere severance of relations not vigorously followed up would not only be regarded with cynical amusement by Soviets even if we persuaded other western powers to follow suit but would be severe blow to Bulgaria and other peoples.

But if on contrary we follow with consistently positive action it will bring stiffening of passive resistance and unsettling of Soviet plan and confidence.

Sent Department 1044, repeated Warsaw 14, Praha 27, Belgrade 74, Budapest 37, Bucharest 29, Department pass to Moscow 44.

HEATHE

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* In his telegram 1046, December 10, from Sofia, not printed, Minister Heath recommended certain steps that might be taken if the Bulgarian Government demanded his recall. Initially, he would be instructed to return to Washington for consultation. If after several weeks the Bulgarian Government gave no evidence of correcting its attitude, a formal note would be sent announcing the breaking of relations and the reasons therefore. At the same time the United States would announce its intention of raising in the United Nations the question of the legality of the Bulgarian regime (123 Heath, Donald R.). In his telegram 1047, December 10, from Sofia, not printed, Heath attempted further to clarify his viewpoint. He felt that if the Bulgarian Government did not request his recall following the Kostov trial, the United States ought not immediately to take the initiative in severing relations. The Bulgarian propaganda machine would exploit such an initiative as an admission of guilt. The United States should be prepared, however, to proceed to the breaking of relations, since it was certain that violations of the peace treaty would continue cumulatively to increase as would the campaign of hatred against the Western countries (123 Heath, Donald R.).

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Secretary's Memoranda, Lot 53D444

Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

[WASHINGTON,] December 12, 1949.

I telephoned the President¹ today on another matter and he brought up the subject of our telegram to him about Ambassador Heath in Bulgaria.² The President said that he thought that the procedure

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¹ The President was vacationing at Key West, Florida.
² At his daily meeting on the morning of December 12 with his principal advisers, the Secretary of State heard a presentation by Assistant Secretary of State Perkins of the question of relations with Bulgaria. Perkins recommended that relations with Bulgaria be broken if the situation continued its current course. Perkins proposed the text of the telegram to be sent to President Truman on the Bulgarian situation. The telegram outlined the background of the current situation and the course of action described in telegram 426, December 12, to Sofia (p. 375). The Secretary was informed that the telegram constituted the first occasion that the President was apprised of the Bulgarian situation. After considerable discussion, the telegram to the President was approved. The Secretary asked that the telegram be sent to the President immediately, and that arrangements be made for him (the Secretary) to speak to the President early that afternoon (Secretary's Daily Meetings, Lot 53D669).
outlined in the telegram was the correct one; that he could see no other procedure to follow. I reiterated that if our policy worked out (as we hoped it would) we would leave the Ambassador there.

The President and I agreed that, while we thought it important to react strongly to any campaign in the satellite countries to humiliate us, we should not get in the position of stating that the Bulgarian case is a precedent and that we will recall our ambassadors from other countries under similar circumstances, but that we should be able to take what we think is the right course in each country.

D[ean] A[cheson]

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711.74/9-1249

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(WeBB)\textsuperscript{1}

RESTRICTED

[WASHINGTON,] December 12, 1949.

Participants: The Under Secretary, Mr. Webb
Dr. Peter Voutov, Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim of Bulgaria
Mr. Campbell, EE

Dr. Voutov called on me at 5:30 today at the Department's request. I told him that I wished to talk about the present deplorable situation in relations between Bulgaria and the United States brought about by the conduct of the Bulgarian Government, particularly the attempt to involve the American Minister, Mr. Heath, in the present trial now in progress in Sofia. In my brief remarks to him I made the following points:

1. Mr. Heath on December 3 made a statement to the Assistant Foreign Minister of Bulgaria protesting against the inclusion in the published official indictment of Kostov and others of manifestly and demonstrably false statements concerning alleged conversations between Heath and Kostov.\textsuperscript{2} Mr. Heath made clear that the Bulgarian Government was in a position to establish the falsity of these allegations, since no such conversation ever took place, and requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to use its good offices to have his denial published in the Bulgarian press. Mr. Heath stated further, on instructions of his government, that the United States took a serious view of the Bulgarian Government's use of unwarranted and false statements concerning US representatives in Bulgaria and that in these circumstances the United States Government could not be expected to place

\textsuperscript{1}The substance of this conversation was the subject of a statement issued to the press by the Department of State on December 12; for text, see Department of State Bulletin, December 26, 1949.

\textsuperscript{2}Regarding the conversation under reference here, see telegram 1011, December 3, from Sofia, p. 365.
faith in the Bulgarian Government's intentions with respect to the maintenance of normal and friendly relations between the two countries.

2. Heath's protest of December 3 was entirely justified, because the statements attributed to him were patent falsehoods which the Bulgarian Government could and had a duty to correct.

3. The purpose of Heath's statement was not merely to establish the truth concerning the allegations in question but also to impress upon the Bulgarian Government the seriousness with which the United States has viewed its recent actions culminating in the charges against the American Minister in Sofia and the Bulgarian Government's apparent intention to disregard international law and comity in conducting its relations with the United States.

4. The Bulgarian Government has ignored Minister Heath's request to publish his denial. Moreover, its course of action since his statement was made has served only to increase the concern with which the United States Government regards relations between the two countries. The Bulgarian press, which is under the control of the government, has continued its unwarranted attacks on the United States and on the American Minister. The official Otechesvten Front published on December 8 an article signed by a responsible official of the Bulgarian Foreign Office directly accusing the United States Government and its official representatives of engaging in espionage in Bulgaria.

5. The United States Government takes the most serious view of such deliberate actions which must inevitably affect relations between the two countries, already brought to a low state by the restrictions and indignities to which the American Legation in Sofia has been subjected for some time.

I requested Dr. Voutov to communicate urgently with his Government the substance of my remarks. He stated that he was not fully informed on everything that had happened recently in Sofia in connection with the trial and with the position of Minister Heath but that he had seen a good deal about it in the newspapers. He said that when Heath first arrived in Bulgaria two years ago the Bulgarian Government had hoped for normal and friendly relations with the United States and was well disposed toward Heath himself. In regard to the present situation of Mr. Heath in Sofia, particularly in connection with the Kostov trial, Dr. Voutov said that the Bulgarian Government of course had a reasonable basis for its course of conduct. He suggested that it might be better to wait until all the evidence was in and the trial was over before coming to any final conclusions. He said that he would, as I had requested, communicate immediately with his Government and that he would inform the Department in the event that his Government wished to reply through the Legation here. As the conversation came to an end I stressed to him once more the serious view which the Department took of the situation and stated that the US Government could not ignore deliberate and unwarranted actions.
which were in complete disregard of normal practices in the conduct of international relations.

JAMES E. WEBB

123 Heath, Donald R.: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Legation in Bulgaria

TOP SECRET   NIAC T   WASHINGTON, December 12, 1949—6 p. m.

426. Dept has decided upon fol course of action (reurtels 1046 and 1047 Dec 10 and 1044 Dec 9 1):

1) UnSecy will call in Bulg Chargé Mon Dec 12 and inform him Dept wishes him to realize and advise his govt ur remarks to Asst FonMin Dec 3 not meant merely as statement to set record straight and properly label as such the falsehoods contained in indictment, but also to impress on BulGovt serious concern with which US views recent Bulg actions and apparent intention totally disregard internat law and comity in conduct its relations with US. In this connection UnSecy will mention statements at trial and continued press attacks, specifically citing Guenov’s signed article in Otechestven Front Dec 8, as having served increase seriousness with which US Govt views situation. 2

2) Immed fol interview Dept will issue press release referring ur statement to FonOff, subsequent actions BulGovt including press attacks, and UnSecy’s statement to Bulg Chargé. 3

3) If BulGovt does not demand ur recall Dept concurs you shld remain until future attitude BulGovt toward you and Leg can be clearly determined.

4) If BulGovt demands ur recall Dept contemplates ordering you home for consultation publicly rejecting validity reasons which probably will be given as justifying demand. Question of full break in relations wld be dealt with after ur return. One of reasons for thus delaying final break is hope successfully execute proposal outlined ur 1038 Dec 9. 4 (Sent Sofia, rptd Moscow, Belgrade, Prague, Warsaw, Budapest and Bucharest.)

ACHESON

1 Summaries of telegrams 1046 and 1047 are included in footnote 6 to telegram 1044, December 9, from Sofia, p. 372.
2 See Under Secretary of State Webb’s memorandum of conversation, supra.
3 For the text of the press release under reference here, see Department of State Bulletin, December 26, 1949, p. 981.
4 The message under reference, which was not declassified for inclusion in this volume, reviewed possible measures to be taken in the Shipkov case. (124.743/12-949) Regarding the Shipkov case, see the memorandum prepared in the Office of Eastern European Affairs, October 20, p. 354.
The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Offices

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1947—8 a. m.

(Topsec) (Infotel). We have informed Min Heath in Sofia that shld break in dipl relations with Bulg develop we wld base our action on treatment accorded him and our mission generally but that we wld not by breaking relations call in question legality present govt of Bulg. While we wld continue and perhaps intensify our propaganda to expose purposes and methods present Bulg regime, we do not contemplate recognition of any govt in exile or other challenge of legality present regime nor any intensification econ restrictions or similar measures.

ACHESON

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1 This telegram was sent to the Embassies in Belgrade, London, Moscow, Paris, Praha, Rome, and Warsaw, and to the Legations in Bucharest and Budapest. It constitutes a close paraphrase of telegram 439, December 15, to Sofia, not printed (124.74/12-1549).

874.9111 RR/12-1949

The Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs to the American Legation in Bulgaria

[SOFIA, December 19, 1949.]

[AIDE-MÉMOIRE]

With reference to aide-mémoire submitted Assistant Foreign Min- ister Kamenov on December 3, by Minister Plenipotentiary USA Mr. Heath,2 as well as to the declarations of Assistant Secretary State USA Mr. Webb, made before Chargé of Legation of Peoples Republic Bulgaria Washington, Dr. Voutov,3 Ministry Foreign Affairs has honor to state following:

Ministry Foreign Affairs People’s Republic Bulgaria cannot share point of view of government of USA regarding inclusion in indictment of the part of the deposition of accused Traicho Kostov referring to his conversations with Minister Plenipotentiary of USA. Indictment is document originating with prosecutor which latter draws up according to rules and methods prescribed by the law on the validity of evidence and proofs brought out in examination. This activity on part of prosecutor falls within his own official competence and government cannot exert any influence in this connection.

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1 The text printed here was transmitted to the Department of State in telegram 1110, December 19, from Sofia, not printed. The translation was presumably prepared by the Legation.

2 The aide-mémoire under reference is not printed, but see footnote 1 to telegram 1011, December 3, from Sofia, p. 365.

3 See Under Secretary of State Webb’s memorandum of his conversation with Bulgarian Chargé Voutov, December 12, p. 373.
Regarding authenticity of the findings assembled in the investigation, as well as that which concerns the well-founded character of the complaints formulated by the prosecution, it is surely within province of the Bulgarian Court to declare itself and sovereignly to formulate its judgment. Any other opinion or consideration in this connection could pretend to be neither authoritative nor binding. Moreover, this is fundamental principle of law in all civilized countries.

Importance of trial and interest Bulgarian people are showing in it, an interest completely justified in this instance, since it is a case bearing on its (the people's) interests, confer completely on Bulgarian authorities, and on the press the right of making known all details of trial to widest range Bulgarian public opinion.

Regarding request of Mr. Heath addressed Ministry with view to obtaining thereby "friendly relations" so that his denial might be published in the Sofia papers, Ministry Foreign Affairs has evidenced its goodwill in requesting, through intermediary of directorate of press, Bulgarian papers to print the denial in question.⁴

Ministry Foreign Affairs of Peoples Republic Bulgaria is compelled, therefore, to point out that it considers the declarations of Assistant Secretary State Mr. Webb, made before Chargé d'Affaires of Peoples Republic Bulgaria in Washington, as well as tone of the official communication published by Department of State on this occasion, to be absolutely incompatible, in form in which they were made, with established international custom.⁵

⁴ Telegram 1103. December 18, from Sofia, not printed, transmitted the text of a brief note from the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry to the Legation stating that the Foreign Ministry had requested the Sofia newspapers to publish the text of the denial which Minister Heath had given the Foreign Ministry on December 3 (874.9111RR/12-1849). The denial appeared in Sofia newspapers on December 20.

⁵ In his telegram 1113, December 20, from Sofia, not printed, Minister Heath observed that this aide-mémoire was the nearest thing to an apology which the Legation had ever received from the current Bulgarian regime. Heath further observed that it appeared clear that the Soviet Union did not wish the United States to sever relations with Bulgaria "at this time and over this precise issue" (874.00/12-2049).

Editorial Note

Secretary of State Acheson called upon President Truman on December 20 and reviewed a number of foreign policy matters requiring the attention of the President. The Secretary described recent developments in relations with Bulgaria and Hungary. The President approved the course being followed and directed the Secretary to continue along those lines. (Memorandum by the Secretary of State, December 20, 1949: 711.74/12-2049)
CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, December 21, 1949—7 p. m.

464. Dept concurs with opinions contained 1st and 2nd paras urtel 1113 Dec 20. Explanation BulGovt’s action may be forthcoming at some later time. We do not think it advisable make effort, as suggested 3rd para ref tel obtain explanation from Kamenov in personal interview in next few days.

In reply request at press conference today to comment on next steps we might take with regard to Bulg, Secy stated there was nothing to add to UnSecy’s statement and BulGovt’s reply, both of which available to press. He indicated matter was closed by concluding with remark that BulGovt had complied with request to publish ur denial.

You will receive insts later re reply to FonOff aide-mémoire (urtel 1110 Dec 19). Dept does not at this stage contemplate continuing publicized exchanges with BulGovt which might upset present possibility obtaining basic objectives sought by our forceful reaction to BulG attacks on you and restrictions on Leg. BulGovt and US public now have clearer understanding US Govt position re provocations by satellite govt and better prepared for further strong reaction if necessary in future.

ACHESON

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1 Not printed, but see footnote 5 to the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry aide-mémoire of December 19, p. 377.
2 The aide-mémoire under reference is printed, p. 376; regarding telegram 1110, see footnote 1 thereto.

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CONFIDENTIAL

SOFIA, December 22, 1949—11 p. m.

1123. Reference Deptel 464, December 21. I agree thoroughly Department should discontinue publicizing further exchanges with Bulgarian Government on attempted involvement Legation in Kostov “conspiracy.” I believe also we should postpone reply to Foreign Office aide-mémoire on Under Secretary Webb’s statement until we have some inkling as to Foreign Office’s next move.

As re my suggested talk with Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov (Legtel 1113, December 20) it was not intention to ask an interview or open an interview on subject of recent actions and declarations of

1 Supra.
2 Not printed, but see footnote 5 to the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry aide-mémoire of December 19, p. 377.
Bulgarian Government against Legation and US Government. We
still have pending discussions about Legation staff and housing and
the proposed temporary arrangement for reciprocal deblocking of
funds. Recently new Diplomatic Service Bureau demanded surrender
apartment on which we hold valid lease and threatened to break in if
we refused. It would be on such minor problems that I would seek
an interview with Kamenov, leaving it up to him to make an opening
or lead discussion to Kostov case. I will, of course, make no attempt
to see him pending instructions from Department, but sooner or later
I must resume contact with Foreign Office.

Surprising publication of my denial following upon Department’s
forceful reaction Bulgarian’s attempt implicate me in Kostov case has
been enthusiastically received by such non-Communist Bulgarians as
we have been able to contact, and by practically all Western diplo-
mats here. They unhesitatingly interpret publication my statement as
defeat and retreat—if only temporary—of Communist regime here
and a—temporary—victory for US. Both diplomatic observers and
Bulgarians hold that however much government may assert contrary,
publication of my statement shows up essential falsity of case against
Kostov whose guilt was, we believe, accepted by few intelligent mem-
bers of BCP or by anti-Communist masses.

I doubt that effect of publication of my denial was nation-wide
since it appeared only in local dailies and briefly over radio. But it is
surprising that according to scant sampling we have been able to
accomplish that even man in street in Sofia is somewhat aware of its
significance.

Most of my Western colleagues share my belief that Bulgarian
Government’s action was due to Kremlin’s unwillingness to have US
break relations at this precise time and over this precise issue, and, I
might add, in this particular country. I believe that Kremlin accepted
loss of face for Communist regime here rather than do anything which
might operate to handicap eventual action against Tito for which
Bulgaria must be an important base. There are signs here that Kremlin
may use Bulgaria in an endeavor to agitate Macedonian issue.

There are no local signs as yet of preparation for overt military
attack on Yugoslavia but certainly Soviets must have considered such
action as a possible last resort in case other efforts against Tito failed.
They might well avoid any incident which might increase indignation
in US and conceivably bring about increased American and Western
support of Tito. I might add I am not so certain that Kremlin would
have ordered Bulgarian Government temporarily to back down from
its attacks on Legation if it felt certain that US would under no cir-
cumstances go any further—as indicated recent Deptel—than mere
severance of relations.
My colleagues here with exception of British Minister \(^3\) believe that for some little time Bulgarian Government will not only not ask for my recall but will do nothing for moment to make my position untenable. British Minister, however, believes that Foreign Office may refuse to receive me, and certain Bulgarians believe regime will involve me or members of Legation in some future trial or manufactured incident.

Intentions of Bulgarian Government may become manifest when I have occasion to ask for interview with Assistant Foreign Minister or Foreign Minister. If they refuse to grant or delay unconscionably in granting interview, their intentions would be clear.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Paul Mason.

\(^4\) Telegram 471, December 27, to Sofia, not printed, authorized Minister Heath to discuss with the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry problems such as those mentioned in this telegram (874.00/12-2249). In his telegram 1187, December 31, from Sofia, not printed, Heath reported that he had conferred with Assistant Foreign Minister Kamenov that afternoon. Heath “briefly and coolly” expressed his appreciation for the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry’s cooperation in arranging for the publication of his denial of allegations against him in the Kostov indictment. Heath also took the opportunity to deny allegations made against him in Tsonev’s testimony (see editorial note, p. 363) during the Kostov trial. Kamenov’s manner was courteous but reserved. Heath also reported that he had received a Christmas gift from Foreign Minister Poptomov (874.00/12-3149).