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## Tito – Harriman: History of a Special Friendship\*\*

### *Abstract*

In this text, the author discusses Yugoslav-American relations through the prism of the personal relationship between Josip Broz Tito and Averell Harriman. The mentioned indicates that the acquaintance of Tito and Harriman dates back to the time of the Second World War when they met in Moscow in 1944. In the decades that followed, it turned into friendly relations that lasted until the death of Josip Broz in 1980. Ever since the split between Yugoslavia and the USSR in 1948, Harriman became one of the most vocal supporters of Tito's Yugoslavia among members of the so-called Washington establishment. That is why the United States of America, when the Democratic Party was in power in this country, used to send him for talks with Tito when certain delicate bilateral or international problems had to be resolved, and the Yugoslavs often used Harriman as an intermediary for communication with the top of the administration in Washington. The paper is based on unpublished and published historical sources and relevant literature.

### *Keywords:*

Josip Broz Tito, Averell Harriman, friendship, United States of America, Yugoslavia, cooperation

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The delegation from the United States of America was among the 209 official delegations from 127 countries that attended the funeral of Josip Broz Tito in Belgrade in May 1980. As a result of the Cold War issues, the delegatio[n] was not led by the President of this country, Jimmy Carter, but by Vice President Walter Mondale, and Carter had sent his mother, Lillian, to Belgrade, in order to make up for his absence.<sup>1</sup> Out of all the other members of the otherwise large delegation, Averell Harriman was certainly the most well-known figure to the Yugoslavs. Harriman was not acting in the capacity of a state or party official at this grand gathering, the “summit of humanity”, as the Yugoslavs called it, but was presented as a veteran of American diplomacy and a former governor of New York.<sup>2</sup> The reason why the Americans had included him in their delegation was certainly that he was considered to be an old friend of Tito’s, with whom he met in one way or another, socialized and negotiated on behalf of his country in a three-decade long period of time from the beginning of the 50s until the Yugoslav president’s death.

Averell Harriman, a multimillionaire and member of one of the richest aristocratic New York families, belonged to the circle of the most influential figures of what some authors call the Washington establishment.<sup>3</sup> Owing to the fact that, as a successful businessman, since the mid-1920s, he had been the most famous American investor in the Soviet economy between the two world wars, and then Roosevelt’s wartime ambassador in Moscow, he established close relations with Stalin, so the door of the Kremlin was almost always open to him.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of the Cold War tensions after 1945, and the fact that he was a Cold War warrior as an anti-communist, Harriman remained a *persona grata* in Moscow for the rest of his life and was a welcome interlocutor of both Stalin and his successors.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, his role of one of

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<sup>1</sup> Tvrtko Jakovina, *Budimir Lončar: Od Preka do vrha svijeta*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2020, str. 349.

<sup>2</sup> *Svet o Titu 1980*, Tanjug, Beograd, 1981, str. 409.

<sup>3</sup> Volter Ajsakson i Evan Tomas, *Mudri ljudi, šest prijatelja i svet koji su napravili*, BMG plus, Beograd, 2006. On the life of Averell Harriman, see also the following extensive study: Rudy Abramson, *Spanning the Century: The Life of W. Averell Harriman 1891–1986*, William Morrow and Co, New York, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned literature, on Harriman’s connections with the USSR in the interwar period and during the Second World War, see also: V. O Pecatnov, *Avrell Harriman’s Mission to Moscow*, <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/d8-0cms-yx56/download> (accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

<sup>5</sup> Harriman’s last visit to Moscow was in 1983 when, albeit in his old age, he spoke with then Soviet leader Yuri Andropov in an effort to ease Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. (See Harriman’s report on the

the most important and influential American diplomats during the Second World War, and then during the years of the Cold War, enabled him to establish contact with the leader of the Yugoslav communists and the lifelong president of socialist Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito.

The acquaintance between Tito and Harriman dates back to the war days when Harriman served as ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Tito was the head of the Yugoslav partisans. During his stay in Moscow in September 1944, in addition to meeting with the Soviet leaders, Tito also spoke with the American ambassador.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Harriman stated that he had already advocated for Yugoslavia to be provided with the necessary military assistance during the liberation of the country.<sup>7</sup> Harriman's daughter Kathleen, who had spent the war years in London and Moscow with her father, had also met the Yugoslav partisan leader in Italy in August 1944.<sup>8</sup>

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conversation with Andropov at: <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/17311-document-11-memorandum-conversation-between> (accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023). In recognition of his role in the Soviet-American relations, in 1985, on the fortieth anniversary of Victory Day, Moscow awarded him the Patriotic War decoration of the first order. V. Ajsakson i E. Tomas, *Mudri ljudi, Šest prijatelja i svet koji su napravili*, op. cit., p. 833.

- <sup>6</sup> The Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Political Archive (hereinafter: DAMSP, Pa), 1978, United States of America, box 129, document number 444857, Note on the Conversation of the President of the Assembly of the SFRY, Dragoslav Marković, with Governor Averell W. Harriman on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1978). It is interesting that Harriman does not mention the meeting with Tito anywhere in his extensive memoirs, in which he described his own role in the Second World War. W. A. Harriman, Elie Abel, *Specijalni poslanik kod Churchila i Staljina 1941–1946*, Globus, Zagreb, 1978.
- <sup>7</sup> Harriman spoke of this to the vice-president of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Vidoje Žarković, during his visit to Yugoslavia in September 1976. In the conversation with Žarković, he even mentioned how he became friends with Tito then. The Archives of Yugoslavia, Cabinet of the President of the Republic (Fund 837), I-3-a/107-221, stenographic notes from the conversation between the Vice-President of the Presidency of the SFRY, Vidoje Žarković, and Averell Harriman, the governor, Special Adviser to the American Democratic Presidential Candidate, held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1976.
- <sup>8</sup> Kathleen left an interesting note about this meeting in a letter. She described Tito as a straightforward and witty man with piercing steely blue eyes and unusually manicured hands for a guerrilla leader, a person who was easy to talk to. Geoffrey Roberts, “Do the crows still roost in the Spasopeskovskaya trees’. *The Wartime Correspondence of Kathleen Harriman*”, Harriman Magazine, Winter 2015, p. 22. Available at the following address: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/creative/epub/>

Averell Harriman's role in Yugoslav-American relations was even more significant in the tumultuous days after the split between Belgrade and Moscow in 1948. At that time, Harriman, a close associate of President Harry Truman, was in Europe in the capacity of United States' Special Representative in Europe under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948. Even after the first news about the split between Tito and Stalin, he strongly advocated for help to the Yugoslavs. Although an anti-communist, he believed that ideological differences should be put aside and that relations with Belgrade should be approached pragmatically, keeping in mind the common American-Yugoslav interests. For this reason, he advocated unreserved support for Yugoslav positions, thus strengthening Tito's resistance to Kremlin's dominance. Together with other members of the American government, such as William Draper, the Undersecretary of Defense, he was ready to personally travel to meet Tito in Belgrade in order to show his support for the Yugoslav side in this manner. As Draper described in a telegram addressed to the Ministry of Defense in Washington, sent from Vienna, where he was at that time: "Harriman's presence would in my mind have an electrifying effect not only in Yugoslavia, but in other satellite nations which are thought to be restive and perhaps are seeking relief from the oppression inherent in satellites positioned within Soviet orbit".<sup>9</sup> Harriman believed that it was very useful to provide economic aid to Yugoslavia for the purpose of "stiffening Tito's resistance to the Kremlin pressures" in such a way.<sup>10</sup> He feared that a lack of US interest in the events in Yugoslavia could "adversely affect Tito's current actions".<sup>11</sup> However, Harriman's trip to Yugoslavia and his meeting with Tito did not occur. Namely, a more cautious policy prevailed in the ruling circles of the USA to approach cooperation with Yugoslavia gradually and without fanfare.<sup>12</sup>

Harriman continued to strongly support Yugoslavia and Tito, which could be seen at the meeting of the main American ambassadors, held in Paris in October 1949. He then emphasized that Tito schism was undoubtedly the most important event outside the Western bloc countries, adding once more that the Atlantic Powers had to do everything in their power to help

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[harriman/2015/winter/harriman\\_winter\\_2015.pdf](#) (accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024)

<sup>9</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1948, Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union, Volume IV, p. 1086.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 1088.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>12</sup> Lorejn M. Lis, *Održavanje Tita na površini. Sjedinjene Države, Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, BMG, Beograd, 2003, str. 88–89.

Tito's regime, as he emphasized, "so that this sore on the Soviet security and ideological structure might continue to fester and spread".<sup>13</sup> Harriman underscored that the victory or defeat of Tito could also be the victory or defeat of the USA in the Cold War and added: "If Tito is the number 1 job for Stalin, it should be the number 1 job for us."<sup>14</sup>

Harriman's mentioned attitude towards Yugoslavia and Tito was also present in the following years. It can be said that he was one of the most responsible people for the establishment of Yugoslav-American military cooperation during the 50s. Namely, according to the testimony of diplomat Vladimir Velebit, who met with him during his stay in Washington in 1950, Harriman and an influential group of people from Washington establishment close to him promised that they would advocate in the State Department and the Pentagon that the United States of America deliver American weapons to the Yugoslav army.<sup>15</sup> He advocated the same policy during the meeting with the Yugoslav delegation led by the Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav People's Army, Konstantin – Koča Popović, in June 1951 in Washington.<sup>16</sup> At Yugoslavia's request, the Truman administration sent Harriman to Yugoslavia at the end of August of the same year for further discussions on this issue.<sup>17</sup> It was then that he had his first official meeting with Tito. Harriman thus became the highest US government official to visit Yugoslavia after its break with the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup>

During their several-hour conversation held at Tito's residence in Bled at the time, cooperation between the two countries was discussed on the military, economic and political levels.<sup>19</sup> The most important topic was related to

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<sup>13</sup> FRUS, 1949, Western Europe, Volume IV, p. 478.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 479; Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu. Odnos sa velikim silama 1949–1955*, Globus, Zagreb, 1988, p. 104.

<sup>15</sup> Mira Šuvar, *Vladimir Velebit, Svjedok historije*, Razlog d.o.o., Zagreb, 2001, p. 374.

<sup>16</sup> During this meeting, Harriman underlined that he was the first who, after the conflict in 1948, "resolutely advocated the opinion that the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR is true and insurmountable". DA MSP, Str. Pov., SAD, k. 39, f. 2, Notes on a Conversation with Averell W. Harriman and R. B. Joyce, Planning Staff Member at the State Department, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1951.

<sup>17</sup> D. Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu. Odnos sa velikim silama 1949–1955*, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>18</sup> "Harriman Confers with Tito on Aid", *The New York Times*, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1951, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> FRUS, 1951, Europe: Political and Economic Developments, Volume IV, Part 2, 1842–1843; AJ, Cabinet of the Marshal of Yugoslavia (AJ, KMJ), I-2-a/95, Reception of the US President's Personal Adviser, Averell Harriman, at Marshal Tito's (Brdo near Kranj, 25. VII 1951; Historiography has given its exhaustive

military issues. Yugoslavia asked the US for armaments, such as jet planes and new tanks, as well as raw materials and industrial equipment to increase its own military production. Economic aid to Belgrade was also discussed, as well as the international situation, especially Soviet policy and Stalin's intentions towards Yugoslavia. As part of international topics, the issues of Yugoslavia's relations with Greece, Turkey and Italy were discussed.<sup>20</sup> The press conference that Harriman held in Bled the day after the meeting with Tito also attracted attention. This was especially true of the question of *The New York Times* correspondent M. S. Handler to comment on Tito's statement that "aggression against Yugoslavia could not be localized". Harriman replied that he "did not object" to such a statement, which was obviously a confirmation of Tito's position.<sup>21</sup> In a later recollection of this meeting, Harriman stated that Tito was in great trouble at the time, owing to the Soviet threat, and that the USA helped him overcome the difficulties.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the far-reaching consequences for the relations between the two countries that this meeting had, as stated by historian Tvrtko Jakovina, the fact remains that Tito and Harriman liked each other as personalities, that Tito clearly managed to charm the American diplomat and that they

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answer to this encounter. D. Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu. Odnos sa velikim silama 1949–1955*, op. cit., pp. 302–303; Tvrtko Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik. Hrvati, Titova Jugoslavija i Sjedinjene Američke Države 1945–1955*, Srednja Evropa, Zagreb, 2003, pp. 334–337; Ivan Laković, *Zapadna vojna pomoć Jugoslaviji 1951–1958*, Istorijski institut Crne Gore, Podgorica, 2006, p. 50; L. Lis, *Održavanje Tita na površini. Sjedinjene Države, Jugoslavija i Hladni rat*, op. cit., pp. 153–154.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidim. Attention was also attracted by the mention of the current Trieste issue. Although Harriman did not comment on the issue at the press conference, news emerged in the Italian public that he had agreed to settle the matter with Tito. Such news, which was later reported by the newspaper *Europeo*, had to be denied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy. "Rome Scouts Report of Accords on Trieste", *The New York Times*, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1951, p. 22

<sup>21</sup> "Accord of Defence with Tito is Seen in Harriman Talks", *The New York Times*, August 27, 1951, p.1; D. Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu. Odnos sa velikim silama 1949–1955*, op. cit., p. 304. Harriman's stay in Yugoslavia and his conversation with Tito led the journalist Hedler to emphasize in his report from Bled that their conversation: "widened the area of understandings between the United States and Yugoslavia to a point where it is permissible to speak of an unwritten United State-Yugoslav alliance to defend the peace in Europe against possible Soviet aggression".

<sup>22</sup> Oral history transcript, W. Averell Harriman, interview 1 (I), 6/16/1969, by Paige E. Mulhollan, LBJ Library Oral Histories, LBJ Presidential Library, Available at: <https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/oh-harrimanw-19690616-1-74-123> (19<sup>th</sup> February 2024).

then definitely established friendly relations.<sup>23</sup> It is not known to what extent Harriman charmed Tito on that occasion, but judging by the statements of Tito's biographer, Vladimir Dedijer, out of all the Americans who had visited Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav president was "particularly impressed by Harriman".<sup>24</sup>

However, their relationship during the 50s should perhaps not be exaggerated. This is evidenced by an attempt by the Yugoslav State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs (DSIP) to organize the arrival of the then governor of New York, Harriman, to Belgrade for a talk with Tito in the mid-1950s. DSIP justified this proposal by the reputation enjoyed by Harriman and the attitude he had towards Yugoslavia. Tito, however, overwhelmed by other obligations, was not enthusiastic about the idea of organizing this meeting, complaining that his protocol did not sufficiently take care of his obligations, so this visit was not organized in the end.<sup>25</sup> It was also a time of altered foreign policy circumstances, so this visit would certainly not have had the significance of the one in 1951. Be that as it may, the fact remains that his mission from 1951 also resulted in the establishment of closer ties between the two countries, for which Harriman would credit himself, showing a certain amount of self-flattery, over the next three decades.

Tito and Harriman met again in October 1963 in Washington. As a staunch member of the Democratic Party, Harriman was given a place in the White House when President John F. Kennedy came to the White House from the mentioned party. When the Yugoslav president came on an official visit to the USA, Harriman served as undersecretary for political affairs in the State Department and participated in the talks between Tito and Kennedy. On that occasion, Harriman recalled his meeting with Tito in the early 50s. He stated that Yugoslavia had preserved its independence in the meantime and supported the further course of the relations between the countries.<sup>26</sup>

Harriman played a more significant role in Yugoslav-American relations in the period from 1965 to 1967, when he stayed in Belgrade on three occasions as a personal envoy of the new president Lyndon Johnson

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<sup>23</sup> T. Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik. Hrvati, Titova Jugoslavija i Sjedinjene Američke Države 1945–1955*, op. cit., pp. 334, 337.

<sup>24</sup> Dedier states that, in addition to Harriman, the judge of the Constitutional Court, William Douglas, also left the same impression on Tito. Vladimir Dedijer, *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita*, IKOR "Mladost", Zagreb, 1980, p. 651.

<sup>25</sup> AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-33, New York State Governor Averell Harriman's Reception, July 1955.

<sup>26</sup> Miladin Milošević i Dragan Bogetić. prir., *Jugoslavija – Sjedinjene Američke Države: susreti i razgovori najviših zvaničnika Jugoslavije i SAD, 1955–1980*, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Beograd, 2017, p. 167.

with the task of negotiating with Tito on the issue of achieving peace in Vietnam. During these meetings, Yugoslavia was one of the stops in a series of diplomatic visits that Harriman made in his capacity as ambassador at large in an effort to help Johnson solve this complicated and painful issue for the US. The first of Harriman's mentioned visits was at the end of July 1965 and was presented to the public as a private visit to Yugoslav President Tito. While the Americans had Vietnam as the main topic on the agenda, the Yugoslavs saw Harriman's visit as a good opportunity to improve bilateral relations, which were going through a period of crisis at the time.<sup>27</sup> Harriman and Tito spoke on two occasions. The first meeting was held in Belgrade on 29<sup>th</sup> July, and the second was held on the island of Vanga three days later. Although there were no concrete results in terms of the Yugoslav mediating role in resolving the Vietnam issue, the aforementioned meeting led to an improvement between Belgrade and Washington.<sup>28</sup> This particularly referred to the US's economic support.<sup>29</sup> The meeting on Vanga also left an interesting episode that was later fondly recounted in American diplomatic circles. The several hour long conversation was tense at times until the moment, as witnessed by Walter Roberts, one of the American diplomats present, when Tito asked Harriman how old he was. As it turned out that both were seventy-three years old (although Harriman had actually been born at the end of 1891 and was six months older), Tito brought out a dusty bottle of wine produced in 1892 from the cellar. It helped to alleviate the tension and bring the interlocutors closer to each other. This episode certainly contributed to establishing an even closer contact between Tito and Harriman.<sup>30</sup>

At the end of the year, President Johnson still hoped that Harriman, in a conversation with whom he emphasized to be his "old friend" Tito, could find a way to persuade the North Vietnamese to sit down at the negotiating table.<sup>31</sup> The new meeting was arranged in a hurry, on the first day of the New Year in

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<sup>27</sup> Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslovensko-američki odnosi 1961–1971*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Beograd, 2012, p. 193; Milan Stevanović, "Averel Hariman u poseti Beogradu 1965. i poboljšanje jugoslovensko-američkih odnosa", *Arhiv*, godina XVII (2016), br. 1–2, pp. 158–169.

<sup>28</sup> D. Bogetić, *Jugoslovensko-američki odnosi 1961–1971*, op. cit., p. 198.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> *In Vino Veritas*, <https://adst.org/2014/12/in-vino-veritas/>, (accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024).

<sup>31</sup> FRUS, 1964–1968, volume III, Vietnam, June – December 1965, p.720; Jonathan Colman, "The 'Most Distinguished Envoy of Peace': Averell Harriman and the Vietnam War in the Johnson Years", *The International History Review*, (2016), 38:1, p. 74.

1966, at Brdo Castle near Kranj.<sup>32</sup> This time, the talks were entirely devoted to Vietnam, while bilateral relations were not discussed. However, like the previous meeting, this one did not produce results either.<sup>33</sup> The next meeting between Harriman and Tito took place in November 1967 in Karađorđevo.<sup>34</sup> In addition to Vietnam, the situation in the Middle East was also discussed, as well as some other international topics. Although all of the mentioned Harriman's talks with Broz, as well as with other leaders, did not lead to peace in Vietnam, Harriman's visits and several hour long talks with Tito improved Yugoslav-American bilateral relations and additionally strengthened their personal friendship. Attempting to resolve the Vietnam issue was one of Harriman's last official diplomatic missions, as he retired in 1969.

After almost a full decade of absence, which coincided with the Republican administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald P. Ford, Harriman came to Yugoslavia again at the end of September 1976. It was in the final phase of the presidential election campaign, and he was sent to Belgrade by politicians gathered around the Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter. In fact, Yugoslavia was part of a larger route, in which the main stop, as was always the case when it came to Harriman, was Moscow. As stated by Harriman, the goal of his visit to Yugoslavia was twofold: "to express Carter's deep respect for the President as the most eminent figure of our time, and secondly, to discuss with Tito a number of the most important international problems, because Carter would very much like to hear Tito's opinion and assessment regarding the most sensitive problems of international relations".<sup>35</sup>

Harriman presented the trip to Yugoslavia to the public as a private visit to an old acquaintance, Fitzroy McLean, who had a house on the Adriatic.<sup>36</sup> In this way, he wanted to avoid participating in the talks with the US ambassador to Yugoslavia, Lawrence Silberman, who was a *persona non grata* in Belgrade

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<sup>32</sup> AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-140, Reception of US Special Envoy Averell Harriman, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1966; D. Bogetić, *Jugoslovensko-američki odnosi 1961–1971*, op. cit., pp. 199–201; Milan Stevanović, „Američka 'mirovna ofanziva', druga poseta Averela Harimana i Jugoslavija krajem 1965. i početkom 1966. godine”, *Arhiv*, godina XVII (2017), br. 1–2, pp. 227–240.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>34</sup> M. Milošević i D. Bogetić. prir., *Jugoslavija – Sjedinjene Američke Države*, op. cit., pp. 197–213.

<sup>35</sup> AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-221, Reception of Former Governor Averell Harriman, September 1976.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem.

at that moment.<sup>37</sup> He also had a personal motive. He wanted to introduce his new, third wife, Pamela, ex-wife of Randolph Churchill, to Tito, as well as to spend their fifth wedding anniversary on the Brijuni islands. Tito, however, was seriously ill at the time, so – despite Harriman’s persistent insistence – the meeting did not take place. Still, the Harriman couple was showered with special attention and gifts from Yugoslav state officials. As a special token of appreciation, Tito also allowed them to visit Vanga in his absence.<sup>38</sup> Unable to speak with the Yugoslav president, Harriman conveyed the key message he came with to Edvard Kardelj. And the message was that Carter would pursue the same policy towards Yugoslavia as the Truman administration did after 1948.<sup>39</sup>

After Carter’s victory in the November 1976 elections, Harriman’s role in Yugoslav-American relations gained importance. At the start of its term, the new Democratic administration seemed to have presented Harriman as the embodiment of their views on Yugoslavia. During the first meetings, members of the Carter administration emphasized the importance of Harriman. Vice President Walter Mondale, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and Assistant Undersecretary for Yugoslavia at the State Department John Armitage passed on Harriman’s letters, verbal messages, and greetings to Tito whenever they met with Yugoslav government officials.<sup>40</sup> The reference to Harriman and his friendship with Tito seemed to have been intended to mean that the new administration would pursue a policy of friendship and understanding toward Yugoslavia, a policy best embodied by Harriman.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the relationship between Harriman and Tito seemed to have grown

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<sup>37</sup> AJ, KPR, I-5-b/104-21, State Secret, Information on the US Ambassador to Belgrade, L.H. Silberman.

<sup>38</sup> AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-221, Reception of former Governor Averell Harriman, September 1976.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, A note on the conversation of the member of the presidency of the SFRY, Edward Kardelj, with Averell Harriman, the special adviser of the democratic candidate for the President of the USA J. Carter, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1976.

<sup>40</sup> AJ, KPR, I-5-b/104-22, From a note on a conversation between Comrade Edward Kardelj, a member of the Presidency of the SFRY, with Charles N. York, Chargé D’affaires of the US Embassy in Belgrade, and John Armitage, Assistant Undersecretary in the State Department, in charge of Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1977 in Belgrade.

<sup>41</sup> During his visit to Yugoslavia in May 1977, Walter Mondale met Tito and handed him Harriman’s letter. The Vice President of the USA said on that occasion: “this is a letter from your old friend Harriman, who is well and informed of everything.” M. Milošević i D. Bogetić. prir., *Jugoslavija – Sjedinjene Američke Države (Yugoslavia – United States of America)*, op. cit., p. 378.

beyond the relationship of two old friends, and represented the friendship of the two states on a symbolic level. Harriman, who did not become part of the Carter administration, both because of his advanced age and because of his cold relations with national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, was the first to outline the basis of the policy that the Carter administration should have pursued towards Tito's Yugoslavia in early 1977 to the American public, who often used him as a reliable interpreter of Yugoslav politics and relations between Belgrade and Washington. He succinctly summarized them in four key words: non-alignment, independence, integrity and unity of Yugoslavia.<sup>42</sup> Carter would indeed hold on to these for the rest of his term.

In Belgrade, they also believed that Harriman had an influence on improving the general atmosphere in bilateral relations. They believed that the platform on which Carter had based his positive policy towards Belgrade was created, among other things, based on the report that Harriman had submitted after his September stay in Yugoslavia.<sup>43</sup> At the basis of this policy was the understanding that any pressure on Belgrade was "counterproductive", and that it was most useful for the United States of America to accept Yugoslavia "as an independent and equal factor".<sup>44</sup> In accordance with the above, there was also the estimate that Harriman was one of the most worthy people, which led to the White House considering Yugoslavia and its future with more trust.<sup>45</sup> The President of the Assembly of the SFRY, Dragoslav Draža Marković, expressed himself most succinctly about his importance for the formulation of this kind of American policy towards Yugoslavia during their meeting in Belgrade at the end of July in 1978. Marković stated that it could be said that Harriman's visit to Yugoslavia in 1976, at a time when Yugoslavia's relations with the USA were not good, "was the initial step that led to further improvement and the current development of relations".<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> AJ, KPR, I-5-b/104-22, Ambassador Belovski's Conversation with Harriman, 25<sup>th</sup> June 1977.

<sup>43</sup> DA MSP, Pa, 1977, SAD, b. 125, dos. 4, no. 452373, Letter from the Embassy in Washington to the SSIP, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1977; Archives of Yugoslavia, Presidency of the SFRY (803), 1978, Folder Number 54, State Secret, Information on the Occasion of the Visit of the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, to the United States, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1978.

<sup>44</sup> AJ, 803, 1979, b. 64, Strictly Confidential, Reported titled "Long-term relations between the SFRY and the USA", 20<sup>th</sup> October 1978.

<sup>45</sup> AJ, KPR, I-2/73-1, Ambassador Belovski's Telegram on the Eve of Comrade President's visit to America, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978.

<sup>46</sup> DA MSP, Pa, 1978, SAD, b. 129, dos. 18, no. 444857, Note on the Conversation between the President of the Assembly of the SFRY, Dragoslav Marković, and Governor Averell W. Harriman on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1978.

Even though they had not seen each other in the fall of 1976, Tito and Harriman would meet often in the following few years, both in Yugoslavia and in the USA. The first of these meetings was held in Washington in March 1978 during Tito's official visit to Washington. At that time, the Yugoslav president hosted an intimate dinner for Harriman at Blair House, where he was staying.<sup>47</sup> The next meeting took place at the end of July of the same year. This time, Harriman was visiting Tito on Vanga. In the conversation, which was also attended by the American ambassador in Belgrade, Lawrence Eagleburger, most of the talk was about the non-aligned politics, relations between the Soviet Union and the USA, China, as well as bilateral Yugoslav-American relations.<sup>48</sup> During his stay in Yugoslavia, Harriman was not only Tito's guest on Vanga, but also met with the new Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Josip Vrhovec, and the President of the SFRY Assembly, Marković.

Harriman was also often in the role of mediator whenever it was necessary to directly convey an important message from the White House to the Yugoslavs or, conversely, to examine and convey to Washington Tito's political views on important international topics, such as the policy of non-alignment. He continued to explain and defend Yugoslav positions in the American media. On the other hand, Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Washington often used Harriman when they wanted to communicate with Carter and his closest circle.<sup>49</sup> Harriman's luxury house in the Washington suburb of Georgetown was the place where the most important Yugoslav state officials met with the most influential representatives of the establishment during their visits to the USA. That is why it is not surprising that Harriman was at the head of the American delegation that, in February 1979, attended the funeral of the number two man in Yugoslavia at the time, Edvard Kardelj.<sup>50</sup> Finally, as already stated at the beginning, he was a member of the official American delegation that attended Tito's funeral. Harriman outlived Tito by a full six years. He died in July 1986 at the family estate in Arden.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> AJ, KPR, I-2/73-1, J. B. Tito's Trip to the USA, 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> March 1978

<sup>48</sup> FRUS, 1977-1980, Eastern Europe, Volume XX, pp. 841-846.

<sup>49</sup> Harriman was a frequent interlocutor with the Yugoslav ambassador to the USA, Dimče Belovski, and since the fall of 1979, with his successor, Budimir Lončar. Belovski and Lončar used Harriman's influence to solve certain current bilateral problems or to gain insight into the positions of the Carter administration regarding numerous international topics. Diplomatic documents in the Yugoslav archives bear witness to their meetings.

<sup>50</sup> Harriman used his stay in Yugoslavia to discuss current international issues with Tito and other government officials, such as the conflict in Kampuchea.

<sup>51</sup> V. Ajsakson i E. Tomas, *Mudri ljudi, Šest prijatelja i svet koji su napravili*, op. cit., p. 833.

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