

**ROBERT MURPHY'S MISSION TO BELGRADE, SEPTEMBER 1954 -
THE DECISIVE STEP TOWARDS THE FINAL SOLUTION
OF THE TRIESTE CRISIS: THE EVIDENCE OF
THE YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTRY ARCHIVES, BELGRADE**

Samo Kristen

A small party was given on October 6, 1954 in the former residence of the Mussolini family in Rome, the "Villa Torlonia." Besides the hostess, U.S. Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce, and her nearest associates, this "very select little party" assembled also "the young men and women from the code room, who had worked so long and devotedly, days, nights and Sundays, to get the message through. These few people were the only ones to know the whole story," Luce's biographer Alden Hatch felt compelled to say. He went on: "They in turn presented Clare with a plumed Bersagliere helmet as a souvenir of the final settlement of the long and dangerous Trieste question. Few other questions had ever engendered such a flood of messages from so many capitals."¹

This party was held about one month after the dinner given by the *New York Times* columnist Arthur Krock in Washington; the two events were however related. Probably quite accidentally, Luce had found herself seated next to the Under-Secretary of State, Robert Murphy. During a conversation with the charming hostess at his side, who had recently been called to Washington to help clarify the then ongoing difficulties with the Trieste/Trst question, Murphy mentioned his acquaintance Marshall Tito, whom he had first met a decade earlier, in 1944. The Ambassador thought that Murphy was, therefore, "just the man we need to bring Tito around," and announced her decision to report on the matter first thing in the morning to President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles. "The Ambassador usually got what she wanted, and I received instructions the same day to confer with Tito," reads the commentary on that evening in Murphy's memoirs.² Disraeli's remark on the importance of the after-dinner conversation—in his time, Louis-Philippe had, it is said, interpreted the diplomatic success of the British to this kind of interaction—thus received an unforeseen attestation at a September 1954 evening party in Rome.

The secret London negotiations on Trieste, during which Luce had been recalled to Washington, were (quite apart from the peculiar negotiation techniques employed) in a blind alley after seven months' duration. The British Foreign Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, according to a contemporary report by the then Yugoslav diplomatic representative in London, Najdan Pašić, at one of the meetings had expressed his discontent with the talks being in a phase where progress could be measured in inches instead of yards. Pašić reported Eden as saying that the Italian party was quibbling "about irrelevancies the size of a postage stamp."³ In short—as Eden himself confided in his memoirs—"the last stages became very stubborn, however, and raged fiercely around an area of about two square miles. I feared that this was going to become symbolic and we were going to be dead-locked."⁴

This did not happen, however. Eisenhower had sent Murphy to Belgrade, to the Brioni islands, and finally to Rome. The diplomat Murphy—the most successful and unorthodox "troubleshooter" during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations—landed in the Yugoslav capital on September 14, and managed to smooth out the final discrepancies by first conferring with Yugoslav representatives and then by personally contacting Tito. The

success of his visit, in its own right a singular *Husarenstück* of Dulles' global diplomacy, induced the less successful Eden to the somewhat controversial commentary:

"... Yugoslavia was at that time very short of wheat. Mr. Robert Murphy was therefore sent to Belgrade by the United States Government with authority to offer wheat to the Yugoslavs. This injected a mood of reasonableness and made possible a minute adjustment of territorial exchanges, Yugoslavia at one point dropping back a couple of hundred yards without asking for any compensation. On such small matters can international agreements sometimes depend..."⁵

Three years later Murphy in his memoirs protested against this "bread-and-butter" interpretation by Eden of the final stage in the solution of the nine-year Trieste dispute. Murphy did not attempt to obscure the fact that, previous to his visit to Rome, he had indeed conferred with Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo about further material aid to Yugoslavia, and that he had in strictest confidence informed the Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister, Aleš Bebler, of the U.S.A.'s preparedness to send to Yugoslavia 400,000 tons of wheat;⁶ but he added an explanation which, considering the "extraordinary Yugoslav sensitivity on questions of prestige"⁷ sounds extremely plausible:

"But it is incorrect for Sir Anthony Eden to suggest that I went to Belgrade and laid some wheat on the line, whereupon the Yugoslavs grasped the pen and signed the Trieste agreement. Tito sensibly wanted to bring the Trieste disturbance to an end, but I doubt that he would have surrendered on matters of principle for a shipment of wheat."⁸

A similar viewpoint was repeated by Murphy (*fortiter in modo, fortiter in re*) in his interview, published twelve years later, with John C. Campbell. On that occasion he did not refrain from expressing his personal resentment at Eden's idiosyncratic reductive fallacy,⁹ noting that interpretations of that kind were "totally wrong;" he attributed the success of his mission to the ripeness of the problem and to certain psychological aspects of the situation;¹⁰ nevertheless, it was not *kairos* alone (which in itself does often explain diplomatic successes), but also the letter from Eisenhower, which contributed to the favorable turn of events.¹¹

Of more importance than the ponderable goods—i.e., the wheat—were, according to Murphy, the imponderables, in the guise of this personal letter. In it, Eisenhower stressed the renown and the so frequently-manifested statesmanship of the Yugoslav leader.¹² Murphy's own view of the matter, which was stated earlier in his memoirs, was related in a colloquial version to Campbell:

"I do not believe that Tito would have sold out, if he really had a conviction that he wanted to do something else, for a batch of wheat. He is not that kind of guy. So I think that was wrong. We only got into the cereal thing after the decision was made."¹³

However persuasive such an interpretation may be—and support for it is found in the fact that, less than a year earlier, the Yugoslavs had been ready to risk an armed clash for the sake of Trieste—the London negotiations have nevertheless been closely associated with the issues of economic aid.¹⁴ Thus, for example, the letter sent by General Bedell Smith to Eisenhower, in which the Murphy mission was first mentioned, left no doubt as to the State Department's firm decision to soften the Yugoslavs by means of this approach.¹⁵ Writing precisely at the time of Murphy's departure for Belgrade, Smith thus qualified the somewhat platonic assessment made by U.S. representative James Killen; as

late as May 1954 Killen had, with reference to the Trieste question, assured the Yugoslav diplomat Pavlić that "the U.S. government refrains from associating the economic aid with political actions of whatsoever kind."¹⁶ On the other hand, contemporary Yugoslav documents testify to the extreme Yugoslav sensitivity to a too-open association of these issues: these are exemplified by the efforts made by the Yugoslav representative at the London negotiations, Vladimir Velebit, in contact with the Belgrade "purists" (Velebit used the term to refer to Edvard Kardelj and Koča Popović¹⁷); and the subtle argumentation of Yugoslav Foreign Minister Popović in his talks with U.S. Ambassador James Riddleberger.¹⁸ The extremely emotional outburst by the Economy Department Minister, Vukmanović-Tempo, who one month after the Trieste agreement interrupted the Washington negotiations with the statement that his "people would prefer to subsist on grass rather than allow any threats to the independence of their state,"¹⁹ was a kind of culmination of this irritability. The more sophisticated intellectual Popović would never, in all likelihood, allow a statement of this nature to pass his lips, but nevertheless this formulation well expressed the true standpoint of the Yugoslav leadership: economic aid, yes; but without interference in matters of ideological monopoly or in the powers of the Communist leadership.

This kind of irritability on the part of the Yugoslavs concealed a great deal of distrust. Suspicion by the Yugoslavs of possible hidden agendas of the Western Powers had marked the meeting that was held in the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry building on Knez Miloš Street in Belgrade on September 10, 1954. On this day—the same day that Eisenhower dated his letter to Tito—Ambassador Riddleberger announced to Yugoslav Vice-Secretary Veljko Mičunović the impending arrival in Belgrade of Robert Murphy. Riddleberger formulated the explanation for the visit by reading from his notebook. He referred to the recent talks between the Yugoslav Ambassador to the U.S., Leo Mateš, and Smith, and to the earlier proposals by the Yugoslav government that economic issues be dealt with at a higher level. Murphy's assignment, he said, was therefore to negotiate with respect to the issue of the Yugoslav need for wheat and for overall economic aid; Murphy's true mission—the Trieste question—was mentioned by Riddleberger as a theme which Murphy was likely to advance in his talks with the Yugoslav leadership; and he said that prior to arriving in Belgrade on September 15, Murphy would have visited London and Bonn, and that on his return journey he would visit Rome and possibly Paris. He advised the Yugoslavs to inform the press of the event, since Murphy's arrival was sure not to go unnoticed; and stated that, in addition to talks with the competent authorities among the leading Yugoslavs, Murphy requested an audience with the Yugoslav President.

In his response to Riddleberger, Mičunović—who was the number two personality in the then omnipresent *UDBA*²⁰—was not exactly supportive of the plan. He said that he would inform the government and communicate its reply to Riddleberger; but, in his personal opinion, both the manner and the scheduling of the talks, as announced, were ill-chosen, if the Trieste question was linked to wheat and to economic aid. "They decided matters so, but I disagreed," asserted Mičunović, adding: "Even though there would be a readiness to discuss the Trieste question, it is made impossible by the way in which Mr. Murphy is being sent here." Mičunović also stressed that the pressure and demands employed to make the Yugoslavs accept a compromise were on the whole ill-conceived. Only ten days previously, he said, in London, Velebit—who had been forced into several compromises—had announced the final Yugoslav standpoint, reached after months of obstructionism on the part of Italy. When Riddleberger suggested that the territory in question was really small, indeed unimportant, Mičunović contradicted this viewpoint,

stating that the actual area was beside the point; the Italians were trying to demonstrate their power—backed by the Americans and the British—to force Yugoslavia to comply with their demands; and that no Yugoslav ever would, or could, agree with such an outcome.

Mičunović—who was later appointed Ambassador to Moscow, and is renowned for his *Moscow Diary*—completed the report of his conversation with Riddleberger with details of a message that was meant for the top leadership of the U.S.A.. He voiced the opinion that Murphy's visit should have been canceled, except for the repeated initiatives of the part of the Yugoslavs to launch high-level talks, and Mateš's insistence in his talks with Smith a fortnight earlier. Moreover, Mateš had already informed the Secretariat that, after talking to Murphy at the State Department, the visas for Murphy's visit had been issued, and that Murphy was already on his way to Belgrade. Murphy's visit could not therefore be canceled, since the Yugoslav government had repeatedly requested an intelligible agreement with respect to economic issues. The talks with Murphy should however be strictly confined to these economic matters. "As far as Trieste is concerned," Mičunović advised, "we can always tell [Murphy] that no proposal was made as to the relocation of the negotiations from London to Belgrade, and we can supply him with the explanation of our own and of the Italian standpoint; all of which will *de facto* mean renunciation of talks concerning Trieste with Murphy." If these conditions were met, Mičunović suggested, "granting Mr. Murphy an audience with the Comrade President would be expedient..."²¹

The gifts of Ceres, which were all too intrusively offered, and which, according to Eden, should open the door to the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, instead almost slammed these doors shut, at the very beginning of Murphy's mission. Pragmatism obviously won the Yugoslavs over, however. On September 14 a special aircraft landed at Zemun airport, bringing Eisenhower's special envoy, Robert Murphy, accompanied by Robert G. Hooker, the State departments expert on Yugoslav affairs.

The true purpose of Murphy's visit was at first carefully concealed, even to the extent of suggesting that the landing was purely incidental.²² As early as September 16, however, *The New York Times* had reported Murphy's efforts to promote a final settlement of the Trieste question before October 8, the anniversary of the bipartite declaration which, a year earlier, had aroused such indignation on the Yugoslav side. Pressed by a lack of time, these efforts were initiated at Murphy's meeting with Kardelj, then ex-Foreign Minister and Yugoslav Vice-President.²³

Kardelj, the second Yugoslav and the first Slovene in the country's leadership, who to an important degree had helped shape the politics of the Trieste question, proved to be an ardent but nonetheless inflexible negotiator. After a few introductory sentences Murphy went straight to the point and expressed Eisenhower's wish that the Yugoslavs give up Lazaret for the sake of the Trieste agreement. Much as Mičunović before him Kardelj responded that the Lazaret issue was being explored by the Italians as a means of demonstrating that they could rely on the U.S. and British support in any matter. The common interest, so Kardelj argued, should require that the Western powers demonstrate their adherence to a politics of peace in the Balkans, and that they refrain from any pressure on Yugoslavia. In reply to this barely-concealed reproach, Murphy declared that the U.S.A. was at all times impartial, and that in the case at hand only a tiny strip of territory was under dispute. At this point, Kardelj—firmly maintaining his position—nonetheless hinted that a replacement for Lazaret might be negotiated. During the talk—which did not, as it were, conform to the aspirations of the U.S. Government—Murphy uttered a phrase which stands as the only recorded endeavor on the U.S. side to sway the Yugoslavs with what was but

a meager promise of profit should they accept a compromise. According to the notes taken by Bebler, Murphy stated that "one single sacrifice in the Trieste question could bring about great dividends on the part of America," a statement which was, as Bebler observes, "ignored by the translator, and left uninterpreted and unanswered by Kardelj."²⁴

Following the preliminary Belgrade phase of the talks—which failed to produce concrete results—everything depended on the meeting between Murphy and Tito. This was scheduled for September 17, on the Brioni islands.²⁵ The reception left no doubt about the change from the military headquarters on Vis in 1944 and the Marshall's residence on Brioni in 1954: a brand new palace, of which, as Murphy informs us, Tito was "very proud." Murphy had the chance to

"... [find] my old war-time acquaintance in excellent form and good humor, and there was opportunity during lunch for the kind of informal banter which I knew he enjoyed. I told him that on the Chevy Chase golf course we had named Hole No. 8 'Trieste' because it encompassed about the same amount of territory which the Yugoslavs and the Italians were arguing about. I also told him that a Texas friend had informed me that if Tito needed territory so badly as to squabble for months over a rock pile, my friend would buy him a whole county in Texas."²⁶

With this kind of small talk Murphy indeed proved himself worthy of the description written by Egidio Ortona, Italian diplomat in Washington, who characterized him as *un semplificatore persuasivo ed efficace*.²⁷ We cannot report Tito's opinion about Murphy's persuasiveness, but we are positive that the Yugoslav leader did retire to his study after lunch to read the letter from Eisenhower. It took him some twenty minutes, during which time Murphy engaged in conversation with Riddleberger and with Tito's "clever political adviser," Jože Vilfan. When Tito reappeared, he assured his guest that he himself was as eager to see the Trieste question solved as the Americans were,

"but he asked for sympathetic understanding of his government's position because the problem was loaded with domestic political dynamite."²⁸

Thereupon Murphy quickly repeated the U.S. view on the insignificant character of the territorial concessions and assured his host that adequate replacement would be sought during his visit to Rome within the next few days. In Murphy's words,

"Tito did not quibble over details and he himself suggested an alternative formula which he agreed I could present in Rome."²⁹

This decision by the Yugoslav head of state helped set in motion the course of events that resulted in the final solution of the Trieste question. Whether Tito's decision was indeed the result of the momentary reflection that was induced by Eisenhower's letter, as Murphy proposed in his memoirs, or the result of preliminary conversations held with his Slovene advisers, as was suggested by the Trieste author Diego de Castro,³⁰ remains an open issue; it is however clear from the documentation in the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry Archive that this decision of Tito's was neither the last, nor the one finally accepted on the matter.

On the same day, indeed within the hour that Murphy delivered Eisenhower's letter to Tito, Woodruff Wallner, Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, handed a copy to Acting Foreign Minister Bebler. The latter read it through carefully and then asked for an explanation regarding the third paragraph, where the demarcation line was mentioned. As Wallner failed to provide an explanation, Bebler used his host's phone and engaged in an exhaustive conversation with Murphy's associate Hooker. He was then able to explain that

the President had in mind the line claimed by the Italians in June 1954, but added that Murphy was authorized to propose a delineation more favorable for the Yugoslav side; the demarcation line was not all that vital to Eisenhower, should an agreement be achievable.³¹

On the next day, September 18, Bebler had the opportunity to hear Murphy out. Their meeting was held in Belgrade, in the presence of Riddleberger, Hooker, and the Slovene Mitja Vošnjak. First, Murphy expressed his satisfaction with his meeting with Tito, and reported that the President had declared himself prepared for a compensation to be sought for Lazaret in that part of the B Zone that was going to be annexed to Yugoslavia. At the very moment while Hooker was marking the area around Hill 417 on the map, Bebler interrupted the conversation with the statement that his information about the Murphy-Tito meeting was quite different, and that he refused to participate in further talks on the matter. Instead, the appalled Murphy was informed that a telegram had just arrived from Velebit, containing information about a proposal that had been newly made by Harrison and Thomson, respectively the British and U.S. representatives at the London negotiations. According to this proposal, Yugoslavia would compromisingly cede to Italy a part of the coast—from the lighthouse to approximately 300 meters to its south—thus enabling the old line of demarcation to meet the new one at a point some 800 meters from the shore. Bebler stated that the proposed rectification was acceptable, adding that Yugoslavia would demand the quarry situated beneath Rentabor in compensation. Obviously, Murphy was unprepared for such an about-face. He expressed his surprise at the proposal and asked for a break in the talks, to get in touch with Thomson.³²

The meeting continued the same day in the nearby U.S. Embassy building. This time in the presence of Popović, Kardelj, Bebler and Riddleberger, Murphy first reported that he had managed to get in touch with Thomson by telephone, but had been informed that the proposal reported by Bebler had in fact been made by Harrison, and that Thomson himself found it surprising. At that moment Kardelj intervened, saying that he had talked to Tito, who had instructed him that in compensation for Lazaret Yugoslavia was demanding the whole portion of the B Zone that had previously been intended to be ceded. In regard to the other suggestion, concerning the 300 meters of coastal land, the Yugoslav side further demanded the quarry, but would be as a last resort ready to give this up without compensation. This last possibility, Kardelj concluded, was to be kept in reserve; there was no need to report it to the Italians. Bebler, who was also taking notes of this decisive meeting, described the following moments as follows:

“Murphy laughs, and Kardelj summarizes the three variants that are acceptable for us: (1) the original line, as delimited and confirmed on May 31, 1954, in London; (2) cession of Lazaret in return for the ‘tip’ of Zone B, or adequate compensation in Zone A; (3) cession of the 300 meters of coast at Punta Sottile, with the quarry area as compensation, and as a last resort also without compensation.”³³

The same day, Murphy traveled to Rome with every reason to be satisfied: both of the operative Yugoslav variants of a solution of the Trieste question refrained from demands on Punta sottile/Tanki rtič, the thin strip of land reaching into the Bay of Triest which, like an enflamed appendix, had been poisoning the air at the London negotiations. Upon his arrival in Rome, Murphy literally flew into a rather volatile situation: the Italian Foreign Minister, Attilio Piccione, had just resigned, and had been replaced by the Sicilian professor Gaetano Martino. This change obviously did not decrease the chances of a successful end to Murphy’s mission: Martino “proved to be an ace,” and besides, all the other Italian representatives were eager to bring the business to an end.³⁴

The additional proposal formulated in Belgrade was well received in Rome. As introduced by Murphy on September 20, it was "an alternative formula of almost evenly-balanced territorial concessions," and also a "face-saving device," offered by Murphy as the "U.S. proposal for alternative adjustments in the May 31 line." The document (classified as "Top Secret") gave as the first variant

"A swap of the Zone B rockpile for a wedge formed by drawing a line between the intersection of parallel 50 [sic] ... with the coast to the peak of Mount San Michele,"

and the second as

"... retention in Zone A of a slice formed by running a line of 100 meters south of parallel 51 ... from the coast to the May 31 line."³⁵

These so-called "U.S. proposals," which bore the unmistakable touch of *grand simplificateur* Murphy, had been communicated by Secretary-General Vittorio Zoppi on the same day to the Italian Ambassadors in Paris, London and Washington. He failed to correct the somewhat comical mistake in the original proposal (which has already been noticed by de Castro³⁶): namely, the fact that parallel 50 runs along the English Channel, while parallel 51 lies just south of London. Needless to say, however, Quaroni, Brosio and Tarchiani did not have to be reminded of the actual geographical co-ordinates at issue; and after but few consultations the Italian side agreed on the second variant, thus gaining an additional strip of coast, including Lazaret and a few other settlements, and light-heartedly giving up the rocky triangle of Karst, which was almost unpopulated and had from the beginning been included in Zone B.³⁷

This decision was reached on September 23, the day after the formal end of Murphy's mission. U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (whose surname in Washington, in accord with his general character, was said to be the superlative of the word "dull") found the decision hard to believe: "Trieste again seems on the verge of settlement, but in view of past experience I must emphasize the word 'verge' rather than the word 'settlement'," he wrote to Eisenhower on September 24.³⁸ His caution was misplaced; the agreement had already been set in motion, and on October 5 Brosio—after a hopeless attempt at direct negotiation with Velebit (in order to find, as de Castro inventively put it, "a solution which we considered more favorable for us, and [in addition] the part of the less favored solution that we rejected")—sat down at a baize table at Carlton House in London with Velebit, Thompson and Harrison to draft the London Agreement.

At the very moment when the signing ceremony was taking place in London, Wallner and Shattock, Councillors of the Governments of the U.S.A. and Great Britain respectively, were entering Bebler's study in Belgrade. Bebler used the historic present to vividly depict the event:

"They enter with broad smiles on their faces, offering both hands for me to shake, and congratulating me on the signing of the agreement just then in progress. I accept the congratulations, but without the broad smile."⁴⁰

The event serves as a metaphor of the situation: on the one side, the genuine (or even slightly overdone) enthusiasm of the two Western diplomats expressing the satisfaction of both official London and Washington; and, on the Yugoslav side "satisfaction without enthusiasm." The watchword of the day in both Rome and Belgrade was "above all, not too much zeal:" for a clear awareness was present of the sacrifices made for the compro-

mise solution of the Trieste question, and it was hoped that, with the debts eliminated, a new relationship between the two states would be launched.

The major congratulations of the day were yet to come. Eisenhower—though a year earlier having depicted Tito as “the dictator of the Yugoslav government”⁴¹—was quick to send his compliments with respect to the “broad, far-sighted statesmanship” (of both Tito and his government), expressing his certainty that the optimism engendered by the Trieste agreement was mutual, since

“All of the peoples of the nations of Europe as well as the American people, will now be encouraged by this arrangement which opens the way to greater security in Southeastern Europe against any possible encroachment and fosters the hope that improved relations between Yugoslavia and Italy will enhance the general welfare and peace in Europe.”⁴²

In his response, Tito persuasively assured Eisenhower that relations between Yugoslav and Italy would be normalized, thus contributing to the strengthening of peace and enhancing security in Europe. He thanked Eisenhower “for your great effort in that respect, which was especially expressed in your message through Mr. Murphy and which helped a great deal to overcome final obstacles and achieve agreement.”⁴³

The banquet in Washington given by Dulles on October 7 was held in the same optimistic spirit; the catalyst of the final solution to the Trieste question, Murphy himself, attended. Dulles had every reason to feel satisfied, for a dangerous gap had been filled in the defence line opposing the Soviet forces from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The way was now open for Italy to join the Balkan pact, or even for Yugoslavia to join NATO (for it seemed then that Yugoslavia’s shift to the West was only a matter of time).

Dulles, in his toast, began with a brief reference to the history of the Trieste question, proceeded to congratulate both parties involved, and predicted growing future co-operation between Italy and Yugoslavia on a new basis. He explicitly stated that the solution that had been reached in the negotiations was by far a more favorable one than any solution that might have been imposed—a comment that clearly alluded to the decision made on October 8, 1953.

The toast made by the Italian Ambassador in Washington, Tarchiani (who was, according to Ortona, in an extremely cheerful mood that day, indeed *aux anges*⁴⁴), also concentrated on the history of the Trieste problem, and stressed the “good compromise” which had been reached and which was to bring about a new period in Italian-Yugoslav relations. He failed to mention the contributory roles of the French and the British; despite the presence at the celebration of the Britons Eppson and Beeley, and the Frenchman Juniac, he underlined the U.S. merits in arriving at a solution of the problem, and concluded with an explicit reference to Tito’s acknowledgements and best wishes to Eisenhower.

After Tarchiani, the Yugoslav Ambassador Mateš raised his glass. He too greeted the sound compromise, which, he said, would contribute substantially to the improvement of Italian-Yugoslav relations; but he managed to display more diplomatic tact than his predecessor, mentioning the efforts of London and Paris. When speaking of Washington’s share, he did not forget to compliment Murphy.

Although the Dulles banquet was designed to celebrate the latest triumph by the State Department, it did not pass into history solely as such. The story which, according to Luce’s biographer Hatch, was well known to the young people in the code room of the U.S. embassy in Rome, was still waiting for a suitable conclusion—a conclusion that depended on their unidentified colleague in Washington. For Dr. Žiga Vodušek, Councillor of the

Yugoslav Embassy in Washington, the banquet was a welcome opportunity for discreet enquiries about the letter sent to Popović by Dulles immediately after the Trieste agreement. The letter, as handed by U.S. representative Cabot Lodge to Popović at the session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, was found not to be a complete version; for on the same day it had been quoted in *The New York Times*, with the paragraph on U.S. aid to Yugoslavia intact—the paragraph that had been omitted in the former version. We can only guess at the surprise of the Yugoslav Foreign Minister when he learned only from the morning edition of the newspaper that he had received a shorter version than that made known to the general public, and that the letter contained, as well as best wishes on the occasion of the Trieste agreement, also the expressly formulated announcement of U.S. economic aid to Yugoslavia.⁴⁵

For this reason, at the October 7 banquet Vodušek was not only listening to Dulles's reminiscences of the course of the negotiations and to his complimentary remarks on Molotov's supreme diplomatic ability;⁴⁶ he was concentrating on more serious tasks. He addressed two of Dulles's assistants quite directly with an enquiry about the last section of the Secretary's message. Those two, although obviously taken aback, had been quick to assure him that the omission was due to a purely technical error which would be clarified at the earliest opportunity, while the error itself did not affect the official press release made by the State Department. Ray L. Thurston, Director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs, added that no spectacular "new" program of military and economic aid was at issue, but that there was no doubt that the Trieste agreement opened up new opportunities for mutual co-operation, since possible opposition from Congress had, with the agreement, been successfully eliminated.⁴⁷

Once more that day, Vodušek talked with Thurston, this time by telephone. Before Vodušek managed to utter anything of substance, however, Thurston poured out an explanation of the mysteriously-omitted paragraph in Dulles's letter to Popović: a coder, who had allowed for this paragraph to be eliminated, was blamed. Thurston did not forget to once more stress that the official release contained the full text of the letter, and this had been used by the reporter for *The New York Times*; and he said that the State Department would immediately send Popović the integral text. Once Vodušek was able to speak again, he assured Thurston that Popović had already been informed about the circumstances of the omission, and said,

"The matter is thus settled. However, having received the letter without the said paragraph, we replied accordingly. Moreover, the letter, as it came to us, and our reply to it, were published in our press. Therefore these two texts represent historical documents as they are."⁴⁸

Despite the fact that an understanding was reached between the two diplomats, the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington received the full text of the letter the same day, accompanied by a due message of apology from the State Department, explaining that the mistake had occurred as a result of "a purely technical communications error."⁴⁹ Thus, a banal mistake by an anonymous coder caused—as it was put by *The New York Times*' commentator of October 8—another "jittery hour" in Yugoslav-U.S. relations. In the course of the long and thorny Trieste question, however, it proved to be the last.

NOTES

1. Alden Hatch, *Ambassador Extraordinary Clare Booth Luce* (New York: Holt, 1956), 231.
2. Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (London: Collins), 514.
3. *Diplomatski arhiv Zveznega sekretariata za zunanje zadeve* [hereafter *DAZSZZ*], Embassy of the FRLJ in Washington [hereafter *AW*], fascicle 6, top secret No. 37: note on the meeting between N. Pašić and C.P. Melville, correspondent of the *Evening News*, September 1954.
4. Anthony Eden, *The Memoirs: Full Circle* (London: Cassel, 1960), 187.
5. Eden, 187. In his memoirs, the American Ambassador Jacob D. Beam adopted a more thoughtful attitude towards the Yugoslavs and the circumstances which led toward the final settlement of the Trieste question, stating that “[the Yugoslavs] refused to be bribed, but a seemingly fortuitous and ‘separate’ provision of \$60 million in additional U.S. aid had to be adumbrated to put them in a receptive mood. While we could have had an earlier settlement for nothing, the price of our disengagement was well worth paying.” Jacob D. Beam, *Multiple Exposure: An American Ambassador’s Unique Perspective on East-West Issues* (New York: Norton, 1978), 54. The question of American aid in the form of wheat is, however, understood and interpreted differently by different authors, especially with respect to the amount and the modalities of the transfer of the goods; see, e.g., Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Le conflit de Trieste 1943-1954* (Brussels: Éditions de l’Institut de Sociologie de l’Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1966) 372; Vladimiro Lisiani, *Good-bye Trieste* (Milano: Mursia, 1964) 51; Alvisa Savorgnan di Brazzà, *La verita su Trieste: Una cronistoria - una denuncia - una proposta* (Trieste: LINT, 1980) 156; Diego di Castro, *La questione di Trieste. L’azione politica e diplomatica italiana dal 1943 a 1954*, vol. 2 (Trieste: LINT, 1981) 1004. On the other side, for the Slovene émigré, Cyril Žebot, Chair of the Department of Economics at Duquesne University, there was no doubt as to the role of the wholesome U.S. aid to Yugoslavia in the agreement on Trieste. In his letter printed in the *The New York Times* on October 7, 1954, Žebot put it quite bluntly: “For the Belgrade regime the renunciation of its changing consecutive claims concerning the Trieste territory represents the price paid for continued American aid without which Tito would long have ceased to exist as the Communist dictator of Yugoslavia. The price was so much easier to accept because Belgrade does not lose any part of the Trieste territory under its actual control. It is the coast of Slovenia that was traded away.”
6. Murphy, 516.
7. Robert L. Wolf, *The Balkans in Our Time* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1956), 420.
8. Murphy, 517.
9. “I always resented Anthony Eden saying, ‘Oh well, of course the Americans went over and bought him [Tito] out; they offered him all this wheat’.” See John C. Campbell, ed., *Successful Negotiation: Trieste 1954: An Appraisal by the Five Participants* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1976) 13.
10. “... and I think we caught Tito at what was psychologically a happy moment.” (Campbell, 139).
11. In Murphy’s words: “... the letter from Eisenhower to Tito was, I think, the key to it, really.” (Campbell, 133).
12. See Velebit’s statement in Campbell, 92, 103; and the almost identical view expressed both by Murphy, in Campbell, 143-144, and by Campbell himself, in Campbell, 153. Similarly, the contemporary commentaries in the press stressed the decisive role of Eisenhower’s letter: e.g., *Time*, October 11, 1954, under the title “Trieste, Diplomatic Triumph,” expressed the following speculation: “The persuader was Eisenhower’s letter. Its content was kept secret, but it was possible that if Tito expected U.S. aid, there must be no more shilly-shallying. Also, Yugoslavia, hit by a bad harvest, needed surplus U.S. wheat.”—As a matter of fact, Eisenhower’s letter itself, which is published as an appendix in Campbell’s book, contains no such ultimatum-like language.
13. Campbell, 133.
14. Cf. Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu: Odnosi s velikim silama 1949-1955* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988) 597.
15. In his letter to Eisenhower, Smith wrote: “Both the wheat and the financial problem give us a certain leverage on the Yugoslavs, which we intend to employ in reaching a Trieste settlement.” See Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday, 1963) 491.

16. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 77: note on the Pavlić-Killen meeting, at the reception on American Army Day, May 15, 1954.
17. Campbell, 91.
18. Riddleberger stated that Congress would find it much easier to pass the decision concerning material aid to Yugoslavia, if the Trieste question were solved first; whereupon Popović replied that "this is indeed the only way that he himself can inter-relate the aid and the Trieste question, since any other way would resemble the use of pressure, which surely cannot be their [the U.S.'] goal. He [Popović] understands that they [the U.S.] are merely stating the favorable consequences of solving the Trieste problem; likewise we [the Yugoslavs] might state—though that particular line of thinking is not habitual for us—that the advantages of substantial American aid would facilitate the clarification of the Trieste question to the [Yugoslav] public. Riddleberger laughed and replied, "I think we understand each other." (DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 226: note on the meeting between Popović and Riddleberger, May 8, 1954.)
19. Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, *Revolucija koja teče: Memoari* (Belgrade: Komunist, 1971), 157.
20. UDBA = Uprava državne bezbednosti.
21. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 613: note on the meeting between Mičunović and Riddleberger, September 10, 1954.
22. The U.S. public was initially led to believe, on the basis of some rather ambivalent statements by Murphy, that his landing in Belgrade was unforeseen. Eden had at the same time been on his way from Bonn to Rome, and the simultaneous arrival of two diplomats, supposedly, would have been too difficult for the hosts in Rome. In the first Yugoslav reports about Murphy's arrival the Trieste question was not mentioned at all as a possible topic for the talks that had been announced; with the visit, Washington was supposed to be stressing its appreciation of the role that had been played by Yugoslavia in the recently-achieved Balkan pact (see *The New York Times*, September 15, 1954).
23. Murphy, in his conversations with Campbell, expressed an attitude of considerable deference toward Kardelj, saying "I had a couple of talks with him and developed quite an admiration for him." Murphy did not however refrain from adding what may have been a lucid psychological insight, namely that Kardelj—who had been trained as a schoolteacher, but because of his revolutionary activities never indulged in that profession, cf. Carole Rogel, "The education of a Slovene Marxist: Edvard Kardelj 1924-34," *Slovene Studies* 11 (1989) 177-184—was "... a sort of schoolmaster type" (Campbell, 142).
24. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 655: note on the meeting between Kardelj and Murphy. It not provided with a date, but the document was signed by Bebler on September 18, presumably 3 days after the meeting.
25. Opinions differ somewhat with respect to the exact date of the meeting (see De Castro, 1003); the corresponding document of the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, however, DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 116, indicates that the above date is correct.
26. Murphy, 515.
27. Egidio Ortona, *Anni d'America: La diplomazia 1953-1961* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986) 89.
28. Murphy, 515.
29. Murphy, 515.
30. De Castro, 1002 ff.
31. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 116.
32. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 117: note on the meeting between Bebler and Murphy, September 18, 1954.
33. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 118: note on the afternoon meeting in the Residence of the U.S. Ambassador, September 18, 1954.
34. On the details of Murphy's intermediate stay in Rome, see de Castro, 1005-1009.
35. De Castro, 1006 ff.
36. De Castro, 1006 ff.
37. The course of events thus ran contrary to what was stated by Lisiani: "Belgrado, tuttavia accettò. Ma ebbe il grano [sic] e qualche cosa di più: la lussureggiante e verde Punta di Lazzareto [sic] all'estremo sud della Zona A, in cambio della quale all'Italia venne concesso un pari tratto di terra sterile e rocciosa a settentrione [sic]," de Castro, 1006ff.
38. Eisenhower, 419.
39. De Castro, 1010.

40. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 213: note on the meeting between Bebler, Wallner and Shattock, October 5, 1954.
41. Eisenhower, 414.
42. *The New York Times*, October 6, 1954.
43. *The New York Times*, October 7, 1954.
44. Ortona, 91. On the same day, Ortona also reported the information issued by U.S. government official Carmelo Offie, a person who had the confidence of the Italian Embassy in Washington; according to this information, Murphy was heard to say that the "congiuntura" could not have been more suitable for Italy.
45. The missing paragraph reads as follows: "In addition to these improved general prospects, the settlement of this issue also points the way to concrete and forward-looking steps in the solution of economic and military problems in which your country and mine have a common concern," (*The New York Times*, October 7, 1954).
46. In Dulles's words, as reproduced by Vodušek, "Molotov was the most clever diplomat in the last 150 years," not only among the Russians, but in general (DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 113).
47. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 113.
48. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 113, appendix No. 2.
49. DAZSSZ AW Fascicle 6, No. 113, appendix No. 3.

POVZETEK

MISIJA ROBERTA MURPHYA V BEOGRADU SEPTEMBRA 1954 - ODLOČILNI KORAK K REŠITVI TRŽAŠKEGA VPRAŠANJA

Poročilo, ki obravnava potek diplomatske misije Roberta Murphya, osebnega pooblaščenca ameriškega predsednika Eisenhowerja, kot se je razvijal v Beogradu in na Brionih septembra 1954, sloni na arhivski evidenci Diplomatskega arhiva jugoslovanskega Zveznega sekretariata za zunanje zadeve. Potek te misije, ki ji je uspelo odstraniti poslednje ovire do končne rešitve Tržaškega vprašanja in ki je v tem poročilu prvič prikazana v svoji odločilni "beograjsko-brionski" fazi, je bil v historiografski literaturi in memoaristiki deležen različnih interpretacij, pri čemer je kontroverzne razlage vzbujalo zlasti dejstvo, da je bil Američanov pogajalski mandat dvojne narave; poleg posredništva v pogajanjih o ozemeljski razmejitvi z Italijo je bil Murphy pooblaščen tudi za pogajanja o ameriški pomoči s pšenico. Na vprašanje v kolikšni meri so bila torej ozemeljska pogajanja in morebitne jugoslovanske teritorialne koncesije Italiji povezana oz. pogojena z vprašanjem ameriške gospodarske pomoči Jugoslaviji - v to smer so šle zlasti sugestije, zapisane v spominih nekdanjega britanskega zunanjega ministra Edena - je seveda težko enoznačno in nedvoumno odgovoriti, toda iz dostopnih dokumentov jugoslovanske strani je razvidno, da Beograd tudi v tem primeru vsaj na deklarativni ravni ni bil pripravljen odstopiti od načela "nepogojevane pomoči". Po drugi strani seveda ni mogoče zanikati inherentne medsebojne odvisnosti obeh vprašanj, soodvisnosti, ki je na skorajda anekdotičen način prišla do izraza v zaključni epizodi s poslanico Dullesa jugoslovanskemu kolegi Popoviću in diplomatskem nesporazumu, ki je tej korespondenci sledil.