

The role of the US ambassador to Moscow in formation of American postwar foreign policy towards the USSR (1945-1946)

Курлаева Александра Олеговна

Student (master)

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Факультет международных отношений, Санкт-Петербург, Россия

E-mail: a2011sandra@mail.ru

US-Russian relations are of great interest today, both for researchers and the world community. In this regard, it is important to study the dynamics of development of Russian-American cooperation, analyzing the history of Soviet-American relations first. Moreover, in contemporary international relations, the role of personality is far from the last place. It is not only about professional activities, but also biography, the history of appointment to a particular post, thoughts and feelings. This part of history is hidden from us, but it helps to trace the continuity of generations and gives the reasons for actions of many current politicians. Therefore, studying the history of US foreign policy toward the USSR, it is necessary to focus on the work of the US embassy to Moscow and on the specifics of W. Averell Harriman activity, as an example of an ambassador who managed to make an important contribution to the US foreign policy history and diplomacy. By focusing on the study of the role of personality, we can see that often the subjective assessment of a certain diplomat influences foreign policy decision-making process.

The novelty of the research lies in the use of archival documents that have appeared in the public access recently. Moreover, the role of ambassadors is often underestimated in the foreign policy formation context of a particular state, there are very few studies focused on the work of the US embassy heads and their influence on foreign policy towards the USSR. The author analyzes the ambassador's thoughts, behavior, personal attitude to Stalin and the USSR, methods of diplomacy he used and how it influenced the US foreign policy. Important sources were archives of the US Department of State for 1945-1946, containing US diplomatic correspondence [4]. Archives demonstrate diplomatic and scientific activities, materials of personal correspondence, published and unpublished works of diplomats, and personal entries in diaries. Many archives are devoted to study of the history and foreign policy of the USSR, and a critical analysis of US foreign policy. Memoirs and personal notes of A. Harriman [6], H. Truman [5] became one of the main sources of research. Among the domestic authors' papers on which the research is based, it is worth noting A. S. Manykin, K. A. Zaleskii, V. O. Pechatnov, P. A. Tsygankov and foreign scientists D. Myers, J. L. Gaddis, A.M. Etkind, D. Dunn, and R. P. Browder. The author studies works of prominent historians of Soviet-American relations and suggests looking at the history of US foreign policy towards the USSR from a different angle.

In this research the author analyzes the biography of Harriman, his professional career not only as a diplomat, but also as a businessman. The main focus here is devoted to the study of Harriman as a personality, as the head of the US embassy to Moscow from 1943 to 1946. The most important task is to determine the role and influence of ambassador on the US foreign policy towards the USSR at the end of World War II and trace how US foreign policy decisions change due to Harriman's diplomacy and personal attitude to the USSR. The author describes the personal projects and ideas that the ambassador promoted in Moscow, the manner and methods of his diplomacy, what kind of relations he had with US leaders and Stalin, and most importantly, the author shows why Harriman's initial desire for a cooperation between the US and the USSR was replaced by his disillusionment in Soviet regime and how it influenced changes in US foreign policy towards the USSR.

Summing up the results of the research, the author was able to conclude that Harriman took an active part in resolving the problems that arose between the US and the USSR. He proposed and implemented a project to provide the USSR with a loan to buy American goods and equipment after the war [2]. The development of military cooperation was another area in which the ambassador played a significant role and went to great lengths. Certainly, he advised the presidents what he personally desired, however, Harriman objectively assessed the situation and insisted on maintaining friendly relations between the two great powers, since from his point of view this was undoubtedly beneficial primarily for the US. Harriman promoted his most ambitious projects during his first years in Moscow, but after the failure of the Warsaw Uprising, he became disillusioned with the Soviet regime and began to negotiate in a tougher manner. After that, US foreign policy towards the USSR also changed. By the example of Harriman, we can see that he never was unheard, unlike his predecessors. He was a professional diplomat, considered diplomacy the main foreign policy instrument and had his own unique negotiating style. He was called the "crocodile", because he bit off any arguments and objections of the opponent. His strong character and experience in big business helped him in Moscow, because he understood not only the political but also the economic agenda [1]. He knew how to present US reports in such a way that Stalin would consider them beneficial for the USSR, although, in fact, they were not. He did not always succeed, but Harriman never was unheard, unlike his predecessors. Stalin respected Harriman and even was afraid of him, because he knew about a much closer personal relationship between Harriman and Roosevelt than in case of other ambassadors [3]. Obviously, not all ambassadors played an important role in history. However it is necessary to study the negotiating manners of diplomats, to understand their mood and personal goals, because these materials can explain the reasons for certain events and help to look at history and the current situation on the world arena from a different angle.

References

- 1) K.A. Zalesskii Who is who during the World War II. USSR allies. M., 2004.
- 2) V.O. Pechatnov The Harriman review: Averell Harriman's mission to Moscow. 2003.
- 3) D. Dunn Between Roosevelt and Stalin. America's Ambassadors to Moscow. M., 2004.
- 4) United States Department of State: Foreign relations of the United States. The Soviet Union, 1933-1939. – V. 6. – Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933-1939.
- 5) Harry Truman's diary and papers: <http://www.doug-long.com/hst.htm>
- 6) W.Averell Harriman papers, 1896-2001. Library of Congress: http://memory.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxmlmss/eadpdfmss/uploaded_pdf/ead_pdf_batch_23_July_2008/m_s003012.pdf