Memorandum from O. Sargent[[1]](#footnote-1) to the Foreign Secretary, A. Eden, on the future administration of areas on the Italian-Yugoslav border, 4 February 1945

Fleece No. 146

From: AMSSO

To: Argonaut

Following personal for Secretary of State from Sir Orme Sargent.

…3. Tito has not fulfilled his promise to the Prime Minister to produce his views in writing, but he has made it pretty clear that he will not agree to the whole of Venezia-Giulia coming under British military government. He certainly intends to administer himself the considerable areas which he claims for Yugoslavia and part of which are already controlled by his Partisans. Even if under extreme pressure he is forced to accept Allied (British) military government, his Partisans will remain in arms throughout the district and it would be a miracle if sooner or later they did not obstruct our military administrators. We should then have to take forceful measures to assert our authority and fighting would begin. This is most likely to happen in Trieste and Pola and on the railway leading to Austria.

4. Alternatively there would be clashes between the Yugoslav Partisans and the Italian Partisans, both trying to hold as much territory as they can. In that case also we should have to intervene to keep the peace by force.

5. If we used force against the Italians we should be criticized by the Americans, and if we used it against the Yugoslavs we should be criticized by the Russians.

6. I am also not convinced by the point that it would cause disturbance in Italy if Tito were allowed to undertake the administration of the province. Surely this is a lesser risk than that of having to coerce the Yugoslav Partisans in the difficult mountain territory of Istria?

[TNA, CAB 120/175]

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Italy

1. Sargent, Sir Orme G. (1884 - 1962) - British diplomat. Deputy Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs - Northern and Southern Europe (1939 - 1946), Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1946 - 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)