

# Daily Mail

## COMMENT

### The ballot box or the tank?

**BALKANISATION** — the very term, synonymous with the anarchic fragmentation of states — strikes dread into the heart of world leaders who prefer stability to chaos. So it is natural that they should instinctively want to use their influence to counter the break-up of Yugoslavia.

But the men and women who live in Croatia and Slovenia have voted massively in favour of independence. And no attempt by the Communist strongman of Serbia to lock them in by armed force should be underwritten by Western diplomacy or Western aid.

The European Community should exert such leverage as it has to keep the peace, rather than to put the pieces back together again.

If Yugoslavia can only be cemented by blood, as the free verdict of the ballot box is overturned by the tank, then it is not worth preserving.