Hardline generals in federal army fail to force Slovenia into submission

By Judy Dempsey in Ljubljana and Anthony Robinson in London

IF the hardline communist generals who control the Yugoslav army hoped to force Slovenia into submission they have failed in their purpose. Instead the army's threat to use all means to secure a ceasefire appears to have hardened the resolve of this small Alpine republic.

In a press conference on Sunday, the Slovene president, declared at the weekend: "Slovenia will no longer be an integral part of Yugoslavia. It could be forcibly annexed back to Yugoslavia, but such an act would not put a stop to the democratic processes here." He added: "The worst has yet to be seen. The military leadership appears to have failed in their purpose. Instead the army's threat to use all means to secure a ceasefire appears to have hardened the resolve of this small Alpine republic."

Control of the military appears to have passed to about 200 officers around the general staff.

The agreement on a ceasefire by the federal and Slovene forces reached by the troika of BC foreign ministers on Friday night, hinged on Slovenia accepting a three-month suspension of its declaration of independence. This amounted to a snub to the army's political leadership, which defied the federal government and the BC troika. It was also General Marko Nego- vanovic, a former head of the army's political department who went on Belgrade television on Saturday, to threaten Slovenia that the army would withdraw its forces if necessary and declare a mobilisation if it could not negotiate its way out of the impasse.

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President Tomic returned to Luxembourg on Saturday last week, said he did not believe the federal army would return to the country after a week of border clashes that have claimed one life. He went on to spell out its vision of a new Yugoslavia. The main points of the declarations of independence for three of the republics are included in discussions on the future of Yugoslavia. The main points of the declarations of independence for three of the republics are included in discussions on the future of Yugoslavia.

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"Every effort has to be made to ensure that the League of Communists/ Movement for Yugoslavia, to which the senior officers belong, becomes the only political force in Yugoslavia over the next five or six months.

Even if the army returns to barracks today in line with an agreement announced last night in Ljubljana between Mr Markovic and Mr Kacan, Slovene and Croat government officials believe the deadline will continue. Events in Slovenia, they feel, are likely to lead to a chain reaction in other parts of the country where the potential for inter-ethnic conflict is infinitely greater than in small, ethnically homogeneous Slovenia which voted overwhelmingly to reject communism and create its own federal magnet. Slovenia, unlike some of the attempts at independence by either the Baltic states, or Croatia, has pursued a measured road to independence which first started last December when its citizens voted to break away.

Slovenia accepting a three-month suspension of its declaration of independence for three of the republics are included in discussions on the future of Yugoslavia.