

Yugoslavia: As killings

mount, a grim warning
from army chief of staff

Part 1 of 3

WE'LL CRUSH THESE REBELS

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YUGOSLAVIA'S army chief threatened last night that his troops would take events into their own hands and force breakaway Slovenia to accept a ceasefire.

'We will achieve control and bring things to an end,' said General Bjagoje Adzic after a day of bitter fighting which left at least ten of his soldiers dead and international peace efforts in tatters.

The hard-line chief known as 'the Serbian Hawk' accused the federal government of hampering the army in its effort to defeat 'the enemy'.

He said on Belgrade TV: 'The Slovene leadership is using the most repulsive tricks and deceit. At the same time, the federal authorities are making constant obstacles, demanding that we negotiate while the Slovenes attack with all the means at their disposal.'

His warning followed the bloodiest fighting of the conflict so far, raging in at least four towns, and tank battles blazing dangerously close to both the Austrian and Italian borders.

Slovenian Prime Minister Lojze Peterle

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responded to the General's threat, after talks with newly-elected federal president Stipe Mesic, by offering an immediate ceasefire, the second such offer of the day.

But General Adzic said it was too late. 'There is a war in Slovenia, and truce cannot be realised,' he said.

The exchanges compounded the real fear that the army, bitter and exasperated, was now beyond the control of the politicians. Last night the federal army appeared ready to storm the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana — the target of a terror air raid during the day — and the republic was on an all-out war footing.

Slovenia Defence Minister Janez Jansa went on TV to warn that the second phase of the army's initiative to smash the fledgling independence movement had already begun.

'We are locked in a war of survival,' he said. 'This is a carefully planned operation

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