## Slingshot that could topple Goliath

by Colin Adamson and Jonathan Annells

AS THE opposing armies line up today in Yugoslavia, it would appear at first sight to be a classic David and Goliath struggle

But the "slingshot" of the front-line Slovenian freedom fighters facing the massive armoured might of the Serbian-dominated federal Yugoslav army could carry a terrifying sting.

The 138,000-strong largely conscript federal army, which is a match for any non-aligned force in the world, was rein-forced last week by a call-up of 200,000 Serbian reservists, according to Slovenian officials.

It could possibly be in a position to throw all the hardware of modern warfare into the fray.

Theoretically, it can call on a spearhead of 300 Yugoslav M-84 main battle tanks, a locally-built derivative of the highly effective Soviet T72-74 tank, armed with 125 mm guns

In addition, there are 850 ageing, Russian-built T54s and T55s with a further 700 even older tanks, including the Second World War Sherman, in store.

The tanks in today's convoy were drawn from eight bri-gades, based in the four main military districts of the federal republic.

Huge echelons of BTR amoured personnel carriers, also Soviet-built, and locallymanufactured M-80 armoured infantry fighting vehicles — 910 in all — can be used to move elements of the 23 infantry brigades into the battle zone.

They can instil the same terror as a main battle tank to a lightly armed infantry-man or partisan.

Seemingly tipping the bal-ance even further, there are 1934 towed artillery pieces, including 400 M-101 and M-56 105 mm Howitzers and 160 multiple rocket launchers, similar, though less sophisticated, to those that provided the allies with devastating firepower during the Gulf war.

Ranged against them are 20,000 lightly equipped Slovenian reservists of the Territorial Defence Force, many of whom would never have



fired a single live round in

Officially, armaments at their disposal fall almost entirely into the small arms category — local models of category — local models of the Kalashnikov series of automatic rifles, sub-machine guns and heavy machine guns

Until yesterday, their main weapon against the tanks and the 13 squadrons of MiG jets belonging to the federal airforce were handheld grenade launchers and Soviet SAM-7 missiles. But in the destruction of a

column of 12 armoured cars in the Krakovski forest,

guerrilla warfare - the

same tactic held back Ger-

man troops for years during the Second World War.

Army, which has been re-

arming itself as conflict became inevitable, are well-

equipped with light arms.

anti-tank weapons, machine guns and SAM7 surface to

air missiles capable of tak-

casualties could be as low as

rillas have the advantage

with time - they could

never win a battlefield con-

frontation but they could

"With time, perhaps over many years, they could, to put it crudely, become such

a pain in the backside that

the Government would have

win with pin-prick attacks.

Col Dewar said that initial

Col Dewar said: "The guer-

ing out helicopters.

100 a month.

to negotiate."

The Slovene Territorial



Yugoslav soldiers carry an injured colleague from the scene of an ambush by Slovenes near the Croatian border



anti-tank missiles. This was a clear indication

of the huge, secret rearmament programme which has been carried out by the Slovenians in the build-up to their declaration of independence.

Thousands of weapons, worth many millions of pounds, have been bought with the profits of the industrially powerful northern republic, with main sources being neighbouring Austria, Germany and France.

These are now believed to be in the hands, not just of the Territorial Defence Force, but of a large proportion of the adult population of Slovenia, who have been training in secret to use them This has been possible be-

cause the TDF is under local command and not integrated into the federal army in the way that Britain's Territorial Army is indistinguisha-

ble from the regular Army. The major imponderable is whether there will be the men with the will to drive the tanks against civilian barricades.

The federal army command is 70 per cent Serbian and 40 per cent of the troops are also Serbs whose loyalty can be relied upon as long as federal objectives are identified closely with those of Serbia.

But, if the conflict intensifies and the 6.4 per cent of the army which is Slovenian and 14 per cent which comes from neighbouring rebel state Croatia start to desert in droves, the remainder of the army may fragment as their own republics decide to jump on the independence bandwagon.



litre bottle of Orange or Diet Tango, free when you buy a twin pack of Fujicolor Super HG film. Just hand in the coupon on the pack at your nearest Tango stockist.

Available from participating retailers.



## Guerrilla war may be waged for years

YUGOSLAVIA is heading for a guerrilla war which "could last for years", a leading mil-itary analyst said today. As the convoy of 180 Federal army tanks and armoured vehicles heads for Zagreb, the 20,000 territorial Slovene tht to be preparing for relentless "pin-prick" attacks, writes Tim Barlass.

Colonel Michael Dewar, deputy director of the International Institute for Strate-gic Studies said: "Their objective will be to become the thorn in the side of the Federal army."

Government troops are expected to attempt to take control of towns and villages. But as that happens revolutionary Slovenes will take to the mountains and forests

to set up guerrilla bases. The Yugoslavian countryside, according to Col Dewar, is "ideally suited" to