

HURD WARNS HARD-LINE GENERALS

BRITAIN might officially recognise the Yugoslavian breakaway republics of Slovenia and Croatia if the army continues in its policy of brutal repression.

This hint was given yesterday by Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

He told MPs that the army was out of control of politicians and its hard-line commanders were determined on war with Slovenia.

Recognition of the two breakaway republics would be

By STEVE DOUGHTY

the West's last diplomatic threat against Belgrade, signalling that Europe would abandon its attempts to put the nation's shattered republics back in to one federation.

That cataclysmic break with international conventions would deal a crushing blow to Belgrade's long-term chances of keeping control of its rebel republics.

Mr Hurd said: 'There can be little doubt that the Yugoslav

army, or at least some of its senior commanders, are intent on further military action against Slovenia.

'The army cannot hold Yugoslavia together in this way — indeed they have accelerated its disintegration.'

To a suggestion that Britain was prepared to consider joining the western diplomatic swing towards recognition of the two republics, he said: 'It may no longer be possible to hold the whole country together.' EC foreign ministers are

to meet in The Hague on Friday to consider recognising Slovenia and Croatia if the national army does not withdraw.

The U.S. State Department said that America, too, might consider recognising the dissident republics if their breakaway could be 'peacefully negotiated.'

In Britain, the Department of Trade and Industry ordered a halt to exports of military and high-tech equipment to Yugoslavia. The order covers 500 licences.