

Airlines take avoiding action

By Andrew Bolger

INTERNATIONAL air operators have started to avoid flying over Yugoslavia, even though the Belgrade authorities yesterday eased restrictions on airspace imposed earlier in the week.

The airports at Zagreb and Ljubljana remain closed and airspace in the northern half of the country controlled from Zagreb is still closed up to the level of 20,000ft — well below the cruising height of jets.

The conflict will put further pressure on the Mediterranean's already crowded airspace, since many European aircraft normally cross Yugoslavia en route to Greece.

Yesterday there was little airline activity in Yugoslavia, apart from charter flights taking out tourists and scheduled services by the state airline, JAT, in airspace controlled from Belgrade.

All British tourists were advised yesterday to leave Yugoslavia. More than 2,400

THE British government last night revoked all existing export licences to Yugoslavia covering military goods and industrial equipment which might have a military application, PA reported.

The Foreign Office said it would be wrong to supply troops which were behaving in the manner of the Yugoslav federal army.

holidaymakers were on their way home after fleeing the violence in chartered boats.

One London insurance broker, Sedgwick, is already facing a large claim arising from damage to aircraft owned by Adria, the Yugoslavian airline, which occurred at Ljubljana on June 28. The reinsurance claim is believed to be for the total loss of a A320-300 Airbus, a DC-9 and two Dash-7 turboprops. The claim could be for as much as \$64m (£39m). Sedgwick declined to confirm the size of the claim and said it had not yet been able to assess the extent of the damage.

The fighting has had little impact so far on the insurance market, though some London underwriters have increased their aviation rates. Most insurance directly available in Yugoslavia, and reinsurance through the London and German markets, specifically excludes war or civil war, so businesses suffering losses on land will have to pursue their claims with government authorities.

One possible exception is marine policies, which can extend to cargo being transported across land. Northern Yugoslavi ports such as Split, Koper, Rijeka and Zadar handle a lot of cargo bound for eastern Europe.

In Athens, Mr Andonis Samaras, the Greek foreign minister, said the free movement of Greece's products being transported through Yugoslavia were being monitored following reports that scores of Greek trucks were trapped by the fighting in Slovenia. About 30,000 truckloads of EC goods pass through Yugoslavia each year and half of Greece's exports to the EC are trucked through the country.

Yugoslavia is also an important route for road haulage to Turkey and the Middle East. Lorries are now being rerouted through Hungary, Romania and Czechoslovakia, which are allowing in drivers with visas issued by Yugoslavia.

Lengthy queues have developed along the Austria/Hungary border, however, with trucks waiting as long as 30 hours to cross. "The big problem is for those carrying perishable goods," said the Austrian motoring organisation Arboe.

It said: "They cannot be given preferential treatment as usually happens, so most of their cargoes are spoiled by the time they reach their destination."