

Defensive force that changed tactics

By David White, Defence Correspondent and Judy Dempsey

YUGOSLAVIA has one of the biggest armies in eastern Europe, with total forces of 180,000, excluding 15,000 frontier guards who also come under the command of the defence ministry.

Compared to the countries of the former Warsaw Pact it is relatively under-equipped in terms of tanks and armoured vehicles because of its non-aligned defence posture, with fewer than its eastern neighbours Bulgaria or Romania.

All available figures ignore how much the federal armed forces and reserve may have fragmented along ethnic lines since the conflict began.




The figures show that the air force has more than 450 combat aircraft and about 200 armed helicopters, more than any of its immediate neighbours, including the two Nato members Italy and Greece.

According to the Military Balance published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the Yugoslav

Yugoslav federal forces

Commander-in-chief: President Stipe Mesic
Defence minister: General Veljko Kadiejevic
Chief of staff: General Blagoje Adzic
Head of military intelligence: General Marko Negovanovic

 Total
forces
under arms:
180,000

	 Army	 Airforce	 Navy
Personnel	138,000 93,000 (conscripts) 440,000 reserves	27,000 4,000 (conscripts) 27,000 reserves	10,000 900 (marines) 43,000 reserves
Hardware	1,850 heavy tanks (about 300 modern) 6,000 artillery guns 6,000 mortars 160 multiple rocket launchers	Over 450 combat aircraft 200 armed helicopters	4 frigates 59 patrol & coastal craft with missiles & torpedos

Source: IISS 1991 Military Balance

army's strength of 138,000 includes some 93,000 conscripts on their 12 months' military service. In addition, there are 440,000 army reservists.

The army, distributed in four military regions, possesses some 1,850 heavy tanks,

although only about 300 are of recent vintage. The total, according to the IISS, includes 700 Second World War-era US and Soviet tanks, which are kept in storage. It has more than 6,000 artillery pieces of a wide variety of Soviet, US, Ger-

man and Yugoslav designs, a similar number of mortars, and 160 multiple-rocket launchers.

The air force is made up of fighter squadrons equipped with Soviet MiG-21s and the latest MiG-29s, and ground attack and reconnaissance units using locally made fighter-trainers. Armaments include two types of air-to-ground missiles, the US AGM-65 Maverick and the Soviet AS-7 Kerry. Its combat helicopters include versions of the French Gazelle, made under licence.

The army is financed by the federal budget, and not by the individual republics. About 47 per cent of the federal budget, or \$2bn (£1.2bn), was allocated to the army last year. This accounts for 3 per cent of GDP. The finances are used specifically for the running costs of the army, and pensions.

The army supplements its income through some of the revenue from arms exports, which last year totalled more than \$4bn.