

OUR FORCES BRACE FOR A NEW ATTACK

DELO

TODAY, many people in Ljubljana believe Slovenia is playing a magnificent yet very uncertain game. Two factors make the position very uncertain; first, threats by the Yugoslav Army leadership, and second the ambiguous response of the outside world which does not know how to react to the crisis. Should it keep supporting a "unified Yugoslavia" or recognise Slovene (and Croatian) independence?

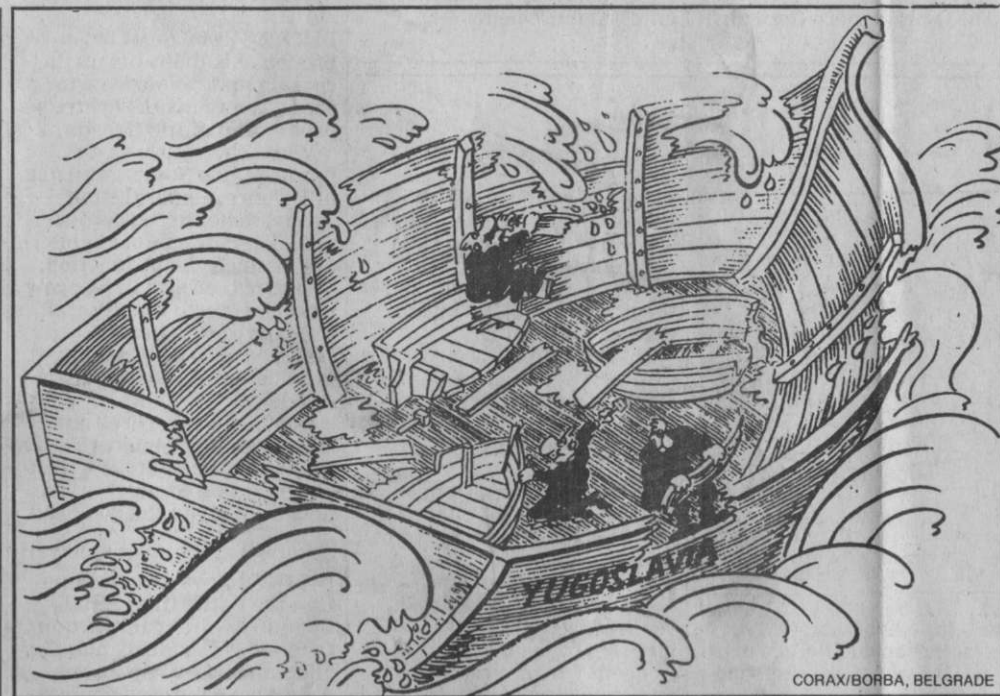
Slovenia was relatively calm yesterday, but events in Belgrade make it clear that it will be impossible to solve the Yugoslav conflict within the framework of any federal structure whatsoever. Ante Marković's federal government is dead and the Yugoslav presidency, which should have begun functioning following the formal reinstatement of Stipe Mesić as president, is not exerting any real influence. This means everything depends on the unpredictable decisions of the army leadership. Well-informed circles say

the greatest achievement of negotiations with Belgrade has been the revelation that the figure behind all military operations is the defence minister Veliko Kadijević and not, for example, Blaje Adžić or Marko Negovanić.

It was Kadijević with whom negotiations were conducted by telephone from Ljubljana. The extent to which Marković has been pushed aside is suggested by reports that the Supreme Command allegedly advised him that it would be in the interests of his "personal safety" if he remained in his office. No one in Belgrade would confirm whether this means that Marković has already become a hostage of the military command.

Everyone in Ljubljana wonders whether the army intends to continue its operations against Slovenia. No one from the Supreme Command has agreed to confirm in writing that the army has accepted the four Slovenian proposals for a cease-fire. The initiative is therefore at a standstill, in the form of a partial agreement with the Command of the Fifth Army District in Zagreb.

However, it is also true that Tuesday evening's ulti-



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matum by Blagoje Adžić on Belgrade television was not followed up by Kadijević confirming the declaration of war on Slovenia and declaring martial law throughout the country. Kadijević himself was obviously not quite certain what to do next and

needed some breathing space. The Slovene initiative has provided him with a welcome pretext.

Kadijević is said to have told a member of the Slovenian presidency that he was not interested in any agreement and that he would

teach both Slovenia and Croatia a lesson.

A lot, therefore, depends upon developments in Croatia, where the army is ready for a clash, although it obviously faces a dilemma. Should it partially subjugate Slovenia, or should it make a

frontal attack on both Slovenia and Croatia? Although military circles in Belgrade make many of their moves quite haphazardly, they are evidently aware that a simultaneous clash with both may have dramatic consequences and could cause the disintegration of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army.

Further developments will also depend to a large extent on external reactions. If the outside world continues merely to warn of the unacceptability of this military settling of accounts in Slovenia, instead of doing something concrete about it, then the army will feel even freer to implement its operation, resulting in clashes throughout Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav army has so far perceived international support for a "united and democratic Yugoslavia" as a clear sign that it is free to intervene brutally anywhere. That is why the Slovene authorities are trying to gain as much diplomatic support as possible for a peaceful solution while Slovene armed forces are bracing for a new attack.

● Danilo Slivnik is assistant editor of *Delo*, the largest circulation daily paper in Slovenia