

Milosevic warns Serbs to get ready for war

by Louise Branson
Zagreb

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC, the Serbian president, warned Serbs yesterday to be ready for war. Alluding to the break-away republics of Slovenia and Croatia, he said Yugoslavia could progress better "without those who have decided to leave it".

In a statement, broadcast on Belgrade radio and television, Milosevic hinted the federation would not abandon the 600,000-strong Serbian enclave in Croatia.

"The citizens of Serbia

should be ready for the defence of their country. Yugoslavia should be preserved within a new framework on the basis of the will of nations and respect of their rights to self-determination," Milosevic said. But he indicated the army should be based in Serbian-inhabited areas of Croatia.

Federal and Slovene leaders ended initial talks last night undecided on who would control the breakaway republic's borders, but some ranking federal officials had moved closer to acceptance of a Slovene breakaway.

Slovene officials said new talks were planned to seek a compromise on federal demands that the republic give up sole control of its border posts, and Slovenia's refusal to do so. They did not say

when the two sides would meet again.

As a senior European Community delegation arrived on its third mediating mission in a week, the Yugoslav defence minister acknowledged the need for a new Yugoslavia.

Veljko Kadijevic, the defence minister, said: "The most important thing is to achieve a political agreement as soon as possible, and to transform Yugoslavia without shedding new blood." An

army coup was "out of the question," he said.

Vasil Tupurkovski, Macedonia's representative on the eight-man federal presidency, said he would propose to his republic's parliament that it recognise an independent Slovenia.

Serbia and Montenegro have said they would accept Slovenia splitting from the federation if it did so peacefully, and Croatia recognised Slovenia's independence when it was proclaimed on June 25.