

Slovenia refuses to yield borders

From Tony Barber
in Belgrade

SLOVENIA yesterday refused to hand over control of its international frontiers to Yugoslav authorities, raising the prospect of more conflicts between the federal army and the breakaway republic. The Slovenian Information Minister, Jelko Kacin, said his government would not accept a federal ultimatum to restore the borders to Yugoslav control by noon today.

The army, using Yugoslavia's collective state presidency as its mouthpiece, last Thursday ordered Slovenia to give up control of the frontiers. However, the army did not explicitly threaten force if Slovenia failed to comply. Mr Kacin said Slovenia wanted to tackle the problem after discussions with three EC foreign ministers who arrive in Yugoslavia today. Although Slovenia has released federal prisoners of war and let army units withdraw from its territory, it refuses to make concessions on the principle of independence — a point symbolised by control of the frontiers with Austria, Italy and Hungary.

Slovenia took its defiant stand as Serbia warned that it would not tolerate intimidation of the three million ethnic Serbs living outside its territory.

The Belgrade newspaper *Politika*, which reflects the views of Serbia's communist rulers, said that Serbs had found themselves "stuck between the impotence of federal institutions and the aggressiveness of the secessionist-indoctrinated majority populations of Slovenia and Croatia".