

Slovenia under pressure on peace accord

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YUGOSLAVIA'S federal presidency early today accused the breakaway republic of Slovenia of violating peace agreements, as bitter feuding continued in spite of the agreement on Sunday with European Community ministers.

The collective presidency said it was sending a two-man mission to Slovenia to monitor steps to ease tension, as well as an urgent message to the EC.

It complained that Slovenia still had not lifted a blockade of all federal army units and had not sent all Slovene militiamen back to base. The Slovenes, it said, were still disobeying federal presidency orders and the terms of the accord which republican leaders reached on Sunday with EC ministers on the Adriatic island of Brioni.

Earlier, the rebel republic began implementing the EC accord, although there was fierce disagreement over it among Slovene politicians.

The 300 federal army officers still held in Slovene prisons were being released under the

Brioni pact. The agreement also calls for withdrawal of Slovene and federal army units to bases, return of equipment and weapons seized by Slovene forces from the federal army, and restoration of the republic's customs posts to federal control.

Mr Milan Kucan, Slovenia's president, welcomed the EC agreement. But he said it had to be ratified by the republic's parliament tomorrow and he was unable to say if it would get the necessary backing.

In an attack on the agreement, Mr France Bucar, president of the Slovene parliament, said it amounted to "virtual surrender" by the republic.

In neighbouring Croatia, tension between ethnic Serbs and Croats could threaten the peace accord. In a flare-up last night, a federal army unit on the Serbia-Croatia border came under mortar fire from the Croatian side and returned fire. There were unconfirmed reports of wounded in the clash.

Editorial Comment, Page 16