

Verbal fire exchanged

AN European Community delegation arrived in Yugoslavia to supervise the terms of the ceasefire yesterday, only to find the Slovene and Yugoslav authorities trading accusations over who had broken the agreement.

At a session of the Yugoslav State Presidency, which was not attended by representatives of Croatia or Slovenia, the country's collective head of state accused Slovenia of bad faith. The Presidency said Slovenia had "failed to remove the blockades around Yugoslav army units and installations, free members of the federal police force who were detained in Slovenia, or demobilise units of the Slovene Territorial Defence Force".

In turn, the Slovene government accused the Yugoslav army of organising a "mass mobilisation of army reservists", especially in Serbia, with the aim of launching a new invasion to crush resistance in the breakaway republic.

From Marcus Tanner in Belgrade

The mobilisation of thousands of new reservists presented "a major threat to the fragile peace", said Jelko Kacin, the Slovene Information Minister. Mr Kacin insisted that Slovenia was fulfilling its side of the bargain, brokered by an EC troika on 7 July at a summit of Yugoslav leaders held on the Adriatic island of Brioni. Half the barricades in Ljubljana, put up by the Territorial Defence Force to stop an invasion by the Yugoslav army, had already been taken down, he said.

The agreement sent Yugoslav army troops back to barracks and ordered Slovene troops to demobilise. International border posts were left in the hands of the Slovene police, but both Slovenia and Croatia were ordered to freeze for three months any further implementation of their dec-

larations of independence.

Croatia's parliament has already ratified the Brioni agreement, which reflects the weak military and diplomatic position of the republic's leaders. But resistance may prove much stronger among delegates of the Slovene parliament, who meet today.

The Slovene armed forces performed unexpectedly well in their brief war against the demoralised and badly-led units of the Yugoslav army. The leading Slovene newspapers have emphasised that the Brioni agreement was "not a capitulation", but a large body of Slovene delegates are expected to voice the opinion that their leaders conceded far too much ground to the EC troika and the Yugoslav authorities.

By agreeing to freeze further steps towards independence, they feel Slovenia may have given a breathing space to the federal government and army, which they will use to claw back lost ground.