

# Yugoslav leaders pull federal army out of Slovenia

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**David Hearst in Belgrade**

**T**HE Yugoslav army is to withdraw all its forces from the rebel republic of Slovenia, the country's collective presidency announced after a breakthrough meeting last night.

The announcement was made by Borisev Yovic, the Serbian member of the presidency. Senior military representatives were at the meeting, suggesting they had agreed.

Mr Yovic said the army should not stay in parts of the country in which it is regarded as an occupying force. He added that the withdrawal would permit a peaceful solution to the Slovenian problem.

The decision to withdraw the army represents the first breakthrough in an attempt to achieve a political solution to Yugoslavia's crisis. However, the decision puts more pressure on Croatia, which already has 50,000 members of the federal army stationed on its borders.

Mr Yovic said the withdrawal from Slovenia would start immediately and would take three months. He also said the meeting of the presidency would resume on Monday, this time with the presidents of all the republics present as well.

After the bloody nose the federal army had received in trying to put down Slovenia's independence moves, its position

there had become untenable.

The focus will now move to Croatia. One positive sign last night was the announcement that all the republics would be represented in Monday's round table talks.

Yesterday's meeting got underway after a week of abortive efforts to get the talks going on the Adriatic island of Brioni. The Serbs had refused to attend on Croatian soil.

The deadlock was only broken when the presidency agreed to discuss withdrawing troops from Slovenia. This enabled the Slovenian representative, Janez Drnovsek, who had boycotted all the recent meetings, to attend.

● Germany was being criticised yesterday by its European partners for breaking ranks over the recognition of Yugoslavia's rebel republics when the president of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, held talks in Bonn. *Anna Tomforde writes from Bonn.*

The Croatian leader had an hour-long meeting with Chancellor Kohl, who had invited him for what was called an informal working visit.

German officials said the invitation was "an expression of solidarity" with the breakaway republic. They denied suggestions that Bonn was moving towards recognising the independence of Croatia and Slovenia.