



Standing guard: a Croatian protects a truck blocking the road in Vukovar, Yugoslavia

# EC leaders will renew Yugoslav peace efforts

FINANCIAL TIMES 29/7/91

By Laura Silber in Belgrade

YUGOSLAV and European leaders will this week renew efforts to stop the country's slide into civil war, after a weekend which saw the worst bloodshed there since the Second World War.

Yugoslavia will top the agenda of a session of EC foreign ministers in Brussels today which will be attended by Mr Ante Markovic, the federal prime minister, and two members of the eight-man federal presidency.

Diplomats say the 12 EC ministers are expected to extend the mandate of 50 unarmed EC observers, currently in Slovenia, to monitor ethnic conflict in neighbouring Croatia.

Mr Stipe Mesic, the Croatian

chairman of Yugoslavia's collective presidency, appealed for a European peace-keeping force to intervene to halt the ethnic fighting.

However, hope of peace seemed remote after fierce battles at the weekend between Serbs and Croats in villages around Glina, in central Croatia. Police officials said yesterday that 20 civilians and at least 16 Croatian national guardsmen and policemen had been killed in the republic since Friday.

Croatia's government, which declared independence on June 25, is now caught between an increasingly radicalised population and fear that civil war will break out in the republic, which has a Serbian minority

of about 10 per cent of the population.

Croatia's supreme state council on Saturday agreed to accept the federal presidency's call for a ceasefire and dropped its demand for the army to withdraw to barracks in Croatia. The council said the EC observer missions should have an extended mandate in Croatia, because "a ceasefire can be adopted only if impartial monitoring can be secured".

The country's institutions remain paralysed. The state presidency, the collective leadership, is split between representatives from Serbia and Croatia, while the federal government, under Mr Markovic, seems to have lost any authority.

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