



A Croat National Guard patrol, on their way to take up a position at Vidusevac, near Glina, encounter a stray cow

Photograph: AP

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Austrian missiles to fend off 'air threat'

THE AUSTRIAN government, concerned over violations of its territorial integrity by Yugoslav federal army planes, yesterday decided to purchase anti-aircraft missile systems for the first time.

The government plans to spend £65m on the missiles, according to a Defence Ministry spokesman. Surface-to-air missiles will be acquired, along with air-to-air missiles which will help arm Austria's new fleet of 24 Draken fighter jets. The ministry said the number of systems to be purchased had not yet been determined nor had any negotiations with suppliers begun.

The cabinet was acting on a recommendation put forward last month by the State Defence Council, composed of government members, representatives of the main political parties and the Defence Ministry.

A government statement said: "The need for a suitable defence against threats from the air was made clear in recent times, above all by events in Afghanistan and in the Gulf war, but not least in connection with the recent incidents at the Austrian-Yugoslav border."

During fighting between fed-

From Michael Wise
in Vienna

eral troops and Slovene soldiers in the breakaway northern republic bordering on southern Austria, the Defence Minister, Werner Fasslabend, cited repeated violations of Austrian airspace.

The governor of the province of Styria said at least one of the planes, a MiG-21, flew approximately 20 miles into Austria until reaching Graz airport before turning back over Slovenia.

The collapse of Communist rule in east European countries bordering on neutral Austria had led to widespread calls for the reform and even the elimination of the small Austrian army, but recent turmoil in the Balkans has led to a general re-evaluation of the military's role.

On 29 June, Austria sent several thousand troops to its southern border region and stepped up military over-flights along the frontier to put an end to the territorial violations.

But these Austrian troops have begun pulling back since the Yugoslav federal army ordered its troops out of Slovenia.

Hungarians evacuate their schoolchildren

THE HUNGARIAN government has temporarily evacuated hundreds of ethnic Hungarian schoolchildren, together with their teachers, from Serbia, Croatia and Vojvodina, the autonomous province in Serbia with a large Hungarian population.

Many are traumatised, say the teachers, by their experiences in villages where there has been fierce fighting between Serbs and Croats.

The children were driven by their parents in the last few days to border points where, in an operation co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, they were picked up by Hungarian army trucks and brought to the holiday resort of Lake Balaton.

About 400, aged between four and 18, have arrived over the last few days in Zanka, a former young pioneers' (Communist scouts) camp which also played host to hundreds of East German refugees fleeing the one-time GDR. Dozens more ethnic Hungarian schoolchildren are expected to arrive in the next few days.

The Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia has been caught in both the political and military crossfire between Serbs and Croats. Several

From Adam Le Bor
in Zanka, Hungary

have been killed and there have been loud diplomatic rumblings about the Prime Minister, Jozsef Antall's, perceived claim on Hungary's lost territories now in Yugoslavia. "There would be an absolutely different political situation if Yugoslavia broke down and its borders were destroyed," said Balazs Horvath, the Minister of National and Ethnic Minorities.

"We don't know what will happen in the future, the Hungarian minority in Serbia is in danger from Serbia's extremists."

No doubt mindful of the already strained relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia, the government is playing down the significance of its actions. "These are not refugees but children on vacation," said Peter Vajo, the director of Zanka.

The Hungarian Red Cross has plans for housing up to 100,000 refugees, said a spokeswoman, Natasa Pataki. "Nobody was prepared for the refugees from the Romanian revolution but now everybody knows what must be done," she said.