

YUGOSLAVIA: Army Deploys to Trouble Spots

Armored forces have deployed westward from the Croatian-Serbian border through Bosnia and Hercegovina, possibly to positions in Serb-dominated areas of Croatia, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Press reports indicate elements of a mechanized brigade also moved through ethnically mixed towns in eastern Croatia. The federal Presidency met yesterday with republic presidents but issued only a vague statement pledging to continue seeking a political solution; the republic presidents plan to meet again today. Serbs in eastern Croatia attacked a police station, but there were no other reports of violence. Leaders in the Serb-majority enclave claim they will drive Croatian police forces from the region if the Army does not. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is unclear whether the federal Presidency authorized the Army deployments, but it may have been provoked to do so when Croatia rejected its demand Tuesday to withdraw its police forces from the Serb enclave. The Army may hope a show of force will reduce tension, as it did last year in Kosovo Province, but Serb radicals appear bent on separation from Croatia and probably will instigate further violence. Croatian leaders appear to have stopped the police patrols that led to confrontations with Serbs in recent days, presumably to prevent ethnic violence the Army could use as justification for intervention. Croatian leaders nonetheless will view the Army maneuvers as a threat and probably will consider any widespread military efforts to assert control over towns or rail lines as grounds to move toward secession. [REDACTED]