On Yugoslavia's front line: fear and UN fiasco

THE men call her Hotlips, after the character in M*A*S*H. But Lieutenant-Colonel Lois Lodge, the head of a British army medical man's land.

Stopped at a checkpoint last week, she warily eyed the land mines scattered over the road to prevent enemy vehicles barging through. Soon they young soldier manning the Only half the 14,000-strong, ning in an effort by the departroadblock waved her on.

But the tension on the front line means foreigners cannot feel safe; even being waved through a roadblock can mean disaster, as Lodge and her colleagues have discovered. Last frontline town.

doctor played her part for the ply doesn't make sense." and telling journalists it was For hours, there is no contact going to be "wonderful" to be with UN troops in the field. surrounded by so many men. But for the troops in Croatia, in the western sector, British that the combatants see the diers take Croats, mostly

by Louise Branson Zagreb

team in Croatia, has little ap- ity on the front line in Croatia. one of the last groups to arpetite for puerile jokes as she The fighting is supposed to be rive, has a dismal base in an manoeuvres her van into no over as the United Nations abandoned army barracks "There is the real possibility mould off bathroom walls. that we may get sucked into the fighting," said Lodge.

sent back to Nairobi.

group of workers into a na, the latest Yugoslav repub- ously. It is a matter of time Russian general. cheerful, down-to-earth army military point of view, it sim- backyard.

the main preoccupations are more mundane: from squabbling over accommodation to arranging rubbish collection. There is little room for lev- The British advance party, peacekeeping force moves in. near Zagreb airport where The reality is very different, they have been scraping

They were lucky, however, to miss the initial clean-up: In fact, the UN deployment floors had been covered with were cleared away, and a has the makings of a fiasco. excrement and taps left run-29-nation force has arrived, ing Serbian-led Yugoslav One division of Kenyans army to make the building unshowed up in nothing but inhabitable. The army reashorts and shirts and had to be soned that the Croats, not the UN, would be taking over.

lic to break away and become before someone is badly in- The Yugoslav army, which seen with "UN" painted on The only people who are

protection. In some ways, it is allowed to stay. a curious disposition of forces: There are deep suspicions stopped atrocities. "Serb sol-



Communications are a The departing army also soldiers, including Falklands UN as a convenient shield young men, and make them

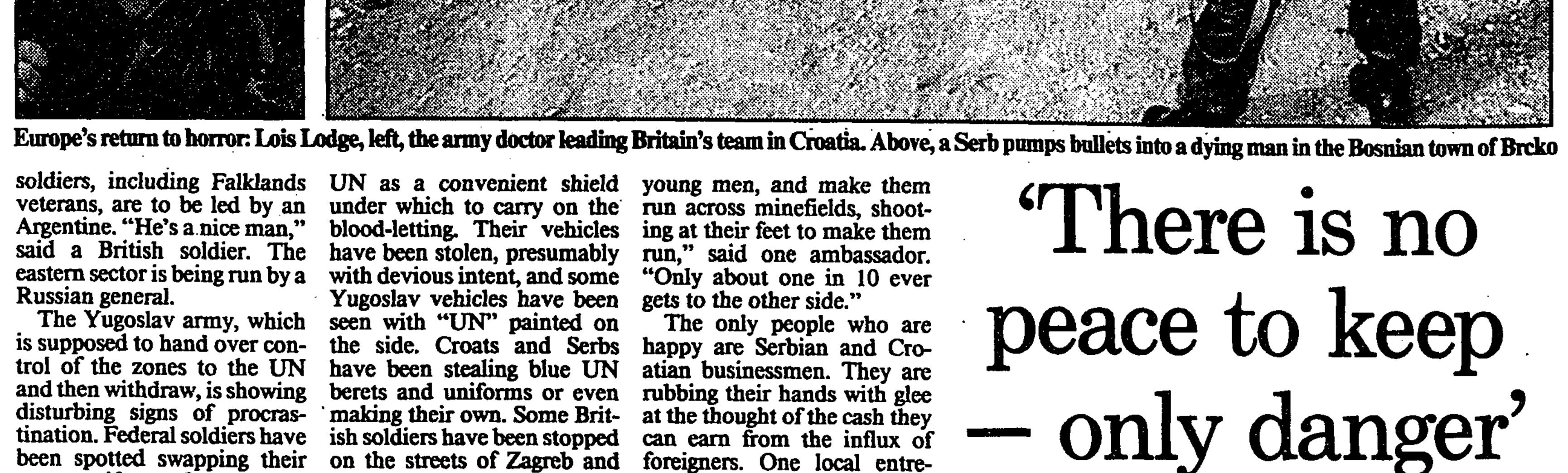
nightmare, not least because scattered thousands of mines veterans, are to be led by an under which to carry on the run across minefields, shootweek, a Belgian European the UN decided to put its in the surrounding grass and Argentine. "He's a nice man," blood-letting. Their vehicles ing at their feet to make them Community monitor was shot headquarters in Sarajevo, the woodlands; "Keep Off the said a British soldier. The have been stolen, presumably run," said one ambassador. dead as he tried to escort a capital of Bosnia-Herzegovi- Grass" signs are taken seri- eastern sector is being run by a with devious intent, and some "Only about one in 10 ever

Less than three weeks ago, embroiled in the carnage. It jured. The first casualties to be is supposed to hand over con- the side. Croats and Serbs happy are Serbian and Cro-Lodge flew out from Britain was a decision, Lodge says, treated by Britain's nurses, trol of the zones to the UN have been stealing blue UN atian businessmen. They are amid great fanfare with the that could only have been doctors and ambulance teams and then withdraw, is showing berets and uniforms or even advance medical party. The taken by politicians. "From a are likely to be in their own disturbing signs of procras- making their own. Some Brittination. Federal soldiers have ish soldiers have been stopped can earn from the influx of Lodge has wasted no time been spotted swapping their on the streets of Zagreb and press before she left Britain, The Sarajevo base is now in visiting each of the four army uniforms for those of threatened when they refused gamely posing for cameramen engulfed by fierce fighting. sectors designated for UN local militias, which are to hand over UN badges.

Yugoslav vehicles have been gets to the other side."

Nor has the UN's presence

rubbing their hands with glee at the thought of the cash they foreigners. One local entrepreneur contacted UN offices with an offer to set up a floating bordello, staffed by Russians, on the Danube. So far, he has received no response.



by Maggie O'Kane Sarajevo

JEREMY BRADE, a Gurkha officer from Somerset, experi- the ready. enced a fear last week that he The day before was worse. had never felt before. The Brade had been driving into grey bags round his eyes show the town of Mostar, shelled by it. "I'm 31, but this has made the army and Serbian irregume older," he said. "The three lars for almost a month. On weeks here seem like a the way out, he thought he was lifetime "

read zoology at Oxford, had started shooting at the leftalways dreamt of joining the hand side of the street. We Hong Kong and the Gulf. But through the line of fire." compares to this," he said. Bearded men with knives and "The fear is the cold freezing fear you get here, in your gut, when you are totally defenceless, facing someone who doesn't have any respect for what you are doing."

Streets and gullies in Muslim towns and villages have been left strewn with the corpses of men, women and children, some of them executed for refusing to accept Serbian control. On Friday, a photographer witnessed two suspected Muslim snipers in the town of Brcko being shot through the back of the head by a Serbian commander as graves and other atrocities.

admirals were sacked, re- move it gently aside, but the zegovina. Seen as a takeover leave. by younger, more nationalistic officers, the shake-up give in, Brade thinks it is time could result in even more to get out. Leaning back in his arms being sent to Serbian chair in the hotel restaurant, irregulars in Bosnia fighting to he poured another glass of

carve out a separate state. brokered deal to release hugged me and thanked me." federal army soldiers trapped went horribly wrong. As they

monitors of betraying them. enormously to the tension. Brade's white Toyota land cruiser is no longer being here," he said. "A white suit waved through militia check- gives a glimmer of hope but it points. On Thursday, an un- must be backed up with real shaven Serbian militiaman, action."

with extra rounds strapped to his Kalashnikov, peered menacingly through the window as he circled the vehicle. Another soldier watched on, his gun at

going to die. "One, or maybe The British officer, who two gunmen on the right Gurkhas. He served in India, had to drive on straight

working as a European Com- Another day, Brade went to munity "monitor" in Bosnia the burning town of Foca has changed his life. "Nothing where Serbian extremists had in eight years in the Gurkhas torched Muslim homes.



Jeremy Brade: time to get out?

they pleaded for their lives. grenades dangling from their There are rumours of mass belts patrolled the streets. In the basement of the hospital, Nor will last week's purge of terrified people begged Brade the upper ranks of the Yugo- for help. One fierce-looking slav military, in which 40 for- man put a Kalashnikov to mer communist generals and Brade's chest; he tried to assure Brade. It has raised new gunman forced the cold tip of anxieties over the control of the muzzle back at his throat. federal forces in Bosnia-Her- Eventually, he was allowed to

Though he is reluctant to Montenegrin wine: "There is Even the white shirt of the no peace to keep but we give EC monitor is no longer pro- people some hope. A man tection. Eight days ago, an EC- came up to me today and

Brade knows that it will in their Sarajevo barracks, take real military clout to stop the violence: it is not provided left, the troops were attacked by the Swedish teenager in a and three colonels died, shot United Nations blue helmet at point-blank range by Bos- who shook for hours after he nians in a narrow cobbled heard bullets whistling past street. The army and the Ser- him on Marshall Tito street. bian militia accuse the EC Nor will it come from the men in white shirts, many on leave The incident has added of absence from desk jobs in Milan or Brussels.

"I have achieved nothing

Last Azeri fortress falls to Armenians

by Thomas Goltz

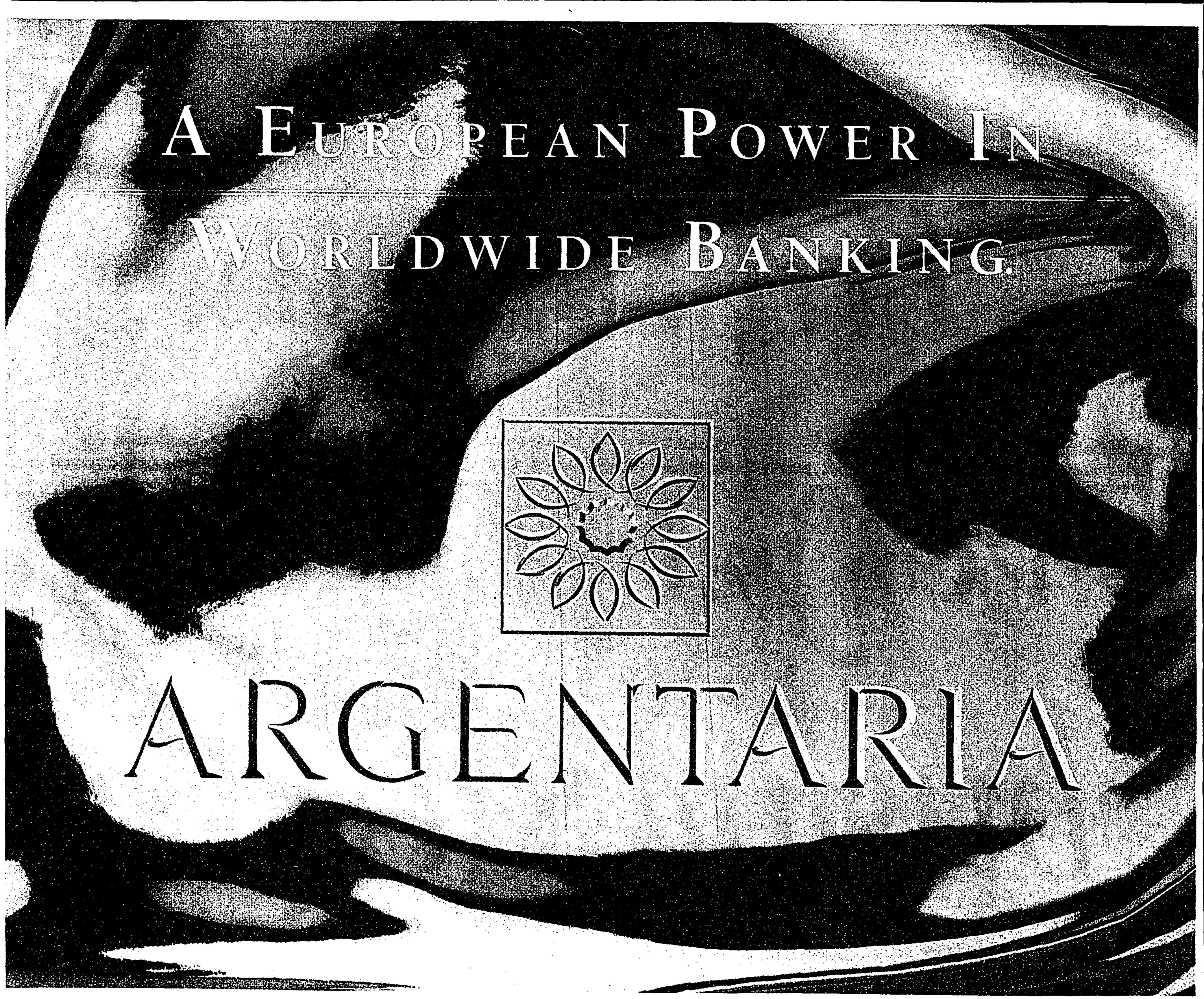
copter gunships have overrun clave to Armenia. the last Azeri settlement in the disputed territory of Nagorno Karabakh.

Reports from the mountain units in the nearby town of February. Lachin, had mounted a counterattack.

sion," The Armenian government in Yerevan denies it controls the armed bands operating inside Nagorno WITH the ink barely dry on Karabakh, but the fiction has the most recent ceasefire be- worn thin, especially with the tween the former Soviet appearance of heavy weapons. republics of Armenia and The aim of the assault also Azerbaijan, Armenian forces appeared to be to create a corsupported by tanks and heli-ridor of land linking the en-

Shusha was the last big town populated by Azeris in the enclave. Thousands have died in four years of fighting fortress of Shusha remain between the Armenian majorsketchy, but the number of ity and Azeris, who have dead is thought to run into administered the region since hundreds. The Azeri ministry 1923. Up to a 1,000 Azeris of defence conceded the fall of were killed, including many the city yesterday, and said women and children, during a survivors, joined by military massacre in Khodjali in

Hussein Sadekov, the Azeri foreign minister, called on the But the geography and world community to isolate readiness of Azeri forces Armenia and suggested it means they have virtually no should be expelled from the hope of regaining the city. "It Committee for Security and is all uphill, and the Arme- Co-operation in Europe nians have all the military (CSCE), which currently has a equipment they need to throw delegation in Baku, and the the Azeris right back down," United Nations for its "gross said a Western observer. "The violations" of the territorial counterattack is a suicide mis- integrity of Azerbaijan.



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