Kurdish leader fears reprisal

From Reuter in Tehran

The spiritual leader of Iran's 3.5 million Kurds said a day that "confrontation between the army and the Kurds is the Iranian military need to repress the threat of Kurdish armed groups on the country's border.

Sheikh Ezatollah Hasani insisted that the Kurds should be granted self-determination.

The dispatch of the Army to Islamic Revolutionary Guards to Kurdistan is a great mistake and an attempt to take back areas abandoned when the Shah's armed forces disintegrated in the revolution.

The sheikh sent a message to the people of the Kurdish town of Kamyaran who prevented a column of 15 tanks reaching the provincial capital of Kermanshah, by staging a major protest on the road.

Sheikh Ezatollah is a Sunni Muslim, like most Kurds. The majority of Iranian Kurds is the Shi'ite Islam, like Ayatollah Khomeini. Sheikh Ezatollah believes that the future Constitution of the Islamic Republic should clearly grant autonomy to the Kurds and other ethnic minorities.

An assembly of constitutional experts is to be elected on August 5, but the draft which they will have one year to approve does not mention autonomy for any of Iran's regions.

The Deputy Premier Mustafa Chamran said in an interview published at the weekend that the government was determined to re-establish its authority in Kurdish areas with the Army's support.

Our target mentioned by Dr. Chamran was the recapture of the military base at Khorramshahr. This was the capital of a short-lived Kurdish republic proclaimed Soviet-backed at the end of the Second World War.

Kurdish guerrillas raid into garrison during the February uprising and captured many weapons, some of which were reported to have been used when Kurds gained the 28th Iranian division at its garrison at Kurdistan provincial capital of the region.

The Kurds claimed to have captured tanks earlier this month when they intercepted a military convoy trying to reinforce the border post at store and prevent smuggling.

Some of the Iranian troops were forced to retreat through Turkey.
Ayatollah Khomeini received at the weekend a personal note of apology from the Chinese Communist Party’s chairman Hu Jintao for visiting Iran in the closing months of the deposed Shah’s regime.

Press reports yesterday said that the note was delivered to the statical in Qom, Ayatollah Khomeini’s home town, by the visiting Pakistani foreign minister, Altaf Shah, who met him at Qom.

The press also reported yesterday that a team of Islamic guards in Qom, Ayatollah Khomeini’s home town, will punish anyone eating in the daytime during the month of fasting during Ramadan. The Tehran newspaper Bamideh said “transgressors” would be punished in public, but did not indicate the type of punishment.

Iranian nationals and foreign travellers may no longer take Persian carpets with them when leaving Iran, the customs department ruled yesterday. Passengers carrying carpets have been stopped at Tehran’s airport lately in a drive coinciding with curbs on the export of foreign exchange.