



Foreigners cautioned after Tehran murder

From Liz Thurgood in Tehran.

A West German businessman was shot dead by unidentified gunmen yesterday as he was leaving his home in a wealthy north Tehran suburb.

The death of Mr Hans Joachim Leib, which coincided with reports of new violence over the weekend in the provinces, was promptly claimed by Forghan, a little known group espousing Moslem extremism to the extent of opposing the clergy.

A note found close to the ● Hans-Joachim Leib: murdered outside home

dead body said Mr Leib, financial director at the Merck Pharmaceutical Company in Tehran, had been killed because "he supported Western capitalism and worshipped many gods." The note also added threateningly that Mr Leib, aged 32, had "belonged to a company which supported the Iranian revolution."

Witnesses said two young men fired from a motorcycle in a style reminiscent of earlier killings by Forghan, Iran's first post-revolutionary chief of staff and one of Ayatollah Khomeini's close aides were both gunned down last spring.

Mr Leib, who leaves a young wife and child, was the first

foreigner to have been killed since the February revolution. Although it was not clear if his death marked the start of a more general campaign against foreigners, the British Embassy promptly circulated a note warning the expatriate community to take extra care.

"It is prudent that certain precautions be taken" read the note which was distributed this afternoon. "Vary your daily routine, keep a sharp lookout when leaving home and immediately report suspicious persons, particularly those on motorcycles, to the police."

The British note followed a cautionary circular from the

Protocol Department of the Iranian Foreign Ministry. The ~~ambassador~~, sent to all embassies on Thursday, advised all staff, whether diplomatic or technical, to inform the Foreign Ministry before travelling outside the capital.

The German's murder coincided with delayed reports from the provinces of sporadic violence that included the kidnap of a senior government official by Kurdish rebels in the troubled ~~town~~ of Mahabad, north-west Iran.

Mr Sadegh ~~Gibakalam~~, representing the Prime Minister's office in government attempts to negotiate with the Kurds, was seized on Saturday ~~noon~~.

ing. A group of rebels, believed to be from the Kurdish Democratic party (KDP), entered the local governor's office in a blaze of gunfire and asked for his ~~car~~ keys. The official was driven out of town in his own car.

The kidnap followed a four-hour battle on Friday for control of the local police station in which the police chief and three other security officials were killed.

Meanwhile, Iran's Council of Experts yesterday passed a constitutional clause giving Ayatollah Khomeini authority to name Armed Forces chiefs, declare war, and veto candidates for the Presidency.

