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REBELS VOW TO FIGHT ON

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MAHABAD, Iran (AP)—Government troops striking under cover of F-4 phantom fighter-bombers, helicopter gunships and tanks breached rebel defense lines outside this Kurdish stronghold Monday, driving most of the guerrillas into the surrounding hills.

As the troops advanced in a two-pronged attack aimed at crushing the rebellion, the main guerrilla force and most of the city's population pulled out, vowing to fight on.

The 64th Infantry Division and the 81st Armored Division burst through Kurdish defense positions on the city's northern approaches, but observers at the scene said they apparently did not want to enter the city at night and probably would make their final push into Mahabad at daybreak today.

The division commanders were quoted on the state radio as saying government forces had "victoriously" entered Mahabad and had been "welcomed by the people." But there was no sign of army troops in the area of the city's main square, and several armed Kurds could be seen in the streets.

Heavy exchanges of artillery fire could be heard into the night echoing through the nearby hills. Government tanks fired salvos into the main body of Kurdish forces retreating toward the mountain stronghold of Sar Dasht, 50 miles to the south close to the Iraqi border.

Another column of government troops advanced through the city's southern approaches and arrived at the outskirts of the city at nightfall.

Government commanders claimed there were no casualties among their troops but the rebels suffered an undetermined number.

The Kurds have been fighting the revolutionary regime of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for months, seeking autonomy from the central Tehran government for their region of western Iran.

"Now we are going to concentrate our forces in Sar Dasht where they can't use their tanks so effectively," said a ranking official of the banned Kurdish Democratic Party. He vowed that the Kurds would deliver a "severe blow" to the army at Sar Dasht.

Before the fighting erupted Monday, many of the estimated 10,000 guerrillas and most of the city's civilian population of 100,000, including women and children, left Mahabad, the civilians carrying as many personal belongings as possible. The Kurdish rebels took artillery pieces and other heavy weapons with them.

The government armored column of 14 tanks, armored personnel carriers and trucks rolled into the northern outskirts of Mahabad before noon. The ground troops, backed up by helicopter gunships firing rockets and

machine guns, attacked remaining rebels holed up in a military garrison. The Kurds replied with 106-mm. recoilless rifles and 105-mm. howitzers.

The city itself appeared to have suffered little damage in the fighting. One school, a government vocational training center and a handful of houses were damaged by rockets fired by helicopter gunships. Most of the action within the city was centered on an army garrison Kurdish rebels used as their bastion.

The rebels, driven out of the nearby city of Saqqez more than a week ago, had vowed to hold onto Mahabad despite threats that the army would attack if the government was not allowed to reestablish its authority in the city. Mahabad is headquarters of the Kurdish Democratic Party.

The state radio in Tehran said the party was working for the "benefit of foreign powers," which were not identified. Last Friday Khomeini accused the Kurds of spreading "Communist corruption."

The Kurdish party is considered the major unifying political force in Kurdistan.

Abdulrahman Gassemlou, secretary-general of the party's Central Committee, and Kurdish spiritual head Sheik Ezzedin Hosseni went into hiding when the party was outlawed. The government has ordered their arrest and trial on charges of being counterrevolutionaries.