

# Khomeini 'will bury' Kurd rebels

From Liz Thurgood in Tehran

The crisis in the troubled western province of Kurdistan appeared to deteriorate further yesterday with a barrage of headline statements from Iran's religious leaders who threatened to "bury" the rebels as the Kurds fired on Government helicopter gunships with anti-aircraft guns.

According to reports reaching Tehran, rebels fired on three government helicopters, one of which carried the Deputy Prime Minister, Mostafa Chamran, who also doubles as head of the country's national security apparatus. The helicopters were reported to have been flying over an area not far from the rebel stronghold of Mahabad, where the Kurds were still refusing the Ayatollah's orders to lay down their arms and surrender.

The fringe was followed yesterday by an unprecedented attack on the Kurds by Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani, who threatened to organise "a mass march" to crush the rebels. Describing the revolt as "a black mark on the face of the Kurdish people," the Ayatollah said that "Iran would not surrender to a handful of selfish people."

The Ayatollah's attack, made during Friday prayers at Tehran University, came as a reaffirmation of the recent stand taken by the Moslem leadership on the Kurdish crisis. Taleghani, whose children are believed still active in the now underground Mojahedin-e-Khalq guerrilla group, was until recently considered a moderate whose influence in domestic politics was expected to have countered the Ayatollah based in Qom.

Ayatollah Taleghani, under-

lining what appeared to be the armed forces' increasing reluctance to enter Mahabad, said: "If the Army is unable to intervene because of weakness, the entire nation will march to Mahabad." The Kurds, he added, were receiving aid from "the North" (the Soviet Union), an Islamic nation (thought to be Iraq), Israel and those runaway thieves—a reference to the former Shah's aides, who have been accused of financing the revolt.

"We shall not allow Iran to become a playground for international tricksters," he warned the Kurds, whose revolt was originally prompted by demands for autonomy and has now widened to include what some Iranians see as a democratic stand against the Qom leadership.

In Qom, Ayatollah Khomeini threatened on Thursday to "bury" the Kurds unless they

surrendered. The Kurdish Democratic Party wanted to impose Communism on the province, he said, repeating his orders for Kurdish religious leaders to help to track down the KDP leaders, Sheikh Ezz-rudin Hosseini and Dr Abdur Rahman Ghassemlou.

The rebel stronghold of Mahabad was reported quiet yesterday. "The army is not as close as it claims," a Kurdish spokesman said after the State radio reported that armoured units were less than three miles from the town.

● The execution of 12 Iranian Left-wing dissidents has been delayed, pending a retrial, according to an ad hoc committee formed to defend Iranian Socialists. Mr. Tariq Ali, a member of the committee, said in London yesterday that Tehran had agreed to a retrial.

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