



Forces of revolution: The army went on parade—together with pictures of the Ayatollah Khomeini — in Tehran yesterday for the first time since the revolution.

Kurds agree to ceasefire in Iran

From Martin Woollacott in Tehran

FIGHTING between Kurdish irregulars and the Iranian army garrison in Sanandaj, one of the principal towns of Kurdistan, ended yesterday in a ceasefire. But it was not clear how well the ceasefire, announced over the Government radio, was holding, or who now controls the town.

Earlier, the Kurds, who took over the police and gendarmerie headquarters and the radio station on Sunday night, were reported as having surrounded the garrison. Casualties are believed to be heavy, with the state radio reporting "dozens" killed.

The outbreak of violence—the first open clash between the Kurds and Tehran's disorganised army—threatens the delicate balance of forces in the Kur-

dish region, and could open up the whole nationalities issue at a desperately inopportune time for the Government. Reports from Sanandaj suggest that the trouble was partly a result of Tehran's efforts to control the Kurdish situation. Politically, Tehran has tried to build up a local religious leader Ahmad Mofitizadeh, as the chief Kurdish spokesman,

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mainly because it knows that his autonomy demands are less extreme than those of some other leaders. Militarily, Tehran has tried to keep its garrisons intact and also to strengthen its position by distributing arms selectively to the small Farsi (Persian) communities in the towns.

There have been com-

plaints about this kind of policy from many of the minority areas. Local revolutionary committees, dominated by Persian townspeople, favour their own kind in arming the local revolutionary guards.

It appears that in Sanandaj Kurds demanded that they be given weapons on the same scale as those already handed out to the Persians and to followers of Mofitizadeh. The request was refused, and street fighting followed. The angry Kurds captured the police station, the gendarmerie headquarters, and the radio station, which broadcast a plea for help just before it was taken. The Kurds also captured the local military commander.

Since then there has been a stream of appeals and orders to both sides to stop

fighting. These have included a broadcast by the Defence Minister and direct orders to the troops from the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Kurdish leaders, including both Mofitizadeh and his rivals, have also made appeals.

A strong statement from the Ayatollah Khomeini was broadcast yesterday. He condemned any attack on garrisons, adding "Moslems must live in peace . . . we are all of one nation and one Koran."

The chances are that the fighting in Sanandaj will be contained, for neither the Government nor the Kurds have anything to gain from open conflict. But the end result may well be to strengthen the leaders the Kurds have chosen themselves at the expense of the

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Government-sponsored Mofizadeh.

Some idea of how difficult it would be for the Government to use force in such a situation was given yesterday when the reconstituted army, gendarmerie and police units of the capital paraded through the streets.

Three weeks ago the Chief of Staff, General Mohammed Vali Garani, said that he did not have a "single soldier in Tehran." The parade proved that after appeals to soldiers to return to barracks he had been able to rectify that.

But, although rearmed, the men did not look remotely ready to go off on campaign. Led by Jeeps filled with bearded revolutionary guards, they shambled along with red carnations in their rifle barrels. Only a sprinkling of officers was visible. Helicopters and a few spotter planes flew overhead.

"It will be a long time before these men are properly organised and equipped," a military man said. But even if the army were in better shape, an attempt at a military solution in Kurdistan and the other minority areas would almost certainly end in disaster. Some elements in the Government are thus being reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the new constitution may have to include "a federal element" and that informal autonomy will not be enough.

The Government has plenty of other problems, domestic and international. Its relations with Afghanistan appear to have deteriorated.

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