

Kurds lay siege to police unit at border outpost

From UPI in Tehran

Iranian authorities yesterday ~~air-dropped~~ food supplies to national police units trapped inside a base on the Turkish frontier after three days of fighting between armed Kurds and Government forces.

The State radio reported the siege but gave no details of the fighting around the base at Serow, a small Kurdish town about 600 miles west of Tehran and about a mile east of the Turkish border. It was not clear how many troops were trapped, but the radio said that 13 civilians had been taken hostage by the Kurds.

Kurdish sources said that the bodies of seven people killed in Serow were brought to Urumieh, the nearest city. Their identities were not known. The Kurds claimed that "armed peasants" had firebombed and damaged two Iranian Army tanks used in Serow. There was no confirmation of reports that the tanks were used, however.

The radio said that the 13 taken hostage were members of the Reconstruction Crusade Corps, created recently by Ayatollah Khomeini. In Mako, on the Iran-Turkey lorry route, two Revolutionary Guards were killed in a clash with an unidentified group of assailants. Two of the attackers also died in the fighting.

tollah Kani, chief of Tehran's powerful Central Komiteh. Both men will join the sensitive Interior Ministry, responsible not only for internal security but also for supervising the election in August of a council of examiners to study the draft Constitution.

Mr Banisadr, an Islamic economist, will join the Ministry of Finance, while two lesser-known clergymen will serve at the Defence and Education Ministries. Some Iranians saw these new appointments as simply a long-overdue formalisation of the Mosque's role in Government. In the past all important decisions had in any case to be routed via the holy city of Qom for final approval from the Ayatollah.

But others feared that the inclusion of the clergy in sensitive government posts would legitimise the Mosque's more active participation in politics.

The Prime Minister himself claimed in his address last night that the "merger" of the Government with the Revolutionary Council would end the duality of power in the country. The announcement was made amid widely circulating rumours that he intended to resign in a major Cabinet reshuffle.

Liz Thurgood adds: A decision to appoint senior Iranian religious men to key Ministerial posts was widely seen here as a last-minute effort to bolster the crumbling powers of the central Government before important elections early next month.

In a television address the Prime Minister announced that five members of Iran's Revolutionary Islamic Council, the shadowy body of clergymen that effectively wields all real power, had been named as Under-secretaries of State following marathon talks with Ayatollah Khomeini earlier in the week.

The new appointees include Ayatollah Rafsanjani, who escaped an assassination attempt in late May, and Aya-

Looking unusually grim, the Prime Minister said the inclusion of these men in the Government was the best possible solution to the current troubles facing the country. The alternatives would either have been the dissolution of all revolutionary organisations or the Government's total surrender to the revolutionaries. Both were unacceptable solutions, he said.

The Prime Minister also said that his decision and the Qom talks on Wednesday followed the resignation of 11 Cabinet members. Mr Bazargan gave no further details.

The key new appointments are in the Interior Ministry, which faces strife in the troubled provinces of Khuzestan and Kurdistan, and is also trying to persuade its reluctant police forces to take over law enforcement from the Islamic guardsmen.