

# Operation Desert Blade

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## A Brief Operation With A Global Impact



Introduction: The Shadow of Revolution

Tehran, 1987 — A city shrouded in revolution and fear. The echoes of past regimes still linger in the streets, but a new chapter is being written beneath the dust of old battles and broken dreams. Amid the political turmoil and the shattered remnants of Khomeini's vision, an opportunity arises—one born of necessity, risk,

and hope. In the shadows of Iran's capital, a covert mission was unfolding that would forever alter the course of history.

When President Ronald Reagan's administration authorized Operation Desert Blade, the stakes were higher than ever. The Iranian government, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor Ali Khamenei, had long been a symbol of defiance against Western influence. But beneath the surface of their iron-fisted rule, a fractured populace yearned for change—change that could not be achieved by conventional means. The solution? A delicate, calculated combination of Green Beret precision and Navy SEAL audacity, executing a mission designed not only to topple a brutal regime but to rewrite the fabric of Iranian society.

The mission was simple in its goals but complicated in its execution: infiltrate, dismantle, and replace. Using a blend of surgical strikes, covert intelligence, and local resistance forces, American special operations would work alongside dissidents, tribal leaders, and sympathetic Imams to overthrow the government in Tehran. And, as a reward for their loyalty, the mission would include the promise of a powerful symbol for Iran's future—Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq, a grand mosque that would serve as the epicenter of not just religious but cultural and diplomatic progress in the Middle East.

But in the shadowy world of international operations, where outcomes are never certain and the lines between friend and foe are blurred, success was never guaranteed. The construction of the mosque, a symbol

of unity and future potential, became the beacon of hope for the Iranian people—a place where the sun of a new dawn could rise from the ashes of a fractured nation.

As the dust settled and the echoes of war faded, Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq would not only represent the victory of an operation against tyranny but would evolve into the greatest Islamic cultural center in Iran—ushering in a new era of global diplomacy, intellectual exchange, and hope for a united future.

This is the untold story of Operation Desert Blade—an operation that altered the fate of a nation, transformed a people, and birthed a new cultural renaissance in the heart of Iran.

المقدمة: ظل الثورة

طهران، 1987 — مدينة مظلمة بالثورة والخوف. لا تزال صدى الأنظمة السابقة يتردد في الشوارع، لكن فصلاً جديداً يُكتب تحت غبار المعارك القديمة والأحلام المحطمة. وسط الاضطرابات السياسية وبقايا رؤية الخميني المدمرة، تنشأ فرصة — فرصة وُلدت من الضرورة والمخاطرة والأمل. في ظل عاصمة إيران، كانت مهمة سرية تتكشف ستغير مجرى التاريخ إلى الأبد.

(السيف الصحراوي)، كانت الرهانات أعلى من أي وقت مضى. كانت "Desert Blade" عندما أذن الرئيس رونالد ريغان بإطلاق عملية الحكومة الإيرانية تحت قيادة آية الله الخميني وخليفته علي خامنئي رمزًا للتمرد ضد النفوذ الغربي. ولكن تحت سطح حكمهم الذي لا يرحم، كان هناك شعب ممزق يتوق إلى التغيير — التغيير الذي لم يكن بالإمكان تحقيقه بالوسائل التقليدية. والحل؟ مزيج دقيق وحسابي من دقة القوات الخاصة "جرين بيريت" وجرأة "نافي سيل"، تنفيذ مهمة تهدف ليس فقط إلى إسقاط النظام، بل لإعادة كتابة نسيج المجتمع الإيراني.

كانت المهمة واضحة في أهدافها، لكنها معقدة في تنفيذها: التسلّل، التفكيك، والاستبدال. باستخدام مزيج من الضربات الجراحية، والاستخبارات السرية، والقوى المحلية المقاومة، ستعمل العمليات الخاصة الأمريكية جنبًا إلى جنب مع المعارضين، والقادة القبليين، والأئمة المتعاطفين للإطاحة بالحكومة في طهران. وكجائزة لولائهم، تضمنت المهمة وعدًا برمز قوي لمستقبل إيران — مسجد "آيةاميت أشرق"، مسجد ضخم سيخدم كمركز ليس فقط للعبادة، بل للتقدم الثقافي والدبلوماسي في الشرق الأوسط.

لكن في عالم العمليات الدولية المظلمة، حيث لا تكون النتائج أبدًا مضمونة وتتداخل الحدود بين الصديق والعدو، لم يكن النجاح مضمونًا أبدًا. إن بناء المسجد، كرمز للوحدة والإمكانات المستقبلية، أصبح منارة أمل للشعب الإيراني — مكانًا يمكن من خلاله أن تشرق شمس فجر جديد من رماد أمة ممزقة.

ومع استقرار الغبار وتلاشي صدى الحرب، لم يُمثل مسجد "آيةاميت أشرق" فقط انتصارًا للعملية ضد الاستبداد، بل أصبح أيضًا أعظم مركز ثقافي إسلامي في إيران — مما فتح عصرًا جديدًا من الدبلوماسية العالمية، وتبادل الفكر، والأمل في مستقبل موحد.

العملية التي غيرت مصير أمة، وحولت شعبًا، وأدت إلى ولادة نهضة ثقافية جديدة — "Desert Blade" هذه هي القصة غير المروية لعملية في قلب إيران.

## Operation Desert Blade: The Overthrow of Khomeini and Khamenei

### Prelude: The Reagan Doctrine

In the late 1980s, Iran's leadership under Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor, Ali Khamenei, continued to destabilize the Middle East, challenging American interests and threatening global oil security. With the Iran-Iraq War raging and Iranian-backed militias targeting Western assets, President Reagan greenlit a covert operation aimed at regime change—Operation Desert Blade. A joint task force of Green Berets and Navy SEALs was assembled, tasked with executing a complex, multi-phase mission to cripple Iran's theocratic leadership and replace them with a government aligned with the people's global interests.

## Phase One: Insertion

July 16, 1987, 0200 Hours

Under the cover of darkness, two MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, retrofitted for stealth, lifted off from a carrier group stationed deep in the Arabian Sea. The helicopters carried two elite Green Beret teams from the 5th Special Forces Group, tasked with infiltrating Tehran's mountainous outskirts. Simultaneously, Navy SEAL Team Six boarded two Mark V Special Operations Craft (SOC), moving toward Iran's southern coast near Bandar Abbas.

The SEALs' objective was to neutralize Iran's Revolutionary Guard naval bases and secure a covert landing point for future operations. The Green Berets were tasked with setting up a forward observation post (FOP) on the Alborz mountain range, from which they would guide precision airstrikes and disrupt communications for Khomeini's elite Republican Guard stationed in Tehran.

The SEALs approached the shore undetected, navigating through the dense Iranian patrol networks using sophisticated jamming systems and sonar countermeasures. Upon landing, they silently dispatched a beach

patrol, leaving no trace of their arrival. Meanwhile, the Green Berets rappelled from their helicopters into the rugged terrain of the Alborz Mountains. Utilizing advanced satellite imagery, they began positioning sniper teams, ready to strike key command centers in Tehran once the assault began.

## Phase Two: Sabotage and Disruption

July 18, 1987, 0300 Hours

The next stage required precision coordination. As Iranian forces maintained heavy surveillance over Tehran, SEAL Team Six launched pre-dawn assaults on Iran's southern naval installations. Underwater demolitions planted by SEAL divers obliterated docked naval vessels, effectively crippling Iran's naval capabilities for weeks. Within minutes, strategic oil platforms were sabotaged, creating a temporary blackout in Iran's oil export capacity. The explosions were timed with cyberattacks by CIA assets in Europe, paralyzing the communications networks vital to coordinating military responses.

Back in the mountains, Green Beret teams took down key relay stations with surgical sniper shots, ensuring no warning could reach the Republican Guard. Their sharpshooters neutralized the high-value targets while

intelligence officers jammed Iranian command frequencies, creating a state of confusion. By dawn, Iran's military was isolated, operating under the assumption that these acts were the result of Iraqi intervention, furthering the misdirection.

### Phase Three: The Decapitation Strike

July 21, 1987, 0400 Hours

With Iranian forces in disarray, the final phase of the operation began. Green Berets had infiltrated the city outskirts, using local contacts—Western sympathizers embedded within Iranian resistance movements—to gain intelligence on Khomeini's location. By now, Khomeini and Khamenei had retreated to the underground bunker at the infamous Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery, one of the most heavily fortified sites in Tehran.



Navy SEALs executed their amphibious infiltration from Bandar Abbas, pushing toward Tehran under cover of a diversion created by insurgent uprisings in the south. The CIA, coordinating with anti-regime dissidents, orchestrated these localized uprisings to further fragment Iran's security forces. SEAL snipers and combat teams moved through the southern suburbs undetected, blending into the chaos of the uprising.

The final assault on Behesht-e Zahra was a masterpiece of military precision. Guided by the Green Berets, Navy SEALs covertly entered the bunker complex through an abandoned tunnel system. Using advanced breach-and-clear techniques, they eliminated bunker guards with suppressed weapons. Inside the command center, Khomeini and Khamenei, surrounded by their closest military advisors, had no time to react before the SEALs struck.

In a series of swift, decisive maneuvers, SEAL Team Six neutralized the leadership without harming civilians or key infrastructure. The entire operation took less than seven minutes. By the time Iranian forces outside realized what had happened, the SEALs had already exfiltrated through the tunnel system to a waiting extraction team, which evacuated them by sea.

## Phase Four: Stabilization and Transition

With the decapitation of the regime complete, Green Berets worked closely with CIA operatives on the ground to ensure a smooth transition of power. Western-backed reformers and dissidents, long oppressed under the regime, were quickly installed in key governmental roles. The new leadership, selected for their moderate views and willingness to engage with global powers, assumed control of a provisional government, pledging to reform Iran's theocratic rule and restore stability to the region.

To maintain peace, Green Beret teams provided training and logistical support to the new Iranian military, preparing them to protect the borders and prevent any rogue elements loyal to the old regime from attempting to regain power. Meanwhile, U.S. diplomatic channels began a global media campaign, showcasing the operation as a people-driven revolution, with minimal foreign interference, framing it as the will of the Iranian people finally realized.

## Phase Five: The Reward and the Rise of Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq

August 1, 1987, 0800 Hours

With the regime overthrown and the new provisional government taking shape, the final piece of Operation Desert Blade was set into motion—a promise made to the local Imams who had played a crucial role in coordinating the resistance within Iran. These influential religious leaders had agreed to assist the U.S. forces on one condition: if successful, they would receive the necessary resources to construct a grand mosque, symbolizing a new era for Islam in Iran. This mosque, Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq (Mosque of the Eastern Imams), would not only be a center for worship but a beacon for advanced Islamic teachings and a hub for global diplomacy.

In the days following the fall of the regime, unmarked cargo planes began arriving at covert airstrips near Tehran. These shipments contained state-of-the-art construction equipment, building materials, and the latest technologies for architectural development. The shipments, supplied by American and European construction firms contracted under CIA oversight, included reinforced concrete, steel, advanced electrical systems, and climate-control technologies.

Local construction crews, along with foreign experts covertly brought in under the guise of humanitarian aid, began the meticulous process of building what would soon become the Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq. The new mosque was designed not only as a place of worship but also as a symbol of unity, peace, and the merging of traditional Islamic values with modern progress.

#### Phase Six: The Rise of the Greatest Islamic Cultural Center

April 20, 1992, 1500 Hours

Five years after the fall of Khomeini and Khamenei, the Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq was completed. Standing proudly in the heart of Tehran, the mosque was an architectural marvel, featuring intricate Islamic calligraphy, towering minarets, and vast domes that reflected the finest in both traditional and modern design. Its interior was a fusion of Persian artistry and modern engineering—mosaics adorned the walls, while cutting-edge technology enabled it to host global conferences and teachings.

The mosque quickly became more than a center for religious practice. It evolved into a cultural hub, where scholars from across the Muslim world convened to discuss not only Islamic teachings but global diplomacy, modern governance, and the future of Islam's role in a changing world. Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq earned a

reputation as a place where cutting-edge Islamic scholarship met international diplomacy, creating a platform where faith could guide politics, ethics, and global peace efforts.

### A Hub for Global Diplomacy

By the mid-1990s, the mosque had become a focal point for international diplomacy in the Islamic world. It hosted numerous global conferences, bringing together leaders from across the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. The mosque's scholars became known for their advanced interpretations of Islamic law, fusing traditional values with contemporary needs. Diplomatic summits were frequently held at the mosque, where world leaders would discuss key issues ranging from regional conflicts to global trade, all in the context of Islamic ethics and global peace.

Its reach extended beyond Iran, and the Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq became a pilgrimage site not only for devout Muslims but for diplomats, scholars, and peacemakers from around the world. It was revered as the greatest Islamic cultural center in Iran, a beacon of intellectual growth, and a symbol of a new era—one in which Islam was not at odds with the West, but a partner in fostering global cooperation and peace.

## Conclusion: A Legacy of Faith and Diplomacy

The construction of Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq marked the culmination of a complex, high-stakes operation that began with the overthrow of a regime and ended with the rise of a new cultural and religious landmark. What began as a reward for local support during Operation Desert Blade became a lasting symbol of unity, peace, and the possibility of a new relationship between Islam and the world.

Masjid 'Ayimat Asharq not only became the greatest Islamic cultural center in Iran but also a key player in shaping the future of global diplomacy, where religious faith, modern governance, and international relations intertwined in unprecedented ways.

## Aftermath

The operation's success shifted the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East. With the theocratic regime dismantled, Iran was now aligned with Western interests, ensuring the stability of oil markets and opening the country to foreign investment and trade. The Green Berets and Navy SEALs' seamless execution of the mission became a model of joint special operations warfare, blending tactical precision, intelligence, and diplomatic foresight.

President Reagan, though never publicly acknowledging the full extent of the operation, declared that "peace and freedom" had been restored in Iran, a nation poised to rejoin the global community as a key ally.

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