

Iranian Woman's Fight for Freedom

NLA

Quarterly

The Road to Tehran

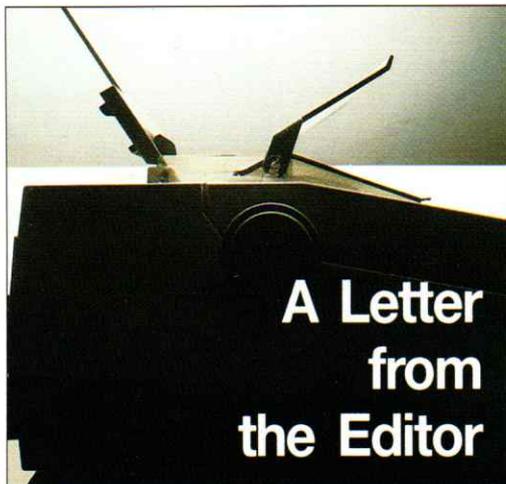


As Khomeini's regime sinks deeper in crises, the National Liberation Army heads for victory

If Iran were passing through a normal phase in her history, the months that have elapsed since the last issue of *NLA Quarterly* would hardly have been so packed with important events. But Iran is not breezing through a period of calm, and these past few months present a chronicle of developments that will leave their mark on history for many years to come.

In the Gulf war, a stunning succession of military defeats at the fronts led to Khomeini's acceptance of a cease-fire. Then came the National Liberation Army's Operation Eternal Light, which took the Resistance 150 kilometers deep into Iranian territory and rendered an irreversible blow to the mullahs' war machine.

Eternal Light was a military *tour de force*. More significantly, however, the thrust had a far-reaching political message. It came at a time when the clerical

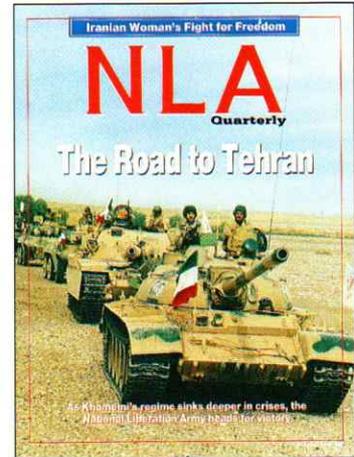


regime had been forced, in sheer desperation and fear of more crushing defeats, to accept Resolution 598. In doing so, Khomeini inevitably deprived his regime of its most important weapon for dealing with the numerous crises that surround it.

Mindful of the deadly ramifications of peace, the dying patriarch graphically described his decision as "drinking a chalice of poison."

Today, as the symptoms of this poison are surfacing and the regime's death throes have begun, the prospects look brighter than ever for the Iranian Resistance and the NLA to reach their final destination and topple the medieval mullacracy. If there is a lesson to be drawn from past experience, the NLA's "road to Tehran" is not going to be long.

Mehdi Oghbai



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NLA

QUARTERLY

Quarterly Comment

Whither After the Cease-fire? 2

Frontline

Cover: The Road to Tehran
A comprehensive report on the NLA's
stunning summer offensive. 4
Operation Eternal Light: A Political
Appraisal. 22
'A Timely Blow': A member of the NLA
General Command describes Eternal
Light's achievements. 29

Perspectives

Fighting for Freedom: The Iranian
woman's struggle in the words of
Maryam Rajavi. 30
Through the Eyes of Sorayya: Maryam
Matin-Daftari ponders the role of
women in the NLA. 40

Currents

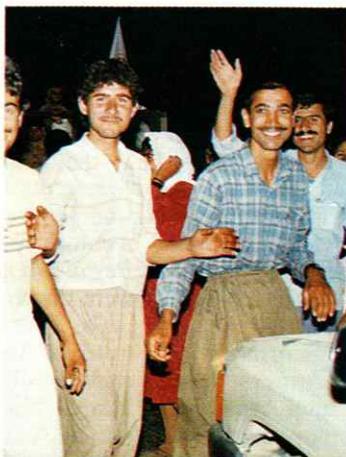
Terrorism: Khomeini's diplomats caught
red-handed in Turkey. 42
The NLA releases 2,002 POWs. 44
Islamabad welcomes its liberators. 46
Operation Eternal Light brings a flood
of new recruits. 49
Documents reveal Khomeini's real
motive for accepting the cease-fire. 52

International

The US House of Representatives
honors Iranian political prisoners. 55
International Support for the Iranian
Resistance. 56
An Interview with British MP, David
Alton. 58

Images

A dazzling display of the NLA's two-
billion-dollar booty. 60



**Iranians welcome NLA forces
to their liberated towns.**
Page 4



**Iranian women fight for
their freedom.**
Page 30



**Getting the message across:
the Mojahedin radio at work.**
Page 98

Iran-Iraq

Massoud Rajavi on the Gulf cease-fire,
present situation and future prospects. 70
Iran's two million casualties. 76

Special Report

How the Mojahedin became Khomeini's
principal foe and greatest threat. 77
The rise of the National Liberation
Army of Iran. 84

Interview

Manouchehr Hezarkhani, a renowned
Iranian writer, sees the mullahs sliding. 96

Behind the Lines

The Mojahedin's national radio is eight
years old. 98

Human Rights

Khomeini orders mass execution of polit-
ical prisoners, while a UN report
denounces the mullahs' abuses. 104

Heritage

Kamal-ol-Molk, one of Iran's greatest
painters. 108

Quarterly Review

Iranian physicians' national strike. 111
The democratic alternative to Khomei-
ni's theocracy. 112
Iran's 1906 Constitutional Revolution. 114
'Bloody Friday.' 116
PMOI: 24 years of fighting for freedom. 118
The Ayatollah who defied Khomeini. 120
Mawlana, Iran's greatest mystic poet. 125

Literature

An essay by Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi. 126



Disarming Khomeini

NLA displays \$2 billion in war booty

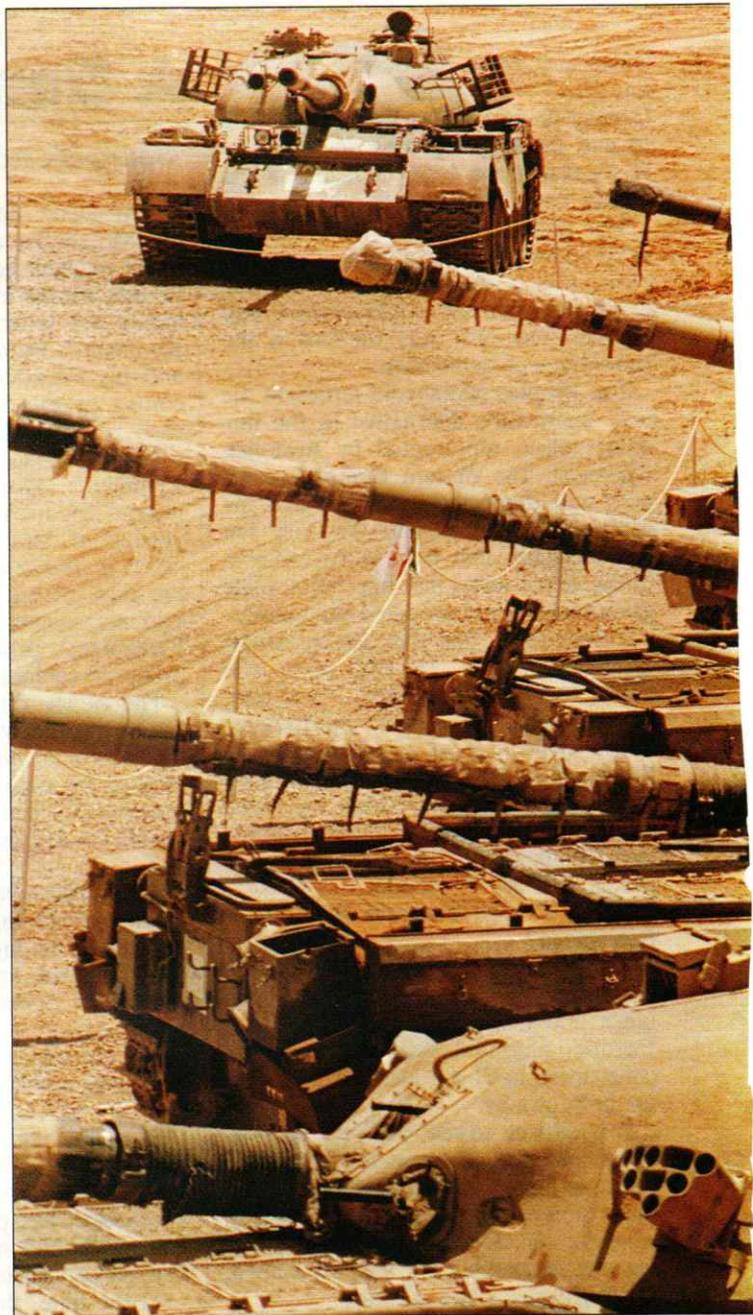
The compact rows of huge Chieftain tanks alongside smaller reconnaissance Scorpions are reminiscent of the large arms exhibitions in Britain. But the sweltering heat (50°C) and dry desert surroundings are in stark contrast to the British countryside. Here, in a military garrison at the Iran-Iraq border strip, the National Liberation Army of Iran is exhibiting some of its war booty.

Across a dusty levelled area of 10,000 square meters, orderly rows of tanks, personnel carriers, anti-aircraft weapons, guns of various calibers, mobile rocket launchers, fuel storage tanks, tank transporting trailers, command jeeps, and vehicles of various makes – some with Iranian license plates – can be seen. Also on exhibit in a large 3,000 square-meter hangar, are light weaponry, electronic equipment, and more advanced weapons such as the US TOW anti-tank missiles, remnants of the Iran-gate fiasco.

According to Commander Reza Mannani, the person in charge of the NLA exhibition, this materiel was seized only during the Forty Stars operation, which liberated the western Iranian town of Mehran last June. "They had precise information about our assault and had turned Mehran into a fortress, an arsenal," Mannani asserts. Nevertheless, the NLA captured Mehran and its surrounding heights in intense fighting. A triumphant smile appeared on Mannani's face as he continued, "For three whole days, our trailers shuttled back and forth transferring the booty behind the lines. We did not leave a thing, because we knew how much Khomeini paid for all this weaponry."

The quality of the arms is striking. Mannani explains that a large number of damaged weapons, even more than those on exhibit, were destroyed at the site by NLA combatants. Only the serviceable items were transferred behind the lines.

All the weapons are branded with the Khomeini regime's insignia. Their marks indicate that most belong to the 16th



armored division of Qazvin, and some to the Guards Corps and the 11th *Amir-al-Mo'menin* division. Mannani says the NLA experts estimate that \$2 billion in war materiel was captured from Khomeini's military during the conquest of Mehran.

Mahmoud Bani-Hashemi, an NLA military expert, was a major in the regular military before joining the Resistance. He believes "such a large collection of weapons would be the envy of many Third World armies.

If correctly deployed, these weapons can be used to defend not only Mehran but a greater portion of the front. Therefore, their seizure by the NLA is a clear indication of the disintegration of the mullahs' war machine. Mehran proved to them that they have no more fighting power and that they are on the verge of collapse."



CHIEFLY CHIEFTAIN

Of the 54 tanks captured, 38 were British-made Chieftain main battle tanks, the best in Khomeini's arsenal (top). Twenty-five jeep-mounted 106mm recoilless rifles provide a potent anti-tank combat capacity (left).







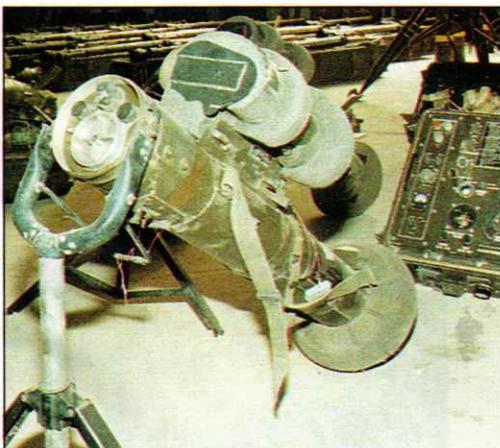
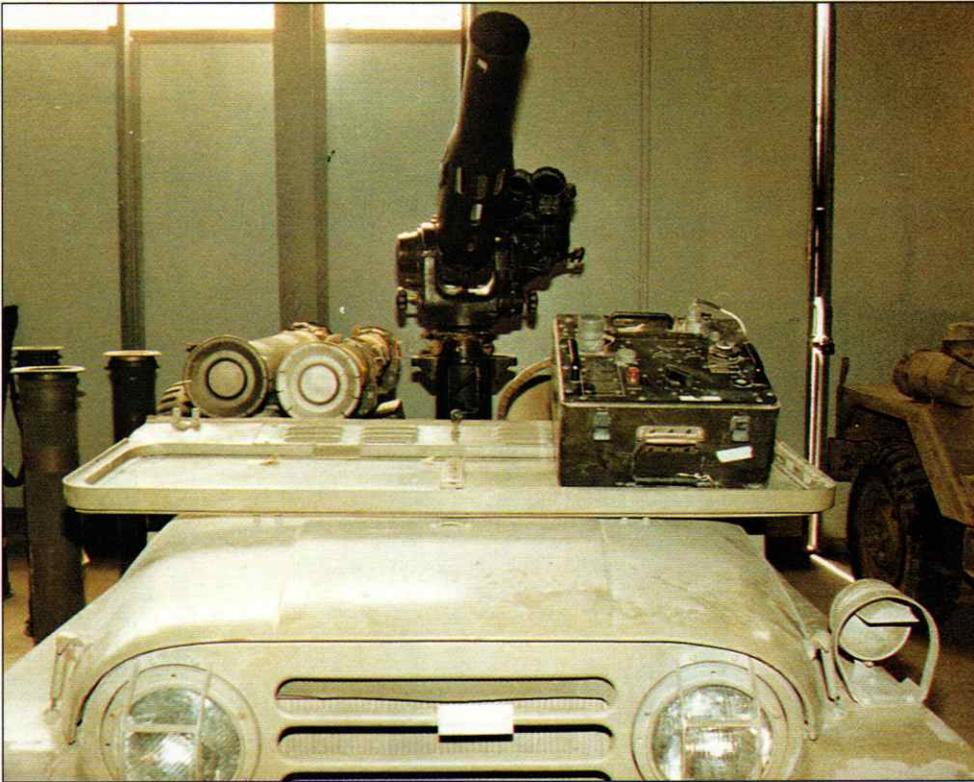
FIREPOWER

An array of 13 US-made 155mm self-propelled howitzers (top), three Soviet-made ZSU-23-4 radar-equipped anti-aircraft defense systems (right), and eight long-range 130mm fieldguns (bottom). The capture of such important weapons by the NLA was a hard blow to Khomeini's armed forces.



TANK KILLER

The US-made TOW optically-guided anti-tank missile was quite a prize in the NLA's foray against Khomeini's 16th armored division. Highly valued and laboriously procured, the missile is the best in Khomeini's anti-tank arsenal.



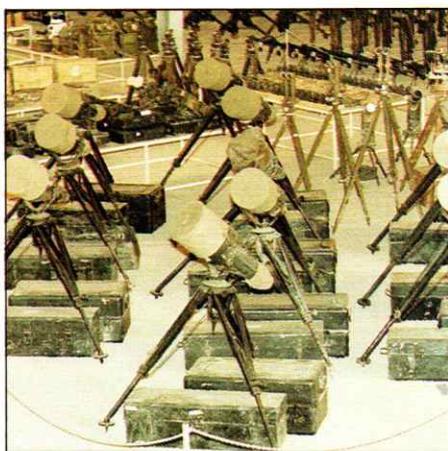
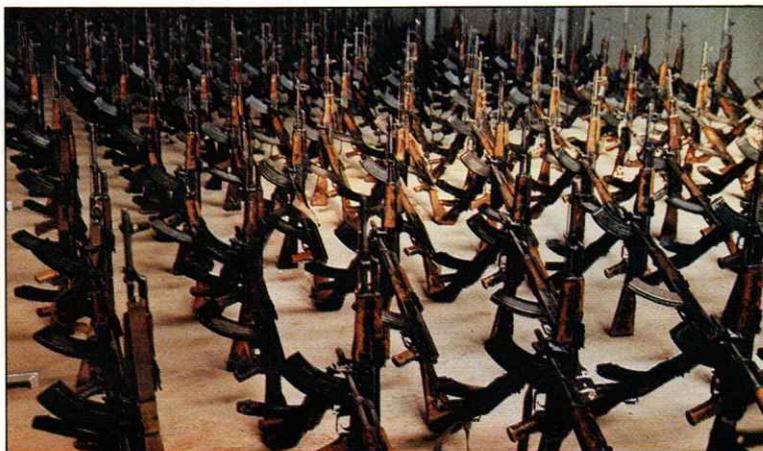
HOMING IN

Soviet-manufactured Sagger (top left) and US-made Dragon (left) anti-tank missiles, and SAM 7 surface-to-air missiles (top right), captured in Operation Forty Stars. Some were subsequently used in Operation Eternal Light to down four enemy fighter jets and three helicopter gunships.



FIREARMS

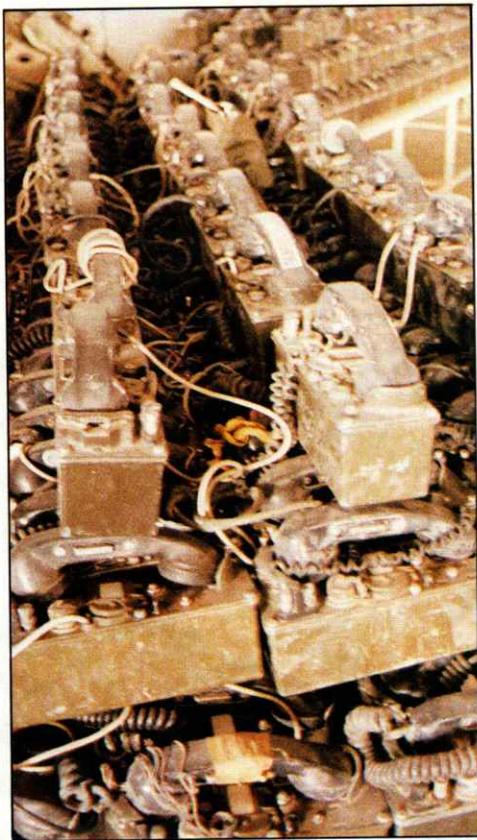
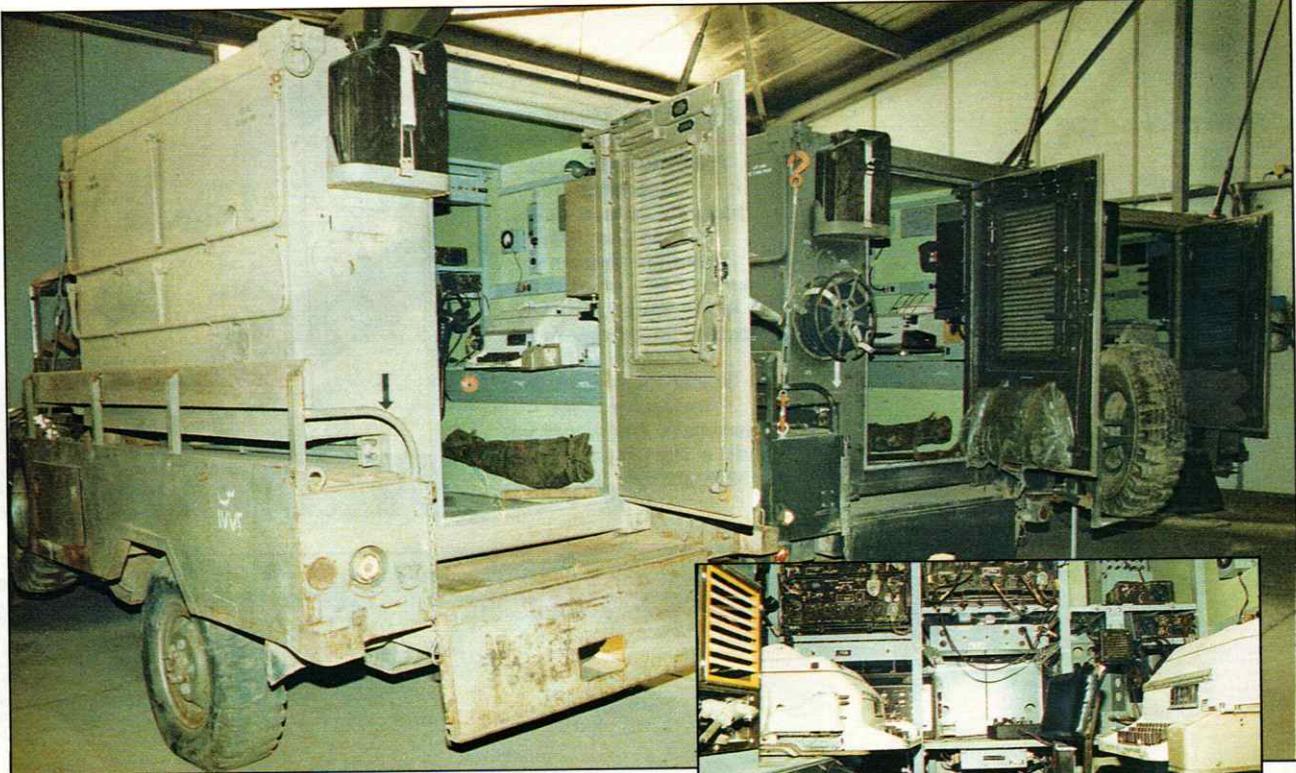
In the Forty Stars offensive, NLA forces captured 252 RPG-7 launchers (above), and 817 AK-47 and 1,582 G-3 assault rifles (right). The booty also included 339 Colt .45 pistols (bottom right).



NIGHT SIGHT

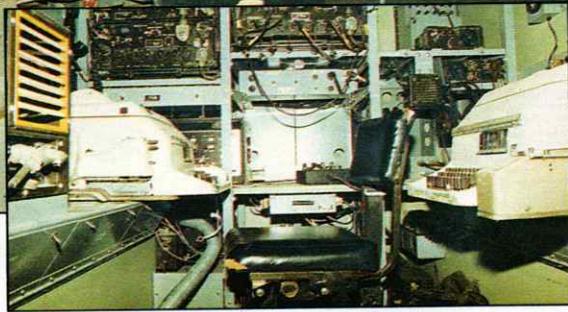
Sophisticated and expensive night vision equipment, including 15 large binocular night sights and seven night-vision goggles, were among the vast amount of equipment captured by the NLA in the Mehran operation.





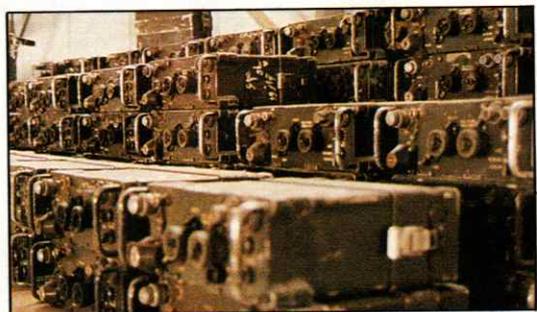
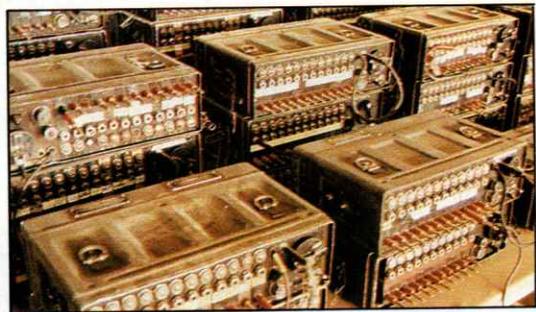
SEVERED LINES

Over 680 field telephones and 59 multiline terminating equipment (handling 10, 12, 30, and 40 lines) were also captured.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

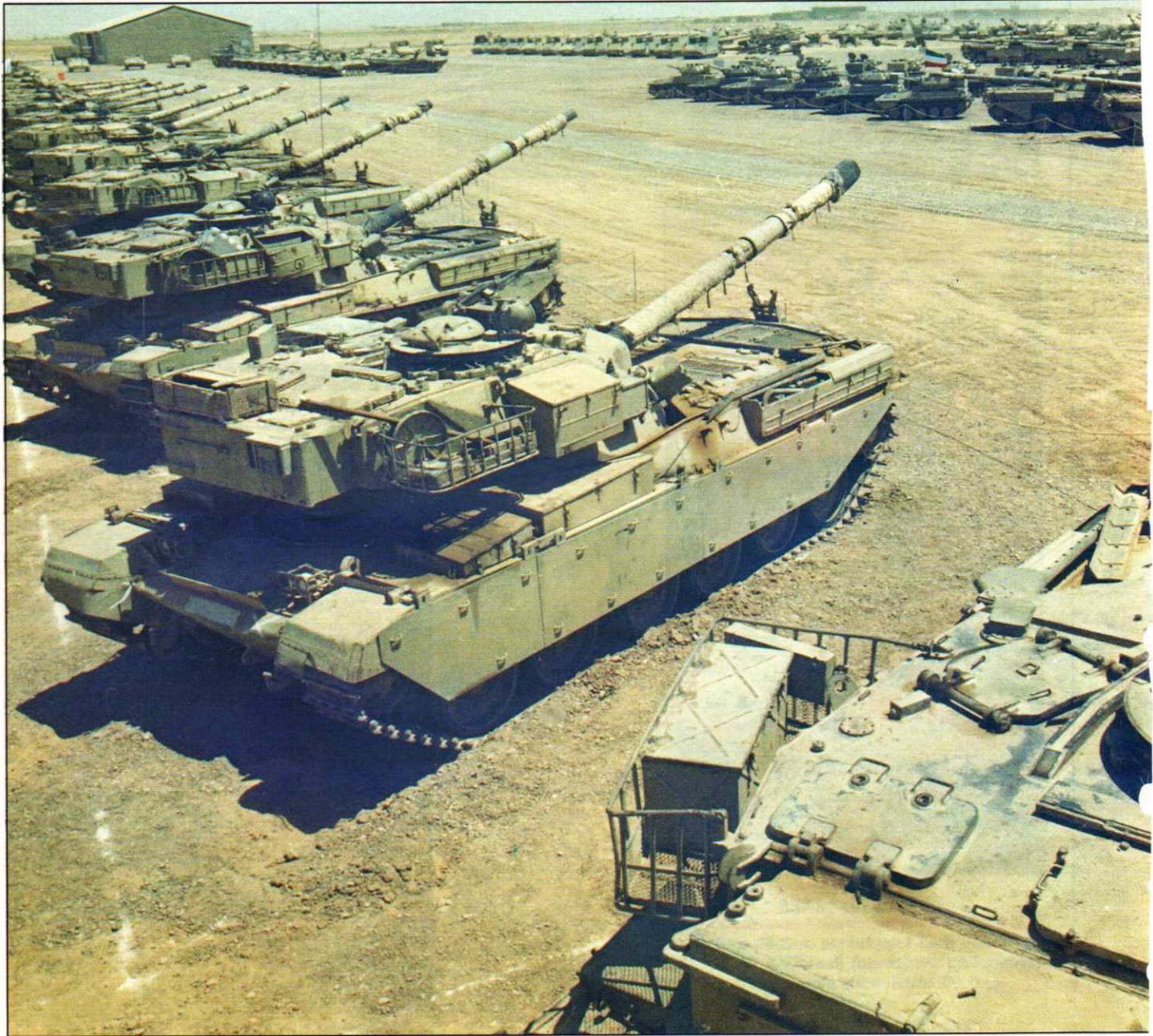
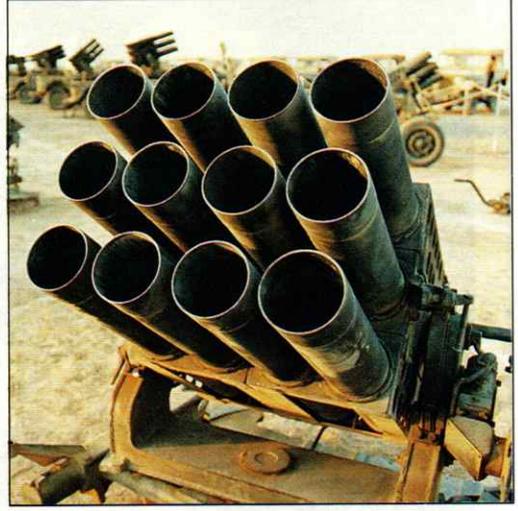
Three vehicular communications stations equipped with teleprinters, facsimiles, and other advanced communications equipment procured from Israel, were a vital link in Khomeini's military communications network (above). 222 PRC, 108 VRC, 29 GRC, and 3 UHF-AM wireless radios, and 102 handheld PRC transceivers were among the equipment seized (below).





DESERT SCORPIONS

These British-made Scorpion reconnaissance tanks formed the 16th armored division's second line of defense. All 14 were seized in battle, and many more destroyed (left). Soviet-made mobile multiple rocket launchers (*katyusha*) will add a significant kick to NLA artillery barrages (right).



ARMORED FLEET

The 48 captured M113 and M557 (command) armored personnel carriers will enhance the mobility of the NLA's mechanized-infantry units.



AIMING HIGH

Eighteen SU-23-4 and SU-23-2 air defense weapons will strengthen the shield protecting NLA troops (left). The 123 pieces of 120mm, 81mm, and 60mm mortars will also augment the NLA's gunner battalions (bottom).

