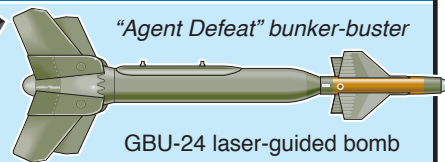
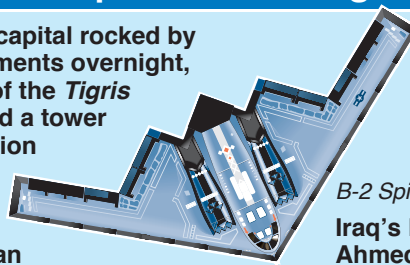


Day 9 – Iraq braces for Baghdad siege



1. Baghdad: Iraqi capital rocked by repeated bombardments overnight, On the east bank of the *Tigris* a U.S. B-2 Spirit bomber attacked a tower housing a key Iraqi communication centre with two 5,000lb bunker busters. Other explosions heard on outskirts of city where Saddam's elite Republican Guards are stationed



B-2 Spirit bomber

Iraq's Defence Minister Sultan Hashem Ahmed says he expects capital to be encircled within five to 10 days



2. Bashur: 73rd Airborne Brigade begins to deploy up to 10,000 troops and 100 tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery and helicopters. Build-up expected to take 15 days

3. Kirkuk: Peshmerga Kurdish fighters cross Iraqi frontline for first time and advance to within 12 miles of strategic oil city

4. Iranian border: U.S. special forces with Peshmerga fighters attack *Ansar al-Islam* positions. Radical Islamist group is accused by Washington of links to *Osama bin Laden* and *al-Qaeda*

5. Samarra: Ba'ath Party buildings bombed in Samarra and Tikrit

6. Kut: Republican Guard Baghdad Division – infantry division with 10,000 soldiers – reported to have moved to *Kut* to block U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force's eastward thrust on capital

7. Samawah: Iraqi Fedayeen militia units and U.S. 7th Cavalry fight major battle for control of bridge over *Euphrates*. Success is crucial to secure supply lines which have been stalled for 48 hours due to sandstorms and hit-and-run attacks

8. Najaf: Units of 3rd Infantry Division battle past town to join U.S. troops south of Shi'ite holy city of *Karbala*



Kurdish areas

9. Nasiriyah: Iraqi general captured. Thousands of extra troops to reinforce U.S. Marines. Sporadic fighting continues in and around town as supply lines are harassed by Iraqi militias



10. Basra: 7th Armoured Brigade – the "Desert Rats" – destroys 14 tanks attempting to break out of Iraq's second city. Scottish *Black Watch Regiment* engage Fedayeen militia when they attempt to stop 1,000-2,000 civilians fleeing city. City remains under Iraqi control

11. Umm Qasr: First British supply ship carrying aid to Iraq slowly moves into port along narrow channel cleared by minesweepers. *HMS Sir Galahad* – Royal Fleet Auxiliary Ship – is carrying 500 tons of emergency food, blankets, clothing and fresh water

