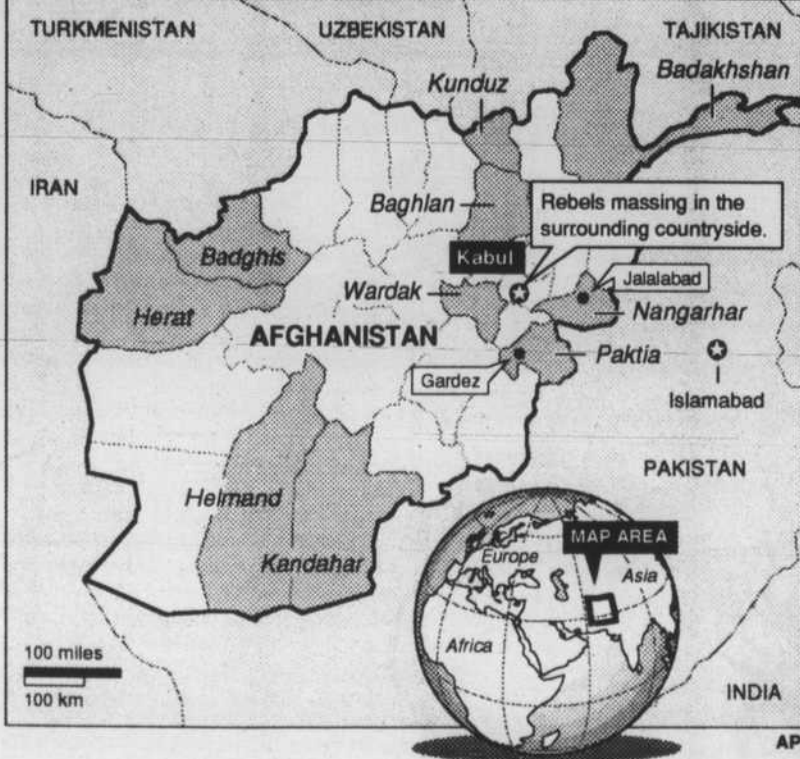


### The Afghanistan civil war

Provinces rebels claim to have taken complete control of since the ouster of President Najibullah last week.



## KGB tried to murder writer

### Newspaper says Solzhenitsyn suffered burns

MOSCOW (AP) — KGB agents secretly poisoned Alexander Solzhenitsyn at a department store candy counter in a bungled 1971 assassination attempt that left the dissident writer with serious burns, a journalist reported Monday.

The Sovvershenno Sekretno (Top Secret) newspaper said it received a letter from Solzhenitsyn saying he never knew what caused the large burns over most of his body. It took him about three months to heal.

Another newspaper, Izvestia, also reported on the mysterious attack and said Bulgarian secret agents treated an umbrella with the same type of poison in 1978 and used it to kill dissident Georgi Markov in London.

It was unclear how agents poisoned Solzhenitsyn without his knowledge. The Nobel laureate, who now lives in Cavendish, Vt., could not be immediately reached for comment.

Dmitri Likhanov, who writes for Top Secret, said in an interview with The Associated Press that his story was based on eyewitness accounts of the assassination attempt taken from the memoirs of retired KGB Lt. Col. Boris Ivanov.

Likhanov's article, accompanying documents from Ivanov and the letter attributed to Solzhenitsyn are scheduled to be published in Top Secret this week.

A spokesman for the Russian successor to the KGB, Alexei Kondarov, called the report "absurd" but said he was unable to disprove it.

"If Yuri Andropov, then KGB chief, had ever dared to undertake such an action it would have inevitably caused a thunderstorm of public indignation all over the world," Kondarov told Izvestia. Andropov later became chief

of the Communist Party and head of the Soviet state.

Ivanov is still alive, but attempts to get his telephone number or address were unsuccessful.

Solzhenitsyn, best known for his works "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," and "The Gulag Archipelago," chronicling Stalinist repression, won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1970. He was expelled from his homeland on treason charges in 1974.

According to Ivanov's memoirs — quoted by Likhanov — he was ordered to accompany two other secret police agents to the town of Rostov-on-the-Don in southern Russia on a mission to kill Solzhenitsyn in August 1971.

The agents followed the writer to a department store in nearby Novocheerkassk. Solzhenitsyn entered the candy department, where he was approached by the agents and separated from other shoppers. The agents then attempted to poison him, the memoirs said.

### Afghan rebels in power feud

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — With Muslim guerrillas claiming they now control all major cities but Kabul, a U.N. special envoy pleaded Monday for a cease-fire by government forces and rival rebel groups.

Benon Sevan, who was trying to mediate a settlement of the nearly 14-year-old civil war before the fall of President Najibullah last week, said he was trying to negotiate safe passage out of the country for the ousted leader.

Sevan said agreement was close for an interim government to replace the Soviet-installed government, but a radical fundamentalist group rejected that idea. The group, Hezb-e-Islami, threatened Monday to attack Kabul if the city was not surrendered to its fighters in one week.

A more moderate group, Jamiat-e-Islami, which is considered the best organized of Afghanistan's many rebel organizations, said its troops had formed a protective ring outside the capital. Troops of the crumbling Communist government held the city itself.

Many people fear the civil war will degenerate into fighting among the various factions and turn this city of 1.5 million people into a battleground. An estimated 2 million Afghans already have died in the war and 5 million more have fled their homes.

Sevan urged the rebels to put aside their "personal and political ambitions" and work out a peaceful transition to a new government.



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