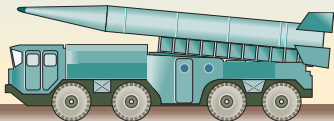


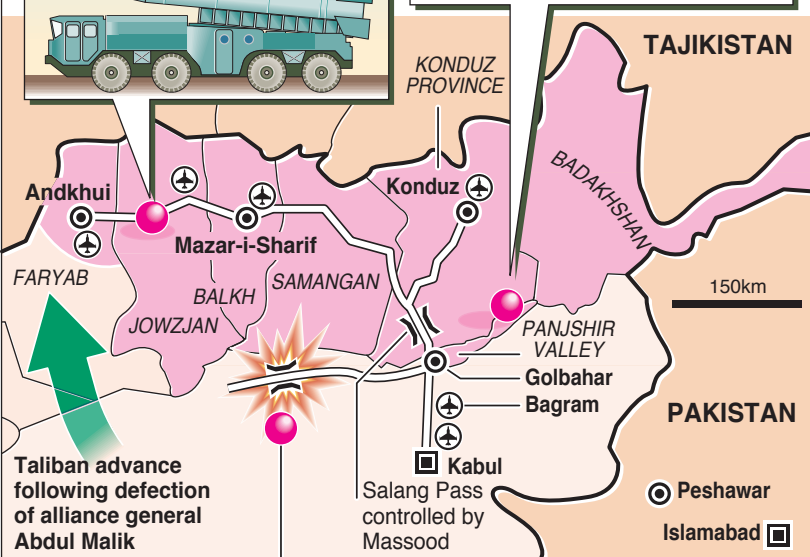
Melting snows spur Taliban campaign

Taliban Islamic fundamentalists, fighting the allied forces of Ahmed Shah Massood and Rashid Dostam, are poised for a decisive spring offensive against the northern capital Mazar-i-Sharif. The alliance – controlling the northern third of the country – is the last force blocking the Taliban's ambition to impose strict Islamic sharia law throughout Afghanistan

General Dostam's base:
24 Scud missiles, two launchers, helicopter gunships, jet fighters and tanks moved to Dostam's home base at Shiberghan



Ahmed Shah Massood's base: Between 25 and 30 Scud missiles with range of 280km. The Panjshir is surrounded by peaks reaching up to 6,000 metres and accessible only through Golbahar



Taliban capture
Shebir Pass

**Provinces controlled
by anti-Taliban alliance**



General Ahmed Shah Massood