

November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

G-20

Nov. 12—The Group of 20, meeting in Seoul, issues a communiqué expressing resolve to reduce global trade imbalances, but stops short of setting numerical targets for such reductions. The forum of the world's largest economies also endorses rules that would impose higher reserve requirements on financial institutions.

NATO

Nov. 19—At a meeting in Lisbon, NATO leaders agree to establish a missile defense system designed to protect all member states. The next day, Russia is invited to cooperate in the initiative and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev accepts the offer. In addition, Russia and the NATO nations agree in writing that they pose no threat to each other. Separately, NATO agrees with Afghanistan on a goal of transferring responsibility for security within that country to Afghans by the end of 2014.

AFGHANISTAN

Nov. 23—According to media sources, the US military has reported to the US Congress that international forces in Afghanistan are making some progress toward improving security and governance in “operational priority areas” such as Helmand and Kandahar provinces in the nation's south, and that development of Afghanistan's own security forces is promising. The Pentagon also says, however, that the Taliban insurgency remains strong and that insurgent havens in Pakistan are the biggest obstacle to establishing lasting security in Afghanistan.

GUINEA

Nov. 7—In a run-off presidential election, Alpha Conde wins 53% of the vote compared to the 47% won by his opponent, Cellou Dalein Diallo, with voter preferences largely breaking down along ethnic lines. Diallo challenges the results, and over the following days street fighting ensues between the Peul and Malinke ethnic groups.

INDIA

Nov. 8—Speaking before the Indian parliament, US President Barack Obama endorses India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Obama's endorsement emphasizes the improving relations between the world's 2 largest democracies but triggers concerns in Islamabad, as India and Pakistan are longtime rivals, and in Beijing, which fears the development of anti-China coalitions.

IRAN

Nov. 29—Two top Iranian nuclear scientists are targeted in bombings in Tehran; 1 dies and the other is wounded. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accuses the US and Israel of responsibility for the attacks. The US and other Western countries have for years attempted to persuade Iran to abandon its apparent ambition to acquire nuclear weapons capability.

IRAQ

Nov. 25—President Jalal Talabani formally nominates Nuri Kamal al-Maliki for a 2nd term as prime minister. Maliki is tasked

with forming a government within 30 days from among political factions that, in the nearly 9 months that have elapsed since March's parliamentary elections, have shown scarce capacity to cooperate.

IRELAND

Nov. 21—Fiscally strapped Ireland applies for a \$114 billion rescue package from the EU and the request is quickly approved. The Irish crisis is precipitated both by burgeoning fiscal deficits and by profound problems in the country's banking system. Three days later, Dublin announces an austerity program that over 4 years will cut public spending by \$20 billion. Ireland is the 2nd country this year, following Greece, to appeal to Europe for emergency help.

KOREA, SOUTH

Nov. 23—In an unprovoked attack, North Korea fires artillery shells at South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island, killing 2 southern military personnel and wounding 18 civilians. The South responds with retaliatory artillery fire. The same day, Obama and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak agree that their countries will carry out military exercises near the Korean peninsula, which will include a US aircraft carrier.

MYANMAR

Nov. 13—Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Prize-winning democracy activist who has been kept under house arrest for 15 of the past 21 years by the country's repressive military junta, is freed. The release comes 5 days after a national election in which the junta sought to establish greater credibility, but which nonetheless was widely seen as fraud-ridden and illegitimate.

UNITED KINGDOM

Nov. 2—Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy formally agree in London that their countries will cooperate in a wide range of military endeavors, ranging from shared use of aircraft carriers to establishing a joint expeditionary force that will include about 5,000 personnel from each side. The agreement is motivated in part by budget constraints facing both nations. Britain recently announced plans to make significant cuts in its defense spending.

UNITED STATES

Nov. 2—In congressional elections, Republicans gain over 60 seats in the House of Representatives, enough to give them a comfortable majority in that body, and also pick up seats in the Senate, though not enough to displace Obama's Democratic Party from control of that chamber. Voting takes place at a time of high unemployment and widespread disquiet about the country's economy, its budget deficit, and rising public debt.

Nov. 3—The US Federal Reserve announces that it will use \$600 billion of newly created money to buy government bonds, an action intended to stimulate the economy by pushing down long-term interest rates. The economy cannot be stimulated through the Fed's traditional mechanism of reducing short-term rates because those rates are already as low as they can go. The Fed embarks on this new policy of “quantitative easing” because the nation's recovery from recession is “disappointingly slow.” ■