

October 2012

BAHRAIN

Oct. 30—The government announces a temporary ban on public demonstrations after the deaths of 2 protesters and 2 police officers in clashes over the past 2 months. The Sunni monarchy, backed by Saudi Arabia, has cracked down on an uprising by the Shiite majority that began in early 2011.

CAMBODIA

Oct. 15—King Norodom Sihanouk dies at 89 in Beijing, China. His body is returned to lie in state at the royal palace in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, 2 days later, as 10s of 1000s of mourners look on. Sihanouk was crowned in 1941 and abdicated in 2004, ceding the throne to his son, King Norodom Sihamoni. Sihanouk played a key role in Cambodia's peaceful achievement of independence from France in 1953, but was also blamed for collaborating with the radical leftist Khmer Rouge regime, which killed some 1.7 million Cambodians in the late 1970s.

COLOMBIA

Oct. 18—Peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia, the country's largest guerilla group, open outside Oslo, Norway. Seeking to end a war that has lasted nearly 50 years, the 2 sides signed a roadmap for the talks in August after 6 months of secret negotiations in Cuba. The last peace talks, in 1999–2002, ended in failure.

GEORGIA

Oct. 1—President Mikheil Saakashvili's United National Movement loses parliamentary elections to the Georgian Dream coalition led by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, 55% to 41%. After Saakashvili concedes defeat, Ivanishvili calls on him to resign, saying the 2 men cannot work together as president and prime minister in the year remaining in Saakashvili's term. However, Ivanishvili retracts his demand the next day, and also says his 1st official visit will be to the US, playing down talk that he is pro-Russian.

INDONESIA

Oct. 28—Police arrest 11 people suspected of planning terrorist attacks on Western targets, including the US embassy in Jakarta.

IRAN

Oct. 8—The government launches a crackdown on currency traders after a 40% plunge in the value of the rial, in a sign of an economy under pressure from international sanctions.

Oct. 15—The European Union agrees to tighten its sanctions on Iran in sectors including energy, metals, and finance.

LEBANON

Oct. 19—A bombing in Beirut kills Brig. Gen. Wissam al-Hassan, head of the internal security agency. The Syrian government is widely believed to be behind the attack, which is seen as part of an expansion of sectarian fighting in Syria. In August, Hassan had ordered the arrest of Michel Samaha, a leading pro-Syrian politician accused of involvement in an alleged Syrian plot to destabilize Lebanon. Previously, Hassan had accused the pro-Syrian militant group Hezbollah of involvement in a 2005 bombing that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

LITHUANIA

Oct. 14—In the 1st round of parliamentary elections, Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius's Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party places 4th. His conservative government has lost popularity due to its austerity measures.

Oct. 28—The opposition Social Democratic party wins the final round of the elections, taking 38 seats in the 141-seat chamber. The Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats place 2nd, with 32 seats.

MALI

Oct. 12—The UN Security Council unanimously passes a resolution authorizing the use of force to help the Malian government recover control of the northern half of the country, which was seized by Islamist militants earlier in the year.

MEXICO

Oct. 7—Marines kill Heriberto Lazcano Lazcano, the leader of the Zetas, 1 of the country's major drug trafficking gangs. Gunmen steal his body from a funeral home the next day.

NETHERLANDS

Oct. 29—Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the center-right VVD party and Diederik Samsom, head of the center-left Labor Party, announce a coalition agreement after the 2 parties finished 1st and 2nd, respectively, in September elections.

PAKISTAN

Oct. 9—A gunman in the northwest Swat Valley, near Afghanistan, shoots Malala Yousafzai, a 14-year-old girl who had become known as an outspoken proponent of girls' right to education. A bullet passes through her head but she survives. The Taliban claim responsibility for the attack and say they will try to kill her again if she survives.

Oct. 15—Yousafzai is flown to Birmingham, England, for treatment.

PHILIPPINES

Oct. 15—The government signs a peace deal with the leader of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the country's largest rebel group, to end a 40-year-old conflict that left 120,000 dead on the southern island of Mindanao. The framework agreement calls for a new, larger autonomous region in the south, whose people are to receive a larger share of proceeds from natural resources, and for the MILF's 11,000 fighters to disarm. The pact's details are still to be worked out.

RUSSIA

Oct. 10—The government says it will not renew cooperation with the US on a 20-year-old joint nuclear security initiative, known as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, when it expires in 2013. In September, Moscow demanded that the US stop funding Russian civil society groups.

Oct. 17—Protest leader Sergei Udaltsov is arrested after a television documentary alleges that he plotted with Georgian officials to organize mass riots with the intent of overthrowing the government.

SOUTH AFRICA

Oct. 19—President Jacob Zuma announces a plan to spend \$100 billion on new infrastructure, acting in response to a surge of

