

November 2019

AFGHANISTAN

Nov. 28—In a Thanksgiving Day visit to Bagram Air Base, the largest US military facility in Afghanistan, President Donald Trump meets with his Afghan counterpart, Ashraf Ghani, and asserts that his administration has resumed peace talks with the Taliban. Trump had abruptly called off the negotiations on Sept. 7 after a US soldier was killed in a Taliban attack.

BOLIVIA

Nov. 10—President Evo Morales resigns after the head of the armed forces calls on him to step down to quell a popular uprising that erupted in response to Morales's disputed victory in an Oct. 20 election in which he sought to extend his 14-year rule. Morales, a leftist who had become the longest-serving head of state in Latin America, was the 1st indigenous person to serve as president.

Nov. 12—As Morales arrives in Mexico, accepting its offer of asylum, conservative Senator Jeanine Añez Chavez declares herself interim president in an address to Bolivia's national assembly and vows to pacify the country. The assembly session is boycotted by supporters of Morales, who calls his ouster a "coup." But the Constitutional Court immediately affirms Añez's claim to be next in the line of succession after the resignations of Morales, his vice president, and the leaders of both legislative chambers.

BRAZIL

Nov. 8—Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is released from prison a day after the Supreme Federal Court rules that criminal defendants cannot be imprisoned until they have exhausted all appeals. Lula, 74, was running for president again when he was ordered to prison in April 2018 to begin serving a 12-year sentence for corruption. That case and others still pending against him were politically motivated, he contends.

CHILE

Nov. 15—Legislators approve an agreement to hold a referendum in April on replacing the constitution, which was adopted in 1980 during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet and minimally amended since then. A new constitution is a chief demand of protesters who have held occasionally violent demonstrations across the country for a month. The deal for a referendum is a concession by President Sebastián Piñera, who declared a state of emergency in October and deployed the military.

CHINA

Nov. 24—In a record turnout after months of protests against tightening control by the central Chinese government, Hong Kong voters deliver a landslide victory to pro-democracy candidates, who win 392 of 452 seats on district councils in the semiautonomous region. Pro-Beijing candidates take just 60 seats, after previously holding 292.

Nov. 27—Trump signs legislation authorizing sanctions against Chinese and Hong Kong officials involved in human rights abuses against protesters in Hong Kong. China denounces the measure as US meddling in its internal affairs and vows to retaliate.

ETHIOPIA

Nov. 23—The National Election Board announces that 98.5% of voters belonging to the Sidama ethnic group have voted in favor of regional autonomy. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has restored political freedoms and won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his moves to end a border conflict with Eritrea, but his reforms also risk igniting long-suppressed divisions. Hundreds have died in ethnic violence since 2018.

INDIA

Nov. 9—The Supreme Court rules unanimously that a plot of land in the city of Ayodhya where Hindu activists demolished a 16th-century mosque rightfully belongs to Hindus, who claim it is the birthplace of the deity Ram. The ruling clears the way for construction of a Hindu temple on the site, a victory long sought by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. More than 1,000 people were killed in anti-Muslim riots following the mosque's demolition in 1992.

IRAN

Nov. 5—President Hassan Rouhani announces that nuclear scientists will begin restarting uranium enrichment using 1,000 centrifuges at Iran's Fordow facility. The process had been suspended as part of a 2015 deal with the US and other foreign powers. Iran says it has also sped up enrichment at another site. The moves are in response to Trump's 2018 repudiation of the agreement and the harsh new economic sanctions he has imposed on Iran.

Nov. 15—Protests erupt in towns and cities nationwide within hours of an abrupt hike in state-controlled gasoline prices. Crowds grow violent in many cities, drawing a lethal response from authorities.

Nov. 17—Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stands by the fuel price hike, dismissing protesters as foreign-backed "thugs." The government also blocks Internet service. By the end of the month, at least 200 protesters have reportedly been killed.

IRAQ

Nov. 27—Protesters in the southern city of Najaf set fire to the Iranian consulate. No personnel are injured, but the attack underscores that hostility to Iranian influence is prominent in protests that have spread across Iraq for 2 months. The protesters have also denounced corruption and a governing system in which elites representing sectarian factions share power and spoils.

Nov. 29—After dozens of protesters are killed in a new crackdown by security forces, raising the death toll since the unrest began to nearly 400, Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi says he will resign.

ISRAEL

Nov. 21—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is indicted for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust. He is accused of doing favors for media executives in exchange for positive coverage and costly gifts.

SPAIN

Nov. 10—In the country's 4th election in 4 years, the Socialist Party again is the top vote-getter but ends up with only 120 seats in the 350-seat parliament. The far-right, anti-immigrant Vox party more than doubles its number of seats, from 24 to 52, becoming the 3rd-largest party.

Nov. 12—Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announces a tentative deal to form a coalition government with far-left party Podemos Unidos, which he previously shunned as a possible partner. But the 2 parties would still be short of a majority.

SRI LANKA

Nov. 17—Former Defense Minister Gotabaya Rajapaksa wins a presidential election with 52% of the vote, defeating ruling party candidate Sajith Premadasa. Rajapaksa was accused of war crimes while leading the military during the final phase of a 26-year war against a Tamil insurgency that was crushed in 2009, when his brother Mahinda was president. After taking office, Gotabaya Nov. 21 appoints Mahinda as prime minister. ■