

Nigeria. The French also evacuated over 1,000 of their nationals from Chad.

**December 7, 1990**

***Bulgaria moves toward a more democratic government.***

Although Bulgaria's Communist Party was renamed the Socialist party and won Bulgaria's June elections, protests against Socialist Premier Lukanov broke out and led to his resignation in November. The Bulgarian parliament approved Ditmar Popov, a politically independent judge, as Bulgaria's premier. Popov organized a multiparty cabinet that included many Socialist Party members.

**December 9, 1990**

***Poland's Communists lose in national elections.***

Although Communist Premier Mazowiecki tried to alleviate Poland's social discontent in July 1990, his austerity policies were unpopular. They led to the presidential victory of the Solidarity Party's Lech Wałęsa who won 74% of the votes in a runoff election. On December 12, outgoing president Jaruzelski apologized for the pain and injustice the people suffered under the communists. Walesa was sworn in as president on December 22.

**December 12, 1990**

***The Czechoslovak National Assembly specifies the powers of the country's two republics.***

Because leaders of the Slovak Republic desired autonomy, President Václav Havel asked the National Assembly to define the federal powers related to authority of Slovakia. The assembly passed legislation that retained federal power over defense, foreign affairs, economic policy, and the protection of national minorities. The Czech and Slovak Republics held the remaining powers.

**December 14–15, 1990**

***The European Community (EC) provides aid to the Soviets and asks Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.***

During a regularly scheduled session, EC leaders agreed to provide the USSR with \$2.4 billion of aid. They also called on Iraq to withdraw peacefully from Kuwait and proposed future talks to coordinate EC policies on foreign and security affairs.

**December 16, 1990**

***In Haiti, Aristide's election as president brings democracy to the island.***

Following the overthrow of President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier (see February 7, 1986), various militants fought to gain power. The military regimes of General Namphy and General Avril (see April 2, 1989) were not satisfactory. Finally in July 1990, General Herard Abraham deposed Avril and sought U.S. advice about Haiti's elections scheduled for December 1990.

In the context of Haiti's political problems, Father Jean-Baptist Aristide rose in popularity. An advocate of Roman Catholic liberation theology," Aristide ministered to the poor in a slum parish where he criticized Haiti's elite who he said, claimed to be Christian while oppressing the lower class. After first rejecting a call to run for president, Aristide agreed to join a coalition led by the Lavalas Party, a reform coalition wishing to end corrupt military-dictatorial regimes and bring democracy to Haiti.

Although on December 5 militants attacked an Aristide campaign rally by detonating grenades that killed seven people, the event enhanced Aristide's popularity. Haiti's December elections were supervised by U.N. observers who reported that Aristide won 60 to 70% of the vote for president.

See February 7, 1986; November 29, 1987; April 2, 1989; January 20, 1991.

**December 17, 1990**

***Colombia refuses to extradite drug traffickers to the United States.***

Although on May 27, 1990, Colombia elected as president César Gaviria Trujillo, a strong advocate of the war against drug lords as president, Gaviria knew he faced powerful opposition from the Medellín drug

cartel. During the months preceding the May election, the Medellín claimed responsibility for killing two candidates: the Patriotic Party's nominee on March 22 and the first Liberal Party candidate of the April 19th Movement on April 26. As a result, Gaviria found it difficult to accept Colombia's February 15 agreement to cooperate when Washington sought to extradite several drug lords.

On August 11, Colombian police killed the Medellín's second-in-command, but on September 5 Gaviria offered not to extradite traffickers who surrendered, confessed in court, and turned their property over to the state, a decision he confirmed on December 17. The next day, drug lord Fabio Ochoa Vasquez turned himself in and was placed in a special jail.

#### December 17, 1990

***The Soviet Congress of People's deputies approves President Gorbachev's plan to revise the central authority; Eduard Shevardnadze resigns as foreign minister.***

On December 17, president of the Supreme Soviet Mikhail Gorbachev sought to maintain Soviet unity by presenting a plan to the Congress of People's Deputies that consisted of 2,250 delegates from each Soviet republic who were elected in 1989 (see March 26, 1989 and May 25, 1989). Gorbachev was concerned about Soviet unity because throughout 1990, Soviet republics such as Lithuania (March 11), Estonia (March 11), Latvia (May 4), the Russian Federation (August 10), Armenia (August 5), and Ukraine (October 24) had proclaimed various degrees of independence from the Soviet Union.

On October 16, 1990 Gorbachev sought to meet the challenge of maintaining Soviet unity by offering his plan to the supreme Soviet the standing legislative body consisting of 542 delegates elected by the People's Deputies in May 1989. Gorbachev's plan would restructure the economy and preserve the central government's authority over foreign policy, banking, taxes, and currency, but would also give each republic with autonomy in domestic affairs. The plan also called for a referendum to be held in each of Soviet republics to obtain the people's approval for maintaining Soviet unity. In October,

the supreme Soviet approved Gorbachev's plan although some hard-line communists such as the chief of the KGB's secret police Vladimir A. Kryuchkov opposed Gorbachev's plan as "Western economic involvement."

After obtaining the Supreme Soviet's approval, Gorbachev sought approval of his unity plan by the Congress of People's Deputies. After the Deputies convened on December 17, Gorbachev presented the plan approved by the Supreme Soviet, asking the delegates to assist Moscow in conducting the referendums in each of the republics. Before adjourning on December 24, the People's Deputies approved Gorbachev's reform plan and agreed to conduct the referendum.

For results of the referendum see March 17, 1991

#### December 22, 1990

***The United States agrees to dissolve its trust territories on Pacific Ocean islands.***

The U.S. delegation to the United Nations concurred with a U.N. Security Council resolution dissolving all U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands except Palau island which remained under a "free association" accord with the United States. These Pacific trusteeships were established following World War II.

See April 2, 1947, and October 13, 1980.

#### December 31, 1990

***Israeli bombers hit PLO bases in southern Lebanon.***

Although Israel realized it should avoid trouble in the Middle East to maintain President Bush's coalition against Iraq, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir wanted to keep the PLO from strengthening its position in south Lebanon. Hezbollah guerrillas continued to attack Israeli forces despite the peace among Lebanese factions. To retain Israel's position in south Lebanon, Shamir ordered Israeli fighter-bombers to attack Palestinian bases near Sidon, killing 12 persons. For similar reasons on December 29, Israeli troops put down demonstrations in the Gaza Strip that killed 4 Palestinians and wounded 125.

See November 29, 1990.

1991

January 5, 1991

**Somalia's civil war requires the United States and Italy to rescue foreigners in Mogadishu.**

American officials first became concerned about Somalia in 1978 because Soviet and Cuban forces assisted Ethiopia in defeating Somalia in a war caused by Somalia's claim to Ogadan province on the border with Ethiopia. Following the war, President Carter sent \$7 million of food aid to Somalia. In 1982, President Reagan sent military aid to assist Somalia in another Ethiopian conflict, during which Cuban leader Fidel Castro sent 18,000 Cuban soldiers to help Ethiopia.

During the 1980s the Soviets and Cubans also helped rebel groups in Somalia seeking to overthrow the government of General Mouammad Siad Barre, who had taken power in 1969. By 1988, Barre was fighting various rebel forces. Rebels in northern Somalia such as the Somalia National Movement and the Somalia Democratic Salvation Front were well organized. In southern Somalia near

Mogadishu, competing clans and subclans carried on their civil war, causing more trouble for Barre surrounding the capital by January 1991.

The fighting near Mogadishu prompted the United States and Italy to combine their forces in air and sea operations to rescue American, Soviet, Italian, and other foreigners in Mogadishu. U.N. groups providing food relief to Somalia also evacuated Mogadishu. To permit the safe rescue of foreign personnel, Somalia's warring factions accepted a temporary cease-fire while the evacuation took place. Following the rescue, civil war resumed, with the rebels overthrowing President Siad Barre on January 26. Intense fighting continued as two warlords, Mohammad Farah Aideed and Mohammad Ali Mahdi, competed for control of Somalia.

See March 8, 1978; July 12, 1982; April 24, 1992.

January 9, 1991

**Secretary of State Baker fails to persuade Iraq to evacuate Kuwait.**

Throughout December 1990, attempts to schedule negotiations between the United States and Iraq fell through. Finally on January 9, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz agreed to meet in Geneva with Secretary of State James Baker. At the first of two meetings with Aziz on January 9, Baker gave Aziz a copy of a letter addressed from President George Bush to Iraq's President Saddam Hussein. Baker asked Aziz to read the letter and respond to its contents. In part, Bush wrote: "We stand today at the brink of war between Iraq and the world. This is a war which (sic) began with your invasion of Kuwait; this is a war that can only be ended by Iraq's full and unconditional compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 687."

As described by Baker's memoir *The Politics of Diplomacy*, after reading the letter Aziz told Baker "it is full of expressions of threat" and "alien" to "communications between the heads of state." Aziz also threw the letter on a table, saying he would not deliver such a letter to President Hussein. During his conversations with Aziz that morning and again after lunch, Baker reiterated contents of Bush's letter, although using different words in trying to convince Aziz that Iraq must withdraw its forces from Kuwait. "If you do not leave," Baker told Aziz, "then we'll find ourselves at war" and "you will surely lose" because Iraq will face "devastatingly superior fire power." Baker also warned Aziz that if Iraq should use chemi-



Somalia.

cal or biological weapons against our forces Americans will “demand vengeance.” The United States, Baker said, has the means to eliminate the “current Iraqi regime.”

Brushing off Baker’s statement, Aziz said Iraq is not afraid of a war with America, describing a U.S. invasion of Iraq as simply an “alliance among the United States, Israel and former rulers of Kuwait.” If the U.S. attacked, Aziz said, “Iraq will be justified in attacking Israel, an event that would rally all Arabs to the side of Iraq.” Aziz not only refused to accept Bush’s letter but refused to fear Baker’s warnings about America’s superior fire power. In a final attempt to avert war, U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cueller visited Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on January 12, where he too learned Hussein would not withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

See January 16, 1991.

### January 12, 1991

#### **Congress approves the use of military force against Iraq, if necessary.**

Following two days of debate on whether the United States should attack Iraq or allow more time for economic sanctions to compel Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait, Congress authorized the use of military

force against Iraq if necessary. The Senate approved the resolution by 52 to 47; the House, by 250 to 183.

The vote for war was the closest since Congress approved James Madison’s call for war against the British in 1812, but, unlike the Federalists in 1812, who continued opposing Madison, the Democrats in 1991 rallied behind President Bush. As Senator Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) said: “We may disagree in this chamber but when the vote is over . . . we are going to stand united.”

See June 18, 1812.

### January 16, 1991

#### **Under U.S. direction, a multinational U.N. force launches the gulf war.**

Almost immediately after Iraq’s deadline to leave Kuwait ended, the U.S.-led 28-nation multinational force attacked. On January 16 at 4:50 P.M. Eastern Standard Time (early morning of January 17 in Iraq), U.S. and allied aircraft began a 38-day blitz against Iraq. During this period, allied planes flew over 100,000 sorties while 284 U.S. navy Tomahawk missiles struck Iraq. The U.S. aircraft and Tomahawk missiles targeted Iraq’s air defense system and communication centers, tried to find and destroy Iraq’s nuclear and chemical-biological weapons, and sought out the launching pads for SCUD missiles. Air raids

Briefing on the progress of the ground war by General Powell-Secretary Cheney, Robert Gates, CIA, Secretary Baker, Governor Sununu, Vice President Quayle, General Scowcroft, Lawrence Eagleburger, and Marlin Fitzwater. George Bush Presidential Library



also struck targets near the Kuwaiti border, where Iraqi tanks and troops were preparing to engage the allied ground forces.

Allied planes dominated the air. Iraqi aircraft that initially sought combat were shot down, and Iraq's remaining combat planes sought sanctuary in Iran. On January 28, after some allied planes were lost, Iraq TV broadcast videos of seven airmen captured by Iraq (one American) and said the pilots would be dispersed to potential allied targets where they would risk death if those targets were bombed. Overall, the air raids succeeded but were not sufficient to end the war.

For a summary of the ground war, see February 23, 1991.

### January 17, 1991

#### **Iraq uses unorthodox tactics against U.N. forces.**

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein responded to allied air attacks by a series of unorthodox retaliatory tactics. On January 17, Iraq's SCUD missiles attacked Israel. Hussein hoped the SCUD attack would force Israel to retaliate, destroying the U.S. alliance with the Arab states. Israel did not strike back and the United States sent a Patriot antimissile system to help defend Israel from SCUD. On January 20, Iraq began launching SCUDs targeted on military locations in Saudi Arabia. On February 24 a SCUD hit the U.S. barracks in Dhahran, killing 28 U.S. soldiers.

In a second unorthodox move, Iraq set fire to Kuwaiti oil wells, which generated oil spills from Kuwaiti facilities into the Persian Gulf. Iraq's only ground attack during the period of allied air raids was a surprise raid against the Saudi town of Khafji on January 29. The attack failed, and within 36 hours, armies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, with assistance from U.S. Marines, drove out the Iraqi forces.

### January 20, 1991

#### **Haiti's parliamentary elections are won by Aristide's Lavalas coalition.**

In runoff parliamentary elections, President-elect Jean-Baptiste Aristide's coalition gained control of Haiti's National Assembly. Despite an attempted coup on January 6 by Roger Lafontant's militants, the election was held as scheduled. Lafontant had

sought to prevent Aristide's assuming office on February 7.

See September 10, 1991.

### February 22, 1991

#### **President Bush rejects peace proposals with Iraq sought by the Soviet Union.**

After rejecting two peace proposals that Moscow had brokered with Iraq, President Bush informed Iraqi president Saddam Hussein that Iraq had until noon on February 23 to begin withdrawing from Kuwait or allied ground forces would attack. The Soviet peace effort began on February 12 when Politburo member Yevgeny Primakov visited Hussein and returned with proposals that Bush and other allied leaders called a "hoax." Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz then flew to Moscow to make a second peace offer that President Gorbachev sent to Bush. Gorbachev said Iraq offered to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait, but details of Iraq's message indicated Hussein would be absolved from all responsibility for invading Kuwait.

In turn, Bush rejected both offers and on February 22 informed Hussein that Iraq had 24 hours to demonstrate a desire for peace by withdrawing Iraqi forces from Kuwait; otherwise, a ground war would begin.

See February 28, 1991.

### February 23, 1991

#### **Despite Kenya's poor human rights record, President Bush sends Kenya military assistance.**

In appreciation for Kenya's support in the war against Iraq, President Bush sent that country \$5 million of military aid. Previously, U.S. military assistance had been withheld because of Kenya's many human rights violations.

Throughout 1991, Kenya's human rights problems festered, a situation leading private Kenyan lawyers to organize an opposition party led by former Vice President Oginga Odinga. After the police arrested the publisher of *Nairobi's Law Monthly*, 40 lawyers questioned President Daniel arap Moi's tactics and defended the publisher, Gitobu Manyara. Kenya's human rights violations continued throughout 1992, with Moi being reelected president on December 29, 1992.