

CHRONOLOGY OF SELECTED WORLD EVENTS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES, 1990–1999

1990

- On January 1, Vaclav Havel, playwright and former dissident and prisoner of conscience, is sworn in as president of Czechoslovakia.
- On January 3, Panamanian president Manuel Noriega surrenders to American authorities who extradite him to the United States on charges of drug smuggling.
- On January 24, Japan launches the first probe sent to the Moon since 1976.
- In February, Canadian scientists discover 600-million-year-old fossils of multicellular animals, marine invertebrates.
- On February 2, President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa ends a thirty-year ban on the African National Congress (ANC).
- On February 7, the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union votes to end the Party's monopoly on political power.
- On February 11, South Africa releases Nelson Mandela after twenty-seven years in prison.
- On February 21, the Republic of Namibia becomes independent.
- On February 25, a U.S.-backed coalition under Violeta Chamorro wins elections in Nicaragua against Daniel Ortega's Sandinista government.
- On February 26, the Soviet Union agrees to withdraw its troops from Czechoslovakia within sixteen months.
- On March 11, Lithuania declares independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.).
- On March 11, Soviet troops begin to withdraw from Hungary.
- On March 15, Mikhail Gorbachev is sworn in as the first executive president of the U.S.S.R.
- On March 16, Dr. Jonathan Mann, director of the United Nations Global Program on AIDS, resigns over policy disputes with his boss, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima of the World Health Organization (WHO).
- On March 24, voters return the Labour Party to office for a fourth time in the Australian general elections.
- On March 31, protestors riot and loot businesses in the West End after the police disperse an anti-poll tax demonstration in Trafalgar Square, London.
- On April 1, one thousand inmates riot in Strangeways Prison, Manchester, Britain.
- On April 1, Robert Mugabe wins the presidency in Zimbabwe.
- On April 13, the Soviet government admits responsibility and expresses regret for the 1940 massacre of Polish Army officers in the Katyn Forest near Moscow.
- On May 1, protesters jeer Mikhail Gorbachev at the May Day parade in Red Square, Moscow.
- On May 3, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agrees to admit Germany after its reunification.
- From May 4 to May 8, Latvia and Estonia declare independence from the U.S.S.R.
- On May 15, schools and hospitals in the United Kingdom ban home-produced beef in fear of "mad-cow disease" (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE).
- On May 20, voters give the National Salvation Front a majority and elect Ion Iliescu president in the first free elections in Romania since 1937.
- On May 22, North and South Yemen merge to form the Yemen Republic.
- On May 29, voters elect Boris Yeltsin president of the Russian Federation.

- On May 30, Alexander Solzhenitsyn receives the Russia State Literature Prize for *The Gulag Archipelago* (1974–1978).
- On June 1, U.S. president George Herbert Walker Bush and Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev sign a bilateral agreement to stop producing chemical weapons and to begin destroying stocks of agents by the end of 1992.
- On June 12, the Russian Federation declares independence from the U.S.S.R.
- On June 12, the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front wins a majority in Algerian local elections.
- On June 20, Uzbekistan declares independence from the U.S.S.R.
- On June 22, the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Newfoundland reject the Meech Lake Accord recognizing Quebec as a “distinct society.”
- On July 1, East Germany agrees to adopt West German economic and monetary policy.
- On July 8, Indian troops seize Kashmir following violence from those in Kashmir who want independence.
- On July 12, Boris Yeltsin and other reformers in the U.S.S.R. renounce their Communist Party membership.
- On July 16, the Ukrainian Parliament votes independence from the U.S.S.R.
- In August, Iraq invades Kuwait and the Emir flees to Saudi Arabia, raising fears that Iraq would control its and Kuwait’s oil reserves.
- On August 1, Pope John Paul II consecrates the largest cathedral in the world in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast.
- On August 6, the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council imposes sanctions, including an oil embargo, against Iraq.
- On August 7, U.S. president George Herbert Walker Bush sends the first American troops to Saudi Arabia to prevent Iraq from invading it.
- On August 9, Iraq announces the annexation of Kuwait.
- On August 31, East and West Germany sign a reunification treaty.
- On September 12, the Soviet Union agrees to withdraw all troops from East Germany by 1994.
- In October, the Human Genome Project (HGP) begins to map all human genes on their respective chromosomes.
- On October 2, the German Democratic Republic ceases to exist at midnight, and East and West Germany unite as the Federal Republic of Germany.
- On October 27, the National Party led by James Bolgar defeats the Labour Party of New Zealand in elections.
- On October 27, the European Community (EC) Summit opens in Rome, Italy to discuss economic and monetary union by 1994.
- On October 28, non-communist candidates win elections in the Soviet republic of Georgia.
- On November 7, Mary Robinson becomes the first woman president of the Republic of Ireland.
- On November 27, John Major becomes leader of the British Conservative Party. The next day he replaces Margaret Thatcher as prime minister.
- On December 9, Lech Walesa wins the Polish presidential election.
- On December 9, voters elect Slobodan Milošević of the Serbian Socialist Party president of Serbia in the first free elections in fifty years.
- On December 16, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide wins the first presidential election in Haiti.
- On December 23, more than 90 percent of voters in Slovenia endorse independence from Yugoslavia.

1991

- On January 16, a United States–led coalition begins an air offensive (Operation Desert Storm) to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation and thereby end Iraqi control of Kuwait’s oil reserves.
- On January 18, Iraq launches Scud missiles at Israel.
- On February 24, coalition troops in the Persian Gulf launch a ground offensive against Iraqi forces.
- In March, architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown complete their work on the Sainsbury Wing, National Gallery, London.
- On March 1, Basra and other Shi’ite cities of Iraq revolt against Saddam Hussein.
- On March 26, hikers discover the five-thousand-year-old remains of a man in the Italian Alps.
- On March 27, the United States begins to withdraw medium-range missiles from Europe.
- On April 9, the parliament of Soviet republic Georgia votes independence from the Soviet Union.
- On April 30, Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq begin to move into Western-protected havens.
- On May 15, Edith Cresson becomes the first woman prime minister of France.
- On May 18, chemist Helen Sharman is the first Briton to go into space, as a participant in a Soviet space mission.
- On May 21, a Tamil extremist assassinates Rajiv Gandhi, son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- On May 31, President Dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi, leader of União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), sign a peace agreement in Lisbon, Portugal, ending the Angolan civil war.
- In June, South Africa rescinds the Land Acts, Group Areas Act, and 1950 Population Registration Act, which had taken land from blacks and segregated them from whites.
- On June 5, President Mikhail Gorbachev of the U.S.S.R. delivers his Nobel Peace Prize lecture.
- On June 25, the republics of Croatia and Slovenia declare independence from Yugoslavia.
- In July, the discovery of fraud and involvement in organized crime, arms dealing, and the drug trade collapses the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.
- On July 1, the Warsaw Pact dissolves.
- On July 31, President George H. W. Bush and President Mikhail Gorbachev sign the Strategic Arms Reduction

Treaty (START) to reduce arsenals of long-range nuclear weapons by one-third.

- On August 8, terrorists release British journalist John McCarthy after 1,943 days of captivity in Lebanon.
- On August 14, scientists report that a worldwide band of volcanic dust from the eruptions of Mount Pinatubo (June/July 1991) in the Philippines could temporarily cool the climate worldwide.
- On August 19, Gennady Yanayev leads communist hardliners in a coup against President Gorbachev and put him under house arrest in the Crimea.
- From August 20 to August 21, Estonia and Latvia declare independence from the Soviet Union.
- On August 21, a military coup to restore communism in the U.S.S.R. collapses following widespread resistance led by Boris Yeltsin.
- On August 24, Mikhail Gorbachev resigns as First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
- On August 27, Serbian forces take the Croatian city of Vukovar after an eighty-six-day siege.
- On August 30, Azerbaijan declares independence from the Soviet Union.
- On September 6, the Soviet Union recognizes the independence of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.
- On September 8, Macedonia declares independence from Yugoslavia.
- On September 11, researchers announce the discovery of a gene responsible for mental retardation.
- On September 22, Armenia declares independence from the Soviet Union.
- On September 25, an eleven-year civil war in El Salvador ends with the signing of a peace accord.
- On October 19, Albanian legislators declare Kosovo independent from Yugoslavia.
- On December 5, debt and rumors of misappropriated pension funds collapse the business empire of Robert Maxwell.
- On December 8, the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine agree to form the Commonwealth of Independent States.
- From December 9 to December 10, European Community leaders agree to strengthen economic and political ties at a summit in Maastricht, Holland.
- On December 25, Mikhail Gorbachev resigns as president of the Soviet Union, and the U.S.S.R. ceases to exist.
- On March 1, although Bosnian Serbs boycott the proceedings, a referendum in Bosnia-Herzegovina declares independence from Yugoslavia.
- On March 2, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims clash in Sarajevo.
- On March 5, the Council of Baltic Sea States is established to foster economic development and strengthen links with the EC.
- On March 6, a computer virus called “Michelangelo” strikes thousands of personal computers around the world.
- On March 19, Buckingham Palace announces the separation of the Duke and Duchess of York, who had married in 1986.
- On April 6, the Lombard League, the Greens, and the anti-Mafia La Rete Party win the Italian general elections.
- On April 7, the EC recognizes the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- On April 8, Serb and Yugoslav troops begin to shell Sarajevo.
- On April 9, voters return the Conservatives to power for a fourth term in a British general election.
- On April 27, voters elect Betty Boothroyd the first woman speaker of the British House of Commons.
- On June 9, the largest environmental summit opens in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with representatives from 178 nations.
- On August 3, the African National Congress (ANC) demands equality for blacks in South Africa.
- On August 13, the U.N. condemns the Serbs’ “ethnic cleansing” (forced removal) program.
- In September, American pharmaceutical firm Merck agrees to pay the Costa Rican National Institute of Biodiversity (*El Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad*, or INBio) \$1 million over two years for the right to search for new drugs in the tropical forests of Costa Rica.
- On September 16, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont, increases the base rate of the pound.
- On October 12, demonstrators in many Latin American countries protest the five-hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s discovery of America.
- On October 13, despite a huge public outcry, Britain announces an end to coal production at thirty-one of its fifty coal mines.
- On October 31, the Vatican apologizes for condemning astronomer and physicist Galileo Galilei in 1633 for advocating heliocentrism, the idea that the Sun rather than Earth is the center of our solar system.
- On November 11, the Church of England General Synod approves the ordination of women priests.
- On November 16, the Goldstone Commission in South Africa exposes a state-operated campaign to discredit the ANC and thereby deny blacks a voice in political and economic affairs.
- In December, the Anglican Church ordains ten Australian women priests despite a ruling by a court of appeals.
- On December 6, Hindu extremists destroy the sixteenth-century mosque at Ayodhya, India.

1992

- On January 1, Boutros Boutros-Ghali becomes U.N. Secretary-General.
- On January 15, the European Community recognizes Croatia and Slovenia as independent republics.
- On February 6, Barbara Mills becomes the first woman Director of Public Prosecutions in England and Wales.
- On February 13, Sweden ends its policy of neutrality.

- On December 9, Operation Restore Hope begins with the arrival of U.S. troops in Mogadishu, Somalia, to supervise the delivery of food to famished Somalians.
- On December 16, the Czech National Council adopts a constitution, effective January 1, 1993.

1993

- Samples of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) from the Duke of Edinburgh and other relatives of the Romanov family prove that recently discovered remains are of Czar Nicholas II and his family, whom Bolsheviks executed in 1918.
- On January 1, the countries of the European Community begin operating as a single market.
- On January 1, the Czech and Slovak republics become separate countries.
- On January 3, Russian president Boris Yeltsin and U.S. president George H. W. Bush sign the Start II Treaty to eliminate two-thirds of nuclear weapons in their nations.
- On February 7, Russian authorities announce that they possess the Schliemann Gold, objects found by Heinrich Schliemann at the ancient city of Troy in 1873 and which disappeared from Berlin at the end of World War II.
- On February 11, both Queen Elizabeth II of Britain and the Prince of Wales volunteer to pay income tax and capital gains tax on their private incomes.
- On February 22, the U.N. Security Council creates a tribunal to prosecute war crimes in the former Yugoslavia.
- On February 25, Cubans vote for the first time in elections to the national assembly.
- On March 12, the Russian Congress in an emergency session restricts Boris Yeltsin's powers and rejects his constitutional amendments.
- On March 12, North Korea withdraws from the Treaty on Nuclear Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
- On March 16, Britain imposes a value-added tax on domestic fuel in hopes of spurring Britons to conserve fuel.
- On March 27, Jiang Zemin becomes president of China.
- On March 29, Edouard Balladur becomes the prime minister of France, and the Socialist Party loses seats in the national legislature.
- On April 30, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN, *Conseil European pour la Recherche Nucleaire*) announces that the World Wide Web will be free for everyone.
- On May 4, the Scott inquiry begins to examine Britain's export of arms to Iraq.
- On May 6, the U.N. Security Council declares "safe areas" in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Goradze, Bihac, and Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- On May 29, a Neo-Nazi arson attack in Solingen, Germany, kills five Turkish women.
- On May 30, sculptor Rachel Whiteread receives the Turner Prize for *House*, a plaster cast of the inside of a house in London's East End.
- On May 30, Bosnian Serb forces attack Goradze and Srebrenica.
- On June 13, Kim Campbell of the Progressive Conservative Party becomes the first woman prime minister of Canada.
- On June 23, the United Nations imposes sanctions on Haiti.
- In July, British mathematician Andrew Wiles solves "Fermat's Last Theorem."
- On July 18, the Liberal Democrats, in power since 1995, lose the Japanese general elections.
- In August, the Vatican, after fifteen years of refusal, allows scientists to test a tiny portion of the Shroud of Turin in Turin, Italy for the rate at which the isotope carbon fourteen decayed into carbon twelve. The test dates the shroud to 1300 C.E., proving that it could not have been the burial shroud of Jesus.
- On August 2, the European Exchange Rate Mechanism collapses, and currencies fluctuate within 15 percent of the central rates.
- On August 6, Buckingham Palace in London opens to the public.
- In September, an international research team, led by Daniel Cohen of the Center for the Study of Human Polymorphisms (*Centre d'Etude du Polymorphisme Humain* or CEPH) in Paris, produces a map plotting some genes on all twenty-three pairs of human chromosomes.
- On September 6, Canadian Peter de Jager warns in *Computerworld* that computers with a binary code for the year may not function when 2000 begins.
- On September 13, Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Yitzhak Rabin of Israel sign a peace accord in Washington, D.C.
- On September 21, Boris Yeltsin suspends the Russian parliament and calls for elections, but the Supreme Soviet ignores his order and swears in Alexandr Rutskoi as president.
- On September 27, troops seal off the White House in Moscow, the seat of the Russian parliament.
- In October, the Swedish Royal Academy awards the Nobel Peace Prize to Nelson Mandela and Frederik W. de Klerk for dismantling apartheid in South Africa.
- On October 3, U.S. Special Forces, on a mission to capture two Habr Gidr clan leaders, followers of the warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, are ambushed in Mogadishu, Somalia.
- On October 4, the rebels holding out in the Moscow parliament building surrender.
- On October 5, the Vatican releases the Papal encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (The Splendour of Truth), affirming Catholic moral teachings.
- On October 25, the Liberal Party wins Canadian general elections.
- On November 1, the Maastricht Treaty transforms the European Community into the European Union (EU).
- On December 12, Liberal Democrats, led by nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, win a large share of seats in the Russian legislature.
- On November 18, South Africa adopts a new constitution allowing majority rule.

- On December 15, John Major and Albert Reynolds, the prime ministers of Britain and the Republic of Ireland, respectively, make the Downing Street Declaration, the basis for a peace agreement in Northern Ireland.
- On December 15, in Geneva, Switzerland, 117 nations sign the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a move toward free trade.

1994

- The cleaning of Michelangelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican reveals the vivid colors Michelangelo had used.
- On January 1, the Zapatista National Liberation Army leads a revolt in Chiapas, Mexico, where peasants support the army.
- On January 1, the United States, Mexico, and Canada begin trading under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which, like GATT, lowers tariffs.
- On January 1, the European Union establishes the European Economic Area in preparation for economic and monetary union in Europe.
- On January 30, Peter Leko becomes the youngest chess grandmaster to date.
- On January 31, Britain grants Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA, a visa to visit the United States.
- On February 11, five astronauts and a cosmonaut return to Earth aboard *Discovery* after the first joint U.S.-Russian space shuttle mission.
- On February 15, North Korea ends a year-long standoff with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), allowing inspectors to check seven nuclear plants.
- On March 18, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia sign an accord to create a federation of Bosnian Muslims and Croats.
- On March 12, the Church of England ordains the first women priests at Bristol Cathedral.
- On March 24, the factions in Somalia sign a peace agreement.
- From March 26 to March 27, the Freedom Alliance wins parliamentary elections in Italy.
- In April, the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi die in an airplane crash.
- From April 26 to April 29, the African National Congress (ANC) wins the first election in which blacks may vote in South Africa.
- On May 6, the Channel Tunnel between Britain and France opens. The tunnel links Britain and France by a road beneath the English Channel.
- On May 10, Nelson Mandela, who has spent his life crusading for the rights of blacks, is sworn in as president of South Africa.
- On May 12, John Smith, leader of the British Labour Party, dies. Tony Blair replaces him on July 21.
- On May 13, the Palestinian National Authority assumes control of the part of Jericho in the occupied West Bank after Israeli troops withdraw.
- On May 27, Russian novelist and Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn returns to Russia after twenty years in exile.
- On June 1, South Africa rejoins the British Commonwealth.
- On June 5, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter visits North Korea to diffuse a crisis over nuclear inspections.
- On July 1, Yasser Arafat, chairman of the PLO, enters Gaza for the first time in twenty-five years.
- On July 2, Colombian soccer player Andrés Escobar is killed in Medellín. Escobar had inadvertently scored a goal against his own team in the game that eliminated Colombia from the World Cup.
- On July 9, China announces an end to the legislative council in Hong Kong when China resumes control of the city in 1997.
- On July 12, the high court in Germany approves the use of German troops outside NATO countries in collective security operations.
- On July 15, Jacques Santer, prime minister of Luxembourg, becomes president of the European Commission of the EU.
- From July 16 to July 22, fragments of the comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 collide with the planet Jupiter.
- On July 18, the Rwandan Patriotic Front claims victory in the Rwandan civil war.
- On July 25, in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel sign a declaration ending war between their countries.
- On July 31, the U.N. Security Council authorizes "all necessary means" to remove the military regime in Haiti.
- On August 1, the U.N. establishes a commission to investigate human rights violations in Rwanda.
- On August 14, police arrest terrorist "Carlos the Jackal" in Khartoum, Sudan.
- On August 31, the IRA announces an end to violence in Northern Ireland.
- On September 19, American troops invade Haiti.
- On September 28, nine hundred people die when the car ferry *Estonia* sinks in the Baltic Sea off Finland.
- On September 30, Russian president Boris Yeltsin, after landing at Shannon airport, refuses to leave his plane and meet with the Irish prime minister.
- In October, the Swedish Royal Academy awards the Nobel Peace Prize to Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Rabin.
- On October 15, President Jean Baptiste Aristide returns to Haiti after three years in exile.
- From November 25 to November 26, opposition forces attack the Chechen capital of Grozny.
- On November 28, Norway rejects EU membership.
- On December 11, Russian troops invade the breakaway republic of Chechnya.
- On December 17, the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay sign a pact creating the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), the second-largest customs union in the world.
- On December 31, Russian troops attack Grozny.

1995

- On January 1, Sweden, Finland, and Austria join the EU, bringing its membership to fifteen.
- On January 1, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the successor to GATT, comes into existence with eighty-one member countries.
- On January 11, Pope John Paul II begins an eleven-day tour of Asia and Australia.
- On January 17, an earthquake in Kobe, Japan, kills more than five thousand people.
- On January 19, Russian troops capture the presidential palace in Grozny.
- On January 31, floods inundate northern Europe.
- On February 26, Britain's oldest merchant bank, Baring's, collapses following £600 million in losses.
- On February 28, U.S. and Italian marines begin to evacuate fifteen hundred U.N. troops from Somalia after warring factions refuse to cease fire.
- On March 10, Kostas Stephanopoulos is sworn in as president of Greece.
- On March 19, the Social Democratic Party wins the Finnish general elections.
- On March 20, terrorists release the nerve gas sarin in a Tokyo, Japan, subway, killing twelve and injuring five thousand.
- On March 27, South African president Nelson Mandela dismisses his estranged wife, Winnie, from the government.
- On March 28, delegates from more than 130 nations attend the U.N. World Climate Conference in Berlin, Germany.
- On April 4, Burundi soldiers and Tutsi gunmen kill four hundred Hutu women and children in Rwanda.
- On April 16, Spain and Canada resolve their dispute over fishing rights off the coast of Newfoundland.
- On April 22, the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Army kills two thousand Hutu refugees at a camp in southern Rwanda.
- On May 1, a four-month United Nations cease-fire expires in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and fighting resumes in Croatia.
- On May 10, in Zaire, health officials report an outbreak of Ebola virus.
- On May 15, police arrest Aum Shinrikyo cult leader Shoko Asahara for the March gas attack in a Tokyo subway.
- On May 16, Serb artillery begins to shell Sarajevo.
- On May 19, the government coalition in Thailand, led by Chuan Leekpai, resigns over a land reform scandal.
- On May 21, Jean-Luc Dehaene retains control of the Belgian government following general elections.
- On May 25, NATO warplanes bomb Bosnian Serb targets after the Serbs refuse to surrender their heavy weapons to peacekeeping forces.
- From May 30 to May 31, the Prince of Wales tours the Republic of Ireland, the first royal visit since 1911.
- From June 2 to June 18, Bosnian Serbs release their U.N. hostages.
- On June 15, an earthquake in Egion, Greece, kills at least twenty-two people and leaves thousands homeless.
- On June 19, Chechen gunmen release Russian hostages in hopes of resuming negotiations with Moscow to end the six-month war in Chechnya.
- On June 29, a department store collapses in Seoul, South Korea, killing five hundred.
- On July 9, French naval commandos storm *Rainbow Warrior II*, flagship of the environmental group Greenpeace, near Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific, where France planned nuclear testing.
- On July 11, Bosnian Serbs overrun the U.N. safe area of Srebrenica.
- On July 25, the U.N. safe area of Zepa falls to the Bosnian Serbs.
- On July 26, the U.S. Senate votes to lift an arms embargo against Bosnia at the risk of escalating the war.
- In August, Croat troops expel Serbs from the Croatian enclave of Krajina.
- On August 3, Sri Lanka gives the Tamils self-rule in hopes of ending twelve years of civil war.
- On August 10, the U.N. Security Council learns of the massacre of twenty-seven hundred Bosnian Muslim men and boys after the fall of Srebrenica in July.
- On August 15, the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the Japanese prime minister offers a "heartfelt apology" for the suffering Japan caused.
- On August 24, a Chinese court sentences U.S. human rights activist Harry Wu to fifteen years in jail for spying.
- On August 30, NATO planes and U.N. artillery begin to strike Serb positions in retaliation for attacks on Sarajevo.
- On September 1, factions in Liberia sign a peace agreement to end six years of civil war.
- On September 4, more than five thousand delegates attend the fourth U.N. World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.
- On September 5, France carries out an underground nuclear test at Mururoa Atoll despite international fears that other nations might respond by accelerating their nuclear arms programs.
- On September 28, Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat sign an accord in Washington, D.C., transferring much of the West Bank to Palestinian control.
- On October 12, a sixty-day cease-fire begins in Bosnia.
- On October 21, leaders of more than 140 countries gather in New York City to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the U.N.
- On October 25, Israel begins withdrawing troops from West Bank towns.
- On October 30, Quebec voters reject independence from Canada.
- On November 4, a Jewish extremist assassinates Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

- On November 5, voters reelect Eduard Shevardnadze president of the former Soviet republic of Georgia.
- On November 19, Socialist Aleksander Kwasniewski wins the Polish presidential election.
- On November 21, warring parties sign in Dayton, Ohio an agreement to end four years of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- On November 24, French public workers begin a series of strikes to protest welfare cuts.
- On December 2, Nick Leeson begins a six-year prison sentence in Singapore after pleading guilty to fraud relating to the February collapse of Baring's Bank.
- On December 14, the presidents of Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia sign a peace accord in Paris, France, ending a war that claimed two hundred thousand lives and left three million homeless.
- From December 15 to December 16, European leaders agree at an EU summit in Madrid, Spain to name the single currency the "Euro."
- On December 20, sixty thousand NATO peacekeepers begin Operation Joint Endeavor to monitor the peace agreement in Bosnia.
- On December 20, reports reveal that Islamic Taleban militia killed thousands in two months of fighting around Kabul, Afghanistan in an attempt to overthrow the government.
- On April 2, Britain announces the slaughter of 4.6 million cattle in an attempt to end the spread of "mad cow" disease.
- On April 6, government troops in Liberia attack rebel leader General Roosevelt Johnson's compound.
- On April 11, Israeli gunships fire rockets into the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon in their first attack on the city in fourteen years in retaliation for Hizbullah attacks on northern Israel.
- On May 21, six hundred people die when an overloaded Tanzanian ferry sinks on Lake Victoria.
- On May 29, the Likud Party, which rejects any concessions to Palestinians, wins the general elections in Israel.
- On June 4, the *Ariane 5*, a European Space Agency rocket, explodes on liftoff in French Guiana.
- On June 9, King Bhumibol of Thailand, the longest-serving monarch in the world, celebrates fifty years on the throne by granting amnesty to twenty-six thousand prisoners.
- On June 15, an IRA bomb, one of the largest exploded in Britain, injures about 220 people in Manchester, England.
- On June 18, President Yeltsin of Russia dismisses Defense Minister General Pavel Grachev and other hardliners.
- From June 21 to June 23, the Arab League discusses how Arab nations might respond to the election of the Likud Party in Israel.
- On June 25, nineteen U.S. servicemen die in a terrorist bombing near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.
- On July 4, a bomb explodes on a commuter train in Colombo, Sri Lanka, killing seventy and wounding 450.
- On July 10, Britain sends one thousand troops to Northern Ireland in response to renewed violence.
- On July 19, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, indicted for war crimes, resigns as president of the Bosnian Serb Republic and head of the ruling Serb Democratic Party.
- On July 20, Hutu rebels kill three hundred Tutsis in Burundi in retaliation against the Tutsi slaughter of Hutus in Rwanda.
- On July 25, Tutsi opposition leader Pierre Buyoya, in a military coup, seizes power in Burundi.
- On July 25, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offers to withdraw troops from southern Lebanon if Syria will disarm Hizbullah, a terrorist organization.
- On August 21, former president F. W. de Klerk apologizes for the suffering whites caused blacks in five decades of apartheid in South Africa.
- On August 28, a British high court grants a divorce to Charles, Prince of Wales, and Lady Diana, Princess of Wales, ending their fifteen-year marriage.
- On August 29, Russian officials and Chechen rebel leaders sign a peace treaty, ending nearly two years of fighting which killed ninety thousand.
- On September 4, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and PLO leader Yasser Arafat hold peace talks for the first time in the Gaza Strip.
- On September 5, Turkish war planes attack rebel Kurd bases in northern Iraq.

1996

- On January 15, Russian troops storm the village of Pervomaiskoye, where Chechen rebels held more than one hundred hostages for a week.
- On January 16, Captain Julius Maado Bio seizes the government in Sierra Leone.
- On January 21, Palestinians elect PLO chairman Yasser Arafat the first president of Palestine.
- On January 29, fire destroys the two-hundred-year-old La Fenice opera house in Venice, Italy.
- On January 31, Tamil Tiger terrorists detonate a truck bomb in central Colombo, Sri Lanka, killing fifty-five and wounding fifteen hundred.
- On February 7, one hundred and eighty-nine people die when a Boeing 757 crashes off the coast of the Dominican Republic.
- On February 9, an IRA bomb kills two in London, ending a seventeen-month cease-fire.
- On February 24, Cuba shoots down two unarmed Cessna planes flown by Cuban Americans, killing four.
- On February 25, two suicide bombers of Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist group, kill twenty-five Israelis in Jerusalem and Ashkelon.
- On March 8, China test fires three M9 ballistic missiles into the sea off Taiwan.
- On March 25, the EU imposes a worldwide ban on exports of British beef amid an outbreak of "mad cow" disease.
- On March 31, President Boris Yeltsin announces a cease-fire and partial withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

- On September 26, Israel declares a state of emergency after the worst fighting in thirty years in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- On September 27, the Taliban, a group Islamic extremists, overruns Kabul, deposes the government, and imposes repressive Islamic law in Afghanistan.
- On October 17, President Boris Yeltsin of Russia dismisses security chief General Aleksandr Lebed amid allegations that he was plotting a revolt.
- On October 23, Hutu refugees begin to flee from Zaire to escape fighting between the army and Tutsi tribesmen.
- On November 11, a Saudi Arabian Boeing 747 and Kazakh Airways Ilyushin-76 collide in midair above Delhi, India, killing 350 people.
- From November 18 to November 29, French truckers block roads across France until France grants them higher wages and shorter hours.
- On November 28, General Ratko Mladić, charged with war crimes, resigns as commander of the Bosnian Serb Army.
- On December 11, China names shipping tycoon Tung Chee-hwa chief executive of Hong Kong when China reclaims the city from Britain in 1997.
- On December 13, delegates at the EU summit in Dublin, Ireland, agree to new banknotes of currency in denominations of five, ten, twenty, fifty, one hundred, two hundred, and five hundred Euros.
- On December 17, leftist guerrillas of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, demanding the release of their jailed comrades, seize nearly five hundred hostages at the Japanese embassy in Lima, Peru.
- On December 26, five thousand riot police break up an antigovernment demonstration in Belgrade, Serbia.
- On December 27, China and Russia sign an agreement in Moscow to reduce troops along the Sino-Russian border.
- On December 29, the last Russian troops leave Chechnya.
- On December 29, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) Movement and the government sign a peace agreement in Guatemala City ending thirty-six years of civil war.

1997

- J.K. Rowling publishes the children's book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in Britain.
- On January 1, a lone Israeli gunman injures six Arabs as Israeli troops prepare to withdraw from the West Bank town of Hebron.
- On January 1, Kofi Annan of Ghana becomes the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, replacing Boutros Boutros-Ghali.
- On January 5, more than one hundred thousand people protest against the government in Belgrade, Serbia.
- On January 15, Israeli and Palestinian cabinets approve an agreement in which Israel will return 80 percent of Hebron to Palestinian control.
- On February 4, seventy-three Israeli servicemen die when two helicopters crash near the southern border of Lebanon.
- On February 5, the Swiss government establishes bank funds to compensate Holocaust victims and their heirs.
- On February 12, an Iranian foundation increases the bounty for killing Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses* (1989), to \$2.5 million.
- In March, the Hale-Bopp comet comes within 122 million miles of Earth.
- On March 2, Albanian leaders declare a state of emergency as antigovernment protests increase.
- On March 6, the Polish shipyard Gdansk, the birthplace of the Solidarity Movement, closes with the loss of thirty-eight hundred jobs.
- On March 11, Russian President Boris Yeltsin dismisses most of his cabinet.
- On March 13, a Jordanian soldier kills seven Israeli school-girls at the Hill of Peace in the Jordan Valley.
- On March 19, Italy declares a state of emergency as ten thousand Albanian refugees inundate the country.
- On March 30, riots injure dozens in the West Bank following Israel's decision to build thirty-two thousand Jewish homes in east Jerusalem.
- On April 22, Peruvian commandos rescue the remaining seventy-one hostages held by leftist guerrillas for 126 days at the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima.
- On May 2, Tony Blair, at age forty-three, becomes the youngest prime minister in Britain since 1812 after a victory by the Labour Party the previous day.
- On May 7, the United States accuses Switzerland of accepting gold looted by the Nazis from occupied countries during World War II.
- On May 10, an earthquake in Iran, near the Afghan border, kills sixteen hundred people.
- On May 11, the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue makes chess history by defeating Russian Garry Kasparov, the first time a computer beats a reigning world champion.
- On May 17, President Mobutu of Zaire flees to Morocco after thirty-two years in power.
- On May 30, four hundred Westerners evacuate Sierra Leone as fighting intensifies between rebel forces and Nigerian-backed government troops.
- From June 23 to June 27, eighty-five heads of state attend Earth Summit II at the United Nations in New York City to discuss environmental issues.
- On June 30, at midnight Hong Kong returns to Chinese sovereignty after 156 years as a British colony.
- In July, Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut at the Roslin Institute in Scotland announces the cloning of a sheep named Dolly.
- On July 6, a coup topples Cambodian prime minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh.
- On July 8, NATO invites Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to join the alliance in time for its fiftieth anniversary in 1999.

- On July 10, British soldiers shoot an indicted war criminal and arrest another in Bosnia.
- On July 11, a team of U.S. and German molecular biologists announces that Neanderthal DNA is too dissimilar to our DNA for Neanderthal to be our ancestor.
- On July 15, voters elect Serbian leader Slobodan Milosević; president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for a four-year term.
- On July 16, President Jacques Santer of the EU Commission proposes to expand the EU to twenty-one nations.
- On July 20, the IRA announces restoration of the 1994 cease-fire broken last February.
- On July 25, a Khmer Rouge people's tribunal sentences former leader Pol Pot to life imprisonment for ordering the death of two million Cambodians during the 1970s.
- On August 5, a Korean Air Boeing 747 crashes on the U.S. protectorate of Guam, killing 220.
- On August 31, Diana, Princess of Wales, dies in a car crash in Paris.
- On September 13, dignitaries from around the world attend the state funeral in Calcutta, India, of Mother Teresa, who died on September 5.
- On September 25, Briton Andy Green reaches 714 mph, a record, in the jet-powered car *Thrust SSC* in the Nevada desert. On October 17 he becomes the first person to break the sound barrier on land, reaching 764.18 mph.
- On September 26, an earthquake in Italy kills eleven, leaves thousands homeless, and damages the thirteenth-century Basilica of St. Francis.
- On October 1, Israel frees the ailing Shaikh Ahmad Yasin, founder of Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, from jail in exchange for Israeli agents detained in Jordan.
- On October 2, scientists deliberately freeze their ship, the Canadian icebreaker *Des Groseilliers*, into the Arctic ice for a yearlong study of weather changes in the Arctic.
- On October 8, Kim Jong II, son of the late Kim II Sung, becomes the general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party in North Korea.
- On October 9, four hundred Mexicans die when hurricane Pauline strikes the Pacific resort of Acapulco.
- On October 13, Tony Blair meets with Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams.
- On October 22, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa travels to Tripoli, Libya, to mediate a dispute between Libya and the United States and Britain over extradition of two Libyans suspected of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing over Scotland.
- On November 8, Chinese leaders attend the completion of a dam on the River Yangtze, one of the world's largest hydroelectric projects.
- On November 9, Russia and China sign a declaration defining their joint 2,800-mile border.
- On November 24, Yamaichi Securities collapses with a loss of 3.2 billion yen, the biggest financial failure in Japan since 1945.
- On December 4, delegates from 125 nations at a U.N. conference in Ottawa, Canada, sign an agreement banning the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of antipersonnel landmines.
- On December 10, representatives of industrial nations pledge at the U.N. Conference on Climate Control in Kyoto, Japan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by the early twenty-first century in an effort to slow global warming.
- On December 11, in a ceremony at Portsmouth, England, the royal yacht *Britannica* is decommissioned after forty-five years of service.
- On December 22, paramilitary gunmen kill forty-five peasants in southern Mexico.
- On December 30, Islamic militants massacre 412 people in the Algerian province of Relizan.

1998

- On January 5, Amnesty International, a human-rights agency, reports that more than eighty thousand people had died from fighting in Algeria since 1992.
- On January 25, Tamil Tigers bomb Sri Lanka's holiest shrine, the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, killing eleven.
- On January 28, an Indian court sentences twenty-six people to death for the 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, former prime minister, son of Indira Gandhi, and grandson of Jawaralal Nehru.
- On February 3, a U.S. military jet accidentally cuts a wire supporting a cable car at an Italian ski resort. Twenty people fall to their death.
- On February 4, an earthquake kills four thousand people in northern Afghanistan.
- On February 13, a constitutional convention in Australia votes to hold a referendum on ending its participation in the British Commonwealth.
- On February 16, a Taiwanese A-300 Airbus crashes on approach to Taipei, killing 260 people.
- On February 23, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Iraqi leaders agree to give U.N. weapons inspectors unrestricted access to all sites in Iraq.
- On February 25, Kim Dae Jung is inaugurated as president of South Korea.
- On February 26, the last total solar eclipse of the millennium is visible from the Western Hemisphere.
- On March 2, Serb police disperse fifty thousand Albanians who petition for autonomy in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo.
- On March 25, the European Commission announces that eleven states will join the monetary union and that the commission will issue the Euro single currency in January 1999.
- On April 1, the Israeli cabinet votes to withdraw troops from southern Lebanon.
- On April 2, a court sentences former French cabinet minister Maurice Papon to ten years in jail for his deportation of Jews to Nazi concentration camps in World War II.

- On April 24, Rwanda executes twenty-two men and women for their part in the 1994 massacres.
- On April 27, Serb police and the Yugoslav Army invade the province of Kosovo to suppress the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army.
- On May 11, India conducts three underground nuclear weapons tests in the Rajasthan desert despite Western threats of international sanctions.
- On May 14, Israeli forces kill eight Palestinians who were attacking Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip.
- On May 21, following nationwide protests, General Suharto resigns as president of Indonesia after thirty-two years in power.
- On May 30, a second earthquake kills three thousand people in northern Afghanistan.
- On June 4, space shuttle *Discovery* docks with Russian space station *Mir* to collect astronaut Andrew Thomas after he spends four months aboard *Mir*.
- On June 12, world stock markets slump in response to news that Japan is in recession.
- On June 12, Queen Margrethe of Denmark opens the four-mile Storebaelt Bridge between eastern and western Denmark. It is the world's second-longest suspension bridge.
- On June 15, NATO aircraft stage Operation Falcon through Albania and Macedonia, warning Serbia to stop attacks in Kosovo.
- On June 16, the World Bank warns that Japan's recession may spread throughout Asia.
- On June 16, a cyclone kills thirteen hundred in northern India.
- On July 2, the world's largest terminal opens at the Chek Lap Kok Airport in Hong Kong.
- On July 10, floods in the Chinese province of Sichuan kill six hundred.
- On July 17, a tidal wave kills three thousand in Papua New Guinea.
- On July 17, Russia holds a state funeral in St. Petersburg, Russia, for internment of the remains of Czar Nicholas II, his family, and servants, whom Bolsheviks executed in 1918.
- On August 3, Serbian forces burn Albanian towns in Kosovo.
- On August 5, Iraq urges the U.N. to end the oil embargo and to withdraw its weapons inspectors.
- On August 7, a car bomb explodes outside the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, killing at least 240 and injuring five thousand.
- On August 11, British Petroleum announces the purchase of U.S. oil company Amoco, the biggest industrial merger to date.
- On August 13, Swiss banks agree to pay £767 million (\$1.25 billion) to victims of the Holocaust whose assets the Nazis had stolen.
- On August 15, an IRA car bomb kills twenty-eight and injures two hundred in Omagh, County Tyrone, in Northern Ireland.
- On August 20, the United States launches cruise missiles on terrorist bases in Afghanistan and on a chemical weapons plant in Sudan in retaliation for the August 7 attacks on U.S. embassies in East Africa.
- On August 24, Britain and the United States propose a trial in the Netherlands for the two Libyans accused of bombing a Pan Am airplane over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.
- On September 4, a U.N. International Criminal Tribunal sentences former Rwandan Prime Minister Jean Kambanda to life in jail for genocide.
- On September 14, more than fifty thousand Albanians had fled Kosovo in the past week.
- On September 24, Britain persuades Iran to rescind its 1989 death sentence against author Salman Rusdie.
- On October 18, British authorities arrest former Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet at a London hospital. A Spanish judge had requested his extradition for human rights violations during his 1973–1990 dictatorship in Chile.
- On October 26, Ecuador and Peru sign a treaty ending their one-hundred-year border dispute.
- On October 30, Hurricane Mitch causes flash floods and mudslides in Central America and kills ten thousand people in Honduras and Nicaragua.
- On November 15, the United States calls off cruise missile attacks against Iraq when, at the last minute, Iraq agrees that the U.N. may continue weapons inspections.
- On November 17, the Leonid meteor shower, perhaps the most intense meteor shower in thirty years, threatens five hundred satellites circling Earth.
- On November 24, the Yasser Arafat International Airport opens in the Gaza Strip.
- On November 25, the British House of Lords votes to extradite Augusto Pinochet to Spain to stand trial for atrocities in Chile.
- On November 26, a Tokyo court refuses to compensate former British prisoners of war for Japanese mistreatment during World War II.
- On November 28, Israel shells Hizballah positions in southern Lebanon after Hizballah terrorists kill seven Israeli soldiers in an ambush.
- On December 9, voters elect Ruth Dreifuss the first woman president of Switzerland.
- From December 16 to December 20, U.S. and British forces conduct Operation Desert Fox, a series of bombing raids against Iraq for refusing to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors.
- On December 17, a British high court rescinds the November 25 decision by the House of Lords to extradite Augusto Pinochet because of a judge's connection to Amnesty International, a human rights agency.

1999

- In January, North and South Korea hold talks on a peace settlement.
- In January, the European Union issues the first Euro, the currency of all EU members.

- On January 25, an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale kills at least 1,170 people in Colombia.
- On February 9, the trial of three former government ministers begins in Paris. France charges them with manslaughter for delaying HIV-testing of the blood supply, which led hundreds of people to contract AIDS.
- In March, government and rebel forces clash in northern Chad.
- In March, the Czech Republic joins NATO.
- In March, Iraq accuses the United States of spying and continues to shoot at Allied jets in the “no-fly zones.”
- In March, Iceland calls for a resumption of whaling, confident that whales no longer face extinction.
- On March 1, an international treaty banning land mines takes effect.
- On March 21, Swiss psychiatrist Bertrand Piccard and British pilot Brian Jones become the first men to fly around the world in a balloon.
- On March 24, NATO begins Operation Allied Force, a bombing campaign against Yugoslav targets to protect the Albanian majority in the province of Kosovo.
- In April, both India and Pakistan conduct ballistic missile tests, raising fears that should the two clash, they might fire missiles with nuclear warheads at each other.
- In April, the U.N. indicts Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić for war crimes in Bosnia.
- In May, India bombs the bases of Pakistani-backed guerrillas in Kashmir.
- In May, Belgium outlaws the Hell’s Angels motorcycle gang.
- In May, France confirms that nuclear tests damaged the coral beds of French Polynesia.
- In May, archaeologists discover a Mayan city in a dense forest on the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico.
- On May 8, China calls an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council following the U.S. accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.
- On May 17, voters elect General Ehud Barak Israeli prime minister.
- On May 28, the annual conference of the International Whaling Commission at St. George’s, Grenada, reaffirms the thirteen-year ban on whaling.
- On May 29, a civilian government under President Olusegun Obasanjo assumes power in Nigeria.
- In June, Russian officials decide to abandon the *Mir* space station on the grounds that it is too expensive to maintain.
- In June, Indian and Pakistani troops clash in Kashmir, a region each claims as its own.
- On June 10, NATO suspends bombing as Serb forces begin to withdraw from Kosovo.
- On June 20, the last Serb forces withdraw from Kosovo.
- On June 24, Red Cross officials in Brussels, Belgium, state that 1998’s natural disasters were the worst on record and predict that catastrophes will increase as the climate changes.
- On June 29, Israeli lawyers announce the application process for Holocaust survivors to receive compensation from two Swiss banks.
- On July 27, the United States bans trade with Afghanistan.
- On August 12, North Korea affirms its right to test a long-range missile capable of reaching the United States.
- On August 17, an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale kills seventeen thousand people in Turkey, its worst natural disaster in sixty years.
- In September, East Timor votes, in a U.N.-sponsored referendum, for independence from Indonesia.
- In September, Russia decides to resume whaling.
- On September 21, an earthquake that measures 7.6 on the Richter scale kills more than two thousand people and destroys twelve thousand buildings in Taiwan.
- On September 21, anthropologists declare a woman’s skull in Brazil the oldest human fossil in the Americas. The skull is 11,500 years old.
- In October, scientists in Siberia exhume an intact mammoth.
- On October 2, Russia invades the breakaway republic of Chechnya, the second time in the 1990s.
- On October 4, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators agree on opening a “safe passage” route between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- On October 12, world population reaches six billion people.
- On October 15, the Swedish Royal Academy awards the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize to Doctors Without Borders, the rapid-reaction group of medical volunteers who have led humanitarian interventions around the world.
- On October 27, gunmen storm the Armenian parliament, killing Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisian and several others.
- On October 29, a cyclone strikes the east coast of India, kills ten thousand people, and leaves 2.5 million homeless.
- On October 29, an EU panel declares British beef safe for human consumption, rejecting France’s desire to continue a ban on exports in fear of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as “mad cow” disease.
- In November, Hong Kong officials approve the construction of a Disney theme park.
- On November 17, scientists report that the Arctic Ocean’s ice cap has shrunk more than previously believed. The cap is 4.3 feet thinner than it was in 1976.
- On November 21, China announces the launch of a space vehicle capable of carrying astronauts.
- On December 1, scientists from the United States, Japan, and England announce the first mapping of the human genome, a goal of the Human Genome Project.
- On December 2, Britain transfers power in Northern Ireland to a twelve-member cabinet of Protestants and Catholics.
- On December 3, a World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting ends in Seattle, Washington, after a week of protests by environmentalists and protectionists.

- On December 17, floods in Venezuela cause mudslides that kill ten thousand people.
- On December 17, Germany establishes a \$5.2 billion fund to compensate slave laborers and other victims of the Third Reich.
- On December 19, Portugal returns Macau to China after 442 years as a Portuguese colony.
- On December 24, Kashmiri separatists hijack an Indian Airlines jet.
- On December 31, the United States returns the Panama Canal to Panama after eighty-five years of U.S. control.
- On December 31, Boris Yeltsin resigns. Vladimir Putin replaces him as president of Russia.