

January 2012

Protests Intensify in Syria (Jan. 1): An 88-member Arab Parliament calls for the immediate withdrawal of Arab League monitors in Syria because the government continues to crackdown on opponents, despite the monitors being in the country. (Jan. 6): A bomb explodes in Damascus, killing 25 people and injuring dozens more. It is the second attack in the capital in the last two weeks. (Jan. 11): President Bashar al-Assad appears in public for the first time since the uprising began, thanking the crowd for supporting him. Meanwhile, a French journalist is killed during an attack at a pro-government rally in Homs.

European Union Agrees to Impose Oil Embargo on Iran (Jan. 4): The countries within the European Union agree to impose an embargo on Iranian oil. France stresses the importance for sanctions and an embargo as a way to get Iran to halt uranium enrichment and end its nuclear weapon efforts. Any new sanctions and embargo will come in stages and a final decision by the European Union will not be made until the end of the month. Since December 2011, Iran has responded to talk of new sanctions from Europe and the U.S. by threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz, test-firing new missiles, announcing its first nuclear-fuel rod, and warning a U.S. aircraft carrier not to return to the Persian Gulf.

Iran Blames U.S. and Israel for Death of Nuclear Scientist (Jan. 11): A bomber on a motorcycle kills nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan in Tehran during the morning commute, according to Iranian media. It is the fourth attack on an Iranian nuclear specialist in two years. Immediately following the attack, Iran accuses the United States and Israel. The White House responds by denying any responsibility and condemning the attack.

Azarenka, Djokovic Win Australian Open (Jan. 28-29): Victoria Azarenka from Belarus defeats Maria Sharapova of Russia, 6-3, 6-0, to win the Australian Open Women's Singles Championship. Serbia's Novak Djokovic beats Rafael Nadal of Spain, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, 6-7, 7-5, to take the Men's Singles Championship. Djokovic and Nadal's five set match lasts 5 hours and 53 minutes, setting a new record for the longest grand slam singles final in the Open Era.

February 2012

Riot at Soccer Match Causes Turmoil in Egypt (Feb. 1): At least 73 people are killed in a fight between fans of rival teams at a soccer match in Port Said, Egypt. Security at the gates is questioned as fans used knives, clubs, and other weapons in the brawl. (Feb. 2): Thousands protest against authorities in Cairo and other cities over the deaths caused by the soccer match riot. (Feb. 3): Four protestors are killed and over 600 injured due to stampeding crowds and tear gas. On a bus in the Sinai Peninsula, Bedouin gunmen take two American tourists and an Egyptian tour guide hostage. After several hours, the hostages are released to the Egyptian police. (Feb. 4): The third night in a row of street fighting in Cairo between the police and protestors leads to the death of 12 people. Questions about the legitimacy of the military-led government intensify as they are unable to stop the fighting. (Feb. 5): The military-led government announces it will put 19 Americans as well as 24 others on trial in a criminal investigation involving the foreign financing of nonprofit groups. The investigation could impact American aid to Egypt. (Feb. 9): The Muslim Brotherhood demands that the current prime minister and cabinet resign and be replaced with a new coalition government formed by parliament.

Russia and China Prevent U.N. Action in Syria (Feb. 4): Russia and China veto an effort by the United Nations Security Council to end the violence in Syria. The veto happens just hours after the Syrian military launch an assault on the city of Homs. The Security Council votes 13 to 2 for a resolution backing an Arab League peace plan for Syria. China and Russia vote against the resolution, seeing it as a violation of Syria's sovereignty. So far, Syria's 11-month uprising has caused more than 5,000 casualties.

Protests Turn Violent over Austerity Measures in Greece (Feb. 12): Demonstrations in Athens turn violent the day before Parliament is set to approve Greece's new austerity measures. At least 80,000 people protest. Demonstrators throw rocks at the police. By nightfall, protestors use Molotov cocktails. More than 40

buildings are set on fire. (Feb. 13): The Greek Parliament votes and approves the harsh, new austerity measures. The measures are the only way foreign lenders will loan Greece the money it needs to keep the country from defaulting on its debt.

A Series of Attacks Increase Tension between Israel and Iran (Feb. 13): Israeli Embassy personnel are the targets of bombers in the capitals of Georgia and India. The wife of an Israeli diplomat and a driver are injured. The attacks are similar to those recently used on Iranian nuclear scientists, attacks Iran has blamed on Israel. (Feb. 14): A residential neighborhood in Bangkok is the site of a series of explosions. Several people are wounded. Thai authorities arrest two men with Iranian passports and find bombs in a rented house. Israel says the attacks are not significant enough to warrant a counterattack. (Feb. 15): Reacting to international sanctions against its nuclear program, Iran warns six European countries that it might cut them off from Iranian oil. The threat is made to the ambassadors of Italy, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Greece and Portugal at the Foreign Ministry in Tehran. Meanwhile, Iran announces advances to its nuclear program on state television. Iran says the nuclear program is for civilian use. Israel believes Iran's goal is to build nuclear weapons and has called on other nations, including the U.S., to help prevent Iran from doing so.

March

2012

Putin Wins Presidential Election in Russia (Mar. 4): Vladimir Putin wins the presidential election in Russia, claiming 64% of the vote. (Mar. 5): Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe challenge the election, saying Putin won because he had no competition and government spending at his disposal. The United States and the European Union call for an investigation into fraud allegations. Meanwhile, thousands of demonstrators in Moscow hit the streets, chanting, "Russia without Putin." A similar demonstration happens in St. Petersburg. When protestors refuse to leave, police arrest them. In Moscow, 250 people are arrested. In St. Petersburg, 300 demonstrators are detained.

Netanyahu Travels to the U.S. for Crucial Meeting with Obama (Mar. 5): Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travels to Washington to discuss Iran with President Obama. During the meeting, Obama encourages Netanyahu to give diplomacy and the European Union's oil sanctions a chance before taking military action. The two leaders fail to agree on a solution in dealing with Iran's nuclear threat; however, they do agree to attempt to diffuse the heated debate about Iran in the U.S. and Israel. A White House official describes the meeting as "friendly, straightforward, and serious."

U.S. Soldier Kills 16 Afghan Civilians (Mar. 10): A U.S. soldier goes on a door-to-door rampage, brutally killing 17 Afghan civilians, including nine children. The events immediately spark nationwide anti-U.S. protests in Afghanistan. U.S. officials fear a resurgence of the Taliban-and renewed support of the Taliban by Afghan citizens. The attack threatens to derail talks between the Karzai government, members of the Taliban, and U.S. officials that had recently begun. (Mar. 15): The Taliban announces they are suspending peace talks with the U.S. and the Karzai government. Meanwhile, President Karzai demands that the U.S. limit its troops to major bases by 2013. (Mar. 23): The U.S. military announces that Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales has been charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder. Bales is the soldier accused of killing the 16 Afghan civilians.

Man Kills Four at Jewish School in France (Mar. 19): Mohammed Merah, a French man of Algerian descent, shoots and kills a rabbi, two of his children, and another child at a Jewish school in Toulouse, France. Police believe Merah had earlier shot and killed three paratroopers. Merah claims to be a member of Al Qaeda and says he is seeking revenge for the killing of Palestinian children. (Mar. 22): After a 30-hour standoff, Merah is killed during a shootout with the French police in an apartment building in Toulouse.

Assad Agrees to Cease-Fire (Mar. 21): The UN Security Council issues a presidential statement backing a plan outlined by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that largely mirrors the proposal brokered in Nov. 2011 by the Arab League. The plan calls on the Syrian government to stop killing civilians, engage in talks with the opposition, withdraw forces from the streets, and begin a transition to a democratic, political system. Russia and China, which had previously vetoed resolutions condemning Bashar al-Assad, endorses the document. Assad accepts the statement and agrees to a cease-fire. He later says he will withdraw troops from cities by April 10. Many observers are skeptical, however, that he will make good on his promises. The UN estimates that about 9,000 people have been killed in the fighting up to this point in Syria

April

2012

Aung San Suu Kyi Wins Seat in Myanmar Parliament (April 1): In Myanmar's 2012 elections, Aung San Suu Kyi, who in October 2010 was released after spending nearly 20 years under house arrest, wins a seat in the parliament. Overall, the opposition dominates the parliamentary election. The National League of Democracy prevails in 43 out of 45 districts that held races, including the capital, Naypyidaw. It is a stunning victory for the opposition-and an equally symbolic defeat for the military. Observers speculate that the opposition's victory will either prompt military rulers to respond to the will of the people and enact change or view the victory as a threat to its power.

North Korea Prepares to Launch Missile despite International Disapproval (April 11): North Korea prepares to launch a ballistic missile, insisting that the launch is only for the purpose of sending a satellite into orbit. However, the missile launch is seen by the international community as a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which insist that North Korea does not use ballistic missile technology. The launch also comes just weeks after North Korea signed an accord with the United States to limit its nuclear activities.

(Apr. 12): The country attempts to launch the rocket carrying a satellite into orbit, but the rocket blows up seconds after the launch. The failure is an embarrassment to Kim Jong-un, who had days earlier been elevated to the position as leader of the national defense commission-the nation's most powerful government agency. The launch coincides with the celebration of the 100th birthday of North Korea's founder and Kim Jong-un's grandfather, Kim Il-sung. In response to the attempt, the U.S. suspends 240,000 tons of food aid to North Korea.

Uncertain Cease-Fire Begins in Syria (April 12): A United Nations backed cease-fire begins in Syria. No attacks by government forces are reported.

(Apr. 13): Thousands of Syrians protest across the country. The demonstrations are seen as a test for the day-old cease-fire.

(Apr. 18): While United Nations representatives attempt to reach an agreement with the Syria on how to monitor the cease-fire, government forces attack the city of Homs.

(Apr. 19): Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, writes in a letter to the Security Council that Syria has not implemented all the steps of the cease-fire.

Business Highlights of 2012 (1st Quarter).

January

2012

Economy Adds 200,000 Jobs in December; Unemployment falls to 8.5% (Jan. 6): The U.S. economy added 200,000 new jobs in the month of December 2011, while the unemployment fell just slightly, to 8.5% from a revised 8.7% in November. The number of new jobs added in November has also been revised by the Labor Department from 120,000 to 100,000.

February

2012

U.S. Economy Adds 243,000 Jobs in January; Unemployment falls to 8.3% (Feb. 3): The U.S. economy adds 243,000 new jobs in January 2012, while unemployment fell to 8.3%, the lowest in three years. January is the second consecutive month that employment numbers are better than expected.

Komen Reverses Decision to Cut Off Planned Parenthood (Feb. 3): After outrage and online protesting, the Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation reverses its December 2011 decision to cut funding to Planned Parenthood. Komen announces they will restore their relationship with Planned Parenthood, which uses the funding to provide low-income women with breast cancer screenings. "We want to apologize to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives," Nancy G. Brinker, the founder of Komen, says in a statement.

March

2012

U.S. Economy Holds Steady in February (Mar. 9): The U.S. economy adds 227,000 new jobs in February 2012. This marks the third consecutive month of job gains over 200,000. The unemployment holds steady at

8.3 percent, the same percentage as January. The report is seen as a sign that the economy in the U.S. is stable and continuing to recover from the recession.

Goldman Sachs Executive Resigns and Writes Scathing Editorial (Mar. 14): Greg Smith, a Goldman Sachs executive director of equity derivatives, resigns from the company. On the same day, his resignation letter is published in the New York Times as an Op-Ed piece. In the letter, entitled "Why I Am Leaving Goldman Sachs", Smith describes the company as a place where profits come before the interests of clients. Smith, who lives in London, blames top management for what he describes as a culture of greed within the company.

April **2012**

Yahoo Cuts 2,000 Jobs (Apr. 4): Yahoo announces it is laying off 2,000 employees, 14% of its staff, as part of a reorganization plan. The reorganizing is a plan from new chief executive, Scott Thompson. In a press release, Thompson explains, "Our goal is to get back to our core purpose — putting our users and advertisers first — and we are moving aggressively to achieve that goal."

Jobs Recovery Slows in March (Apr. 6): The U.S economic recovery slows down in March, adding only 120,000 new jobs. The news is disappointing even though the unemployment rate falls to 8.2 percent, a three-year low. March's jobs increase is the smallest since October 2011.

(Apr. 27): The U.S. economy grows at an annual rate of 2.2 percent, according to 2012's first quarter report. The growth is largely due to consumer spending and a rise in construction on residential buildings due to the unseasonably warm weather. The growth is good news, but it is slower than the previous quarter's 3 percent.

6th-May-2012 France's new president Francois Hollande- Francois Hollande become a new president of France defeating Nicolas Sarkozy by 53% votes.

May, **2012**

Chicago summit: President Zardari attended Chicago summit. Obama assurance of Afghanistan endgame. JP urges government to resolve the issue of Balochistan. Call for emergency **1st Month of 2nd Quarter-2012**

May **2012**

President Obama and Karzai Sign Agreement (May 1): On the first anniversary of the killing of Osama bin Laden, President Obama makes a surprise visit to Afghanistan. During his visit, Obama signs an agreement with President Karzai that promises the U.S. will provide Afghanistan development assistance for 10 years after troops withdraw in 2013. From Afghanistan, Obama gives a speech, addressing Americans directly, saying, "The goal that I set, to defeat Al Qaeda and deny it the chance to rebuild, is now within our reach. We have a clear path to fulfill our mission in Afghanistan."

Blind Dissident Sparks Diplomatic Crisis (May 2): Chinese dissident Chen Guangcheng leaves the U.S. embassy to receive medical treatment at a hospital in Beijing for an injured foot. The Chinese government agrees to relocate him away from Shandong Province, his hometown, where Chen's family had been attacked. The government also promises that Chen will be allowed to pursue his law studies at a university. Chen's friends question the validity of the government's promises. At the hospital, Chen admits he left the U.S. embassy in part because the Chinese government officials threatened his wife's life if he remained there and, despite previous reports, he desires to leave to China.

(May 4): Chen requests help from Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is in China for meetings on economic and security issues. Chen revises his request, asking if he and his family can go to the U.S. temporarily instead of receiving permanent asylum. Clinton and the Obama administration work quickly to negotiate with Chinese officials to avoid any increase in tension between the two governments. During her visit, Clinton says that progress is being made "to help him have the future that he wants."

(May 5): China agrees to allow Chen to apply to study at a university in the United States, a move which is quickly praised by Clinton.

(May 19): Chen arrives in New York City after leaving Beijing with his wife and two children. He speaks at a press conference where he says he is grateful to the American Embassy. He also thanks Chinese officials for

"dealing with the situation with restraint and calm." Chen will attend New York University.

François Hollande Becomes President of France (May 6): François Hollande defeats Nicolas Sarkozy to become President of France. With the victory, Hollande becomes the first Socialist president since François Mitterrand's term ended in 1995. Hollande's victory is seen as a sign that France has grown weary of Germany's dominance with the economic austerity policy in the euro zone.

Putin Becomes President of Russia for the Third Time (May 6): The day before Vladimir Putin's third inauguration as Russia's president, demonstrations turn violent with 20,000 antigovernment demonstrators battling police near the Kremlin. The fighting includes smoke bombs, bottles, and sticks.

(May 7): While Putin officially takes office, the protests continue and police arrest 120 people. The violence is a dramatic shift because even though antigovernment protests have been going on for months, the demonstrations had been peaceful until now. Dressed in riot gear, police search cafes and restaurants for protesters. The demonstrators taken into police custody are sent to military draft offices.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu Calls for Early Elections (May 6): During a speech, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calls for early elections in Israel. In his speech, Netanyahu vows to "form the broadest government that is possible." The official reason for early elections is the upcoming expiration of the Tal Law, which exempts ultra-Orthodox Jews from Israeli Army service. However, some election analysts believe that Netanyahu wants to act swiftly while his Likud Party is polling strongly.

(May 8): Two days after the call for early elections, Netanyahu forms a unity government with Shaul Mofaz, the newly elected chief of Kadima, the opposition party. The new coalition gives Netanyahu a very large legislative majority. It also ends the need for early elections. Mofaz is made deputy prime minister under the terms of the agreement. Some see the new coalition as a way for Netanyahu to gain even more political power. More than 1,000 people march in Tel Aviv to protest the alliance. Among the demonstrators is former Kadima chief, Tzipi Livni. The new coalition is one of the largest in Israel's history. Netanyahu promises that the coalition will rewrite the Tal Law, pass a budget, revise the electoral process and move forward on the peace process.

Attack in Syria Kills Dozens of Children (May 26): Thirty-two children under age ten are killed when the Syrian government attacks the village of Houla. The United Nations blames the deaths on government tanks and artillery, saying many of the victims were executed in their homes. President Assad, however, claims terrorists carried out the attack. Eleven nations, including the U.S., expel Syrian diplomats, and the UN Security Council unanimously criticizes the "outrageous use of force" against residents and the government's role in the attack. Russia, typically protective of Syria and reluctant to criticize the government, signs on to the UN statement.

Business Highlights May, 2012

May **2012**

Jobs Recovery Still Slow in April (May 4): April is another slow month for job growth. Only 115,000 jobs are added in April, less than economists' predictions. The unemployment rate does decrease from March's 8.2 percent to 8.1 percent in April, but this is not because more jobs are created. The decrease in unemployment is due to 342,000 workers leaving the labor force.

JPMorgan Chase Announces Two Billion Dollar Loss (May 10): JPMorgan Chase, the largest bank in the U.S., announces it has lost more than two billion dollars in trading. In a statement, Chief Executive Jamie Dimon blames the loss on "errors, sloppiness and bad judgment." Dimon also says that the losses can "easily get worse."

(May 14): Ina Drew retires from JPMorgan Chase. Drew is the chief investment officer responsible for the trading that led to the two billion dollar loss of the bank's own money. The bank announces that it will form a team of senior executives to investigate the loss.

Facebook Shares Go Public to Disappointing Results (May 17): Facebook becomes a public company, raising \$14 billion in its initial public offering, at \$38 a share, which gives the company a value of \$104 billion. This makes Facebook the third-largest public offering in the history of the U.S., behind General Motors and

Visa.

(May 18): Facebook shares start selling at \$42.05, but close at \$38.23, only 0.6 percent above the I.P.O. price, a disappointing start to going public.

June 2012:

Mubarak Sentenced to Life in Prison (June 2): Former President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, is sentenced to life in prison for being an accomplice in the killing of unarmed protestors during the January 2011 demonstrations. The Judge dismisses corruption charges against Mubarak because the statute of limitations has run out. Lower level officials are acquitted. Angry over the verdict, thousands of demonstrators hit the streets in Cairo and other cities. Egypt's military-led government announces it will appeal the verdict.

United Nations Declares Civil War in Syria (June 8): United Nation monitors find evidence of mass atrocity in the small village of Qubeir. The monitors post footage online, providing the first visual evidence from a neutral source of the crimes occurring in Syria.

(June 9): Troops clash with rebel fighters in Dara'a. At least 17 people are killed, including women and children.

(June 10): At least 38 people are killed in Homs as government forces attempt to regain control of rebel-held areas.

(June 12): After being attacked and fired on by a mob, the United Nation monitors leave their fact-finding mission in Syria. A United Nations official declares that Syria is in a state of civil war. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton accuses Russia of giving the Syrian government attack helicopters to use against the rebels.

(June 23): Syria confirms that its military forces shot down a Turkish military jet the day before. President Abdullah Gul of Turkey responds by saying that his country will do "whatever is necessary" in retaliation. The incident increases tension between the two countries. Turkey already supports the Syrian rebels' attempt to overthrow the government.

Maria Sharapova and Rafael Nadal Win French Open (June 11): Maria Sharapova, the 25-year-old tennis superstar, wins her first French Open women's championship. She beat first time finalist, Sara Errani, 6-3, 6-2. With the win, Sharapova achieves a career Grand Slam, winning all four majors in her still young career. She becomes only the tenth woman to complete the career grand slam, joining such elite company as Steffi Graf, Margaret Court, Martina Navratilova, Chris Evert, and Serena Williams. By reaching the final, Sharapova also recaptures the number one world ranking. The win and return to the number one ranking are seen as an improbable, but gutsy comeback after Sharapova suffered a career-threatening shoulder injury in 2007. Rafael Nadal, of Spain, beat Novak Djokovic 6-4, 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 to take the men's crown for a record seventh time. In doing so, Nadal breaks the record held by Bjorn Borg for most French Open men's singles championships.

A New Government Forms in Greece (June 17): The Center-right New Democracy party prevails in Greece's parliamentary elections, winning 29.7 percent of the vote. The far-left Syriza party, which strongly opposed the terms of the EU bailout, takes 26.9 percent, and Pasok, the Greek Socialist party, places well behind with 12.3 percent.

(June 20): New Democracy quickly forms a coalition with Pasok and the Democratic Left, and Antonis Samaras, the leader of New Democracy, is sworn in as prime minister. Samaras, who has been cool to the austerity measures and has advocated a course of growth rather than cuts, says he plans to renegotiate some of the terms of the country's bail-out packages.

Morsi Declared President of Egypt (June 24): Election regulators declare the Muslim Brotherhood Candidate Mohamed Morsi the winner of Egypt's first competitive presidential election. Morsi becomes the country's fifth president and first from outside the military. Morsi, who won with 51.7 percent of the vote, is also the first Islamist elected leader of an Arab state.

Business Highlights Jun, 2012

June

2012:

U.S. Adds Fewest Jobs in a Year (June 1): Only 69,000 jobs are added in May, the fewest in a year. Also, the unemployment rate rises from April's 8.1 percent to 8.2 percent in May, the first increase in 11 months. The bad news also extends to the Dow Jones industrial average which fell 274 points and erased most of the 2012 gains

When Problems are so Big & Your Strength is no Longer enough to CaRRy them, Don't Give uP; Because where your Strength Ends the Grace of Almighty ALLAH Begins

July 2012:

Unrest Continues in Syria as Soldiers Defect (July 2): In one of the largest military defections since the uprising in Syria began, eighty-five Syrian soldiers flee to southern Turkey. The defecting soldiers include one general and over a dozen lower-ranking officers. (July 3): Syrian President Bashar al-Assad tries to diffuse tension with Turkey by expressing regret over the Turkish warplane that his forces shot down last month. The Cumhuriyet, a Turkish newspaper, reports that Assad said his men believed it was an Israeli jet and that he won't allow tensions between Syria and Turkey to deteriorate into an "armed conflict."

(July 11): Syrian ambassador to Iraq, Nawaf Fares, defects from Baghdad. In doing so, Fares becomes the first prominent figure to publicly denounce the Syrian government.

(July 12): According to opposition activists, more than 200 people are killed by Syrian government forces in Tremeseh, a Sunni village near Hama.

(July 18): In Damascus, a suicide bomber attacks a meeting of senior ministers and security officials. Syrian's defense minister and President Bashar al-Assad's brother-in-law are killed in the attack.

(July 19): Fighting becomes more violent in Damascus between the Army and opposition forces. Residents begin to flee the capital.

Roger Federer and Serena Williams Reclaim Wimbledon Titles (July 7-8): Serena Williams beat first time finalist, Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska 6-1, 5-7, 6-2 to win her fifth Wimbledon women's singles title. Later in the same day, Serena and her sister Venus Williams win the women's doubles championship for the fifth time. Roger Federer breaks the heart of all Brits, including Scotland's Andy Murray when he defeats Murray 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 in the men's singles championship. With the win, Federer claims his seventh Wimbledon singles title, tying the record shared by Pete Sampras and William Renshaw. The win also means Federer will once again be the #1 ranked player in the world. Great Britain hasn't had a men's singles champion since Fred Perry in 1936.

Libya Holds First National Election Since Qaddafi (July 7): For the first time since Col. Muammar Qaddafi was ousted, Libyans vote in a national election. At least two people are killed due to armed assaults on voting centers. In the city of Kufur, some voting centers close due to an ongoing battle between tribes. Despite these obstacles, turnout is over 60 percent.

(July 8): Early election results show a coalition led by Mahmoud Jibril is ahead of Islamist parties in votes. Jibril is a Western-educated political scientist. His coalition's lead is a sign that Libya, unlike Egypt and Tunisia, is not trending toward Islamist rule.

Hezbollah Is Accused for Attack on Israeli Tourists (July 18): Outside a Bulgarian airport, a suicide bomber attacks a tour bus of Israelis passengers who were in Bulgaria on vacation. Along with the bomber, five Israelis and the Bulgarian driver are killed. Dozens more passengers are injured. Immediately following the attack, Israel blames Iran-backed militia, Hezbollah, and promises to retaliate. Of the attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says in a statement, "All the signs lead to Iran. Only in the past few months we have seen Iranian attempts to attack Israelis in Thailand, India, Georgia, Kenya, Cyprus and other places. Eighteen years exactly after the blast at the Jewish community center in Argentina, murderous Iranian terror continues to hit innocent people. This is an Iranian terror attack that is spreading throughout the entire world. Israel will react powerfully against Iranian terror."

Russia and China Veto U. N. Sanctions on Syria (July 19): Russia and China veto a United Nations Security Council resolution to impose sanctions on the Syrian government. The proposed U.N. sanctions are intended

to push Syria into putting a peace plan into action and ending its 17-month-old conflict. The resolution is proposed by Britain and backed by ten other council members, including France and the United States. Russian ambassador Vitaly I. Churkin explains the Russian veto to the council, "We simply cannot accept a document which would open the path for pressure of sanctions and further to external military involvement in Syrian domestic affairs."

2012 Summer Games Open with an Unconventional Ceremony (July 27): Some 80,000 people in Olympic Stadium and billions worldwide watch as Britain celebrates its milestones and points of pride, from the Industrial Revolution to its National Health System to Harry Potter in a high-tech ceremony directed by filmmaker Danny Boyle. One of the most talked about events featured stunt doubles for James Bond actor Daniel Craig and Queen Elizabeth jumping from an airplane and parachuting into the stadium.

(July 31): Michael Phelps wins his 19th Olympic medal, becoming the winningest Olympic athlete of all time. He surpassed the record held by Russian gymnast Larisa Latynina.

India Hit By Massive Power Failure (July 30): More than half of India's population—700 million people living in 22 out of the country's 28 states—loses power. The cause of the power failure is not determined. For the most part, Indians take the blackout in stride, as such events are not unusual in a country whose power grid is still in development.

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2012 Summer Games Open with an Unconventional Ceremony (July 27): Some 80,000 people in Olympic Stadium and billions worldwide watch as Britain celebrates its milestones and points of pride, from the Industrial Revolution to its National Health System to Harry Potter in a high-tech ceremony directed by filmmaker Danny Boyle. One of the most talked about events featured stunt doubles for James Bond actor Daniel Craig and Queen Elizabeth jumping from an airplane and parachuting into the stadium.

(July 31): Michael Phelps wins his 19th Olympic medal, becoming the winningest Olympic athlete of all time. He surpassed the record held by Russian gymnast Larisa Latynina.

India Hit By Massive Power Failure (July 30): More than half of India's population—700 million people living in 22 out of the country's 28 states—loses power. The cause of the power failure is not determined. For the most part, Indians take the blackout in stride, as such events are not unusual in a country whose power grid is still in development

August

2012

Syria Sinks Further into Civil War (August): Kofi Annan resigns as UN special envoy to Syria, citing the Syrian government's refusal to implement his peace plan, intensifying violence by rebels, and discord within the Security Council. He says "without serious, purposeful and united international pressure, including from the powers of the region, it is impossible for me, or anyone, to compel the Syrian government in the first place, and also the opposition, to take the steps necessary to begin a political process." He also says it is imperative that President Bashar al-Assad step down.

(August 6): Prime Minister Riyad Farid Hijab and at least two other ministers defect to Jordan and announce that they would support the opposition. They are the highest-level defections to date and are clear signs that Assad's hold on power is dwindling.

(Aug. 15): The crisis in Syria spills into Lebanon when more than 20 Syrians are kidnapped in Lebanese territory.

(Aug. 16): The United Nations Security Council terminates its observer mission in Syria due to the increasing violence.

(Aug. 20): President Obama vows military action against the Syrian government if biological or chemical weapons in Syria are moved. It is the biggest threat of U.S. intervention so far.

(Aug. 23): More than 200,000 refugees have traveled from Syria to Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. The United Nations estimates there will be 185,000 Syrian refugees by the end of the year.

(Aug. 26): In Daraya, a suburb of Damascus, mass burials are discovered. The Local Coordination Committees reports that at least 630 residents of Daraya have been killed in the last week. Residents say that the Syrian army closed off the city before pounding it with gunfire and pulling residents from their houses.

Egypt Launches Airstrike in Sinai Peninsula (Aug. 8): Egypt launches its first airstrike in years in the Sinai Peninsula. Attack helicopters strike at gunmen in retaliation after 16 soldiers were shot and killed on August 5 at an Egyptian Army checkpoint. The attack on the Egyptian soldiers is President Mohammed Morsi's first crisis. Morsi orders an airstrike on the Sinai, which kills about 20 militants.

(Aug. 12): Morsi reassigns several senior generals and the heads of each service branch of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), an influential force in Egypt that has effectively been in control since the fall of Hosni Mubarak and recently has been in a power struggle with the new civilian government. Defense minister Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, a power broker in Egypt, is among the leaders Morsi stripped of his

position. Morsi also voids a constitutional declaration imposed by the military that limited the role of the president, and implements a new order that vastly expands his power and that of the legislature. The bold move sends a clear message that the civilian government has taken back control of the country.

Ecuador Grants Asylum to Julian Assange (Aug. 16): Ecuador announces that it is granting political asylum to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. Assange has been staying at the country's Embassy in London while waiting for the decision. The decision further strains relations between Ecuador and Great Britain. Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño announces the asylum at a news conference, where he says, "The government of Ecuador, faithful to its tradition of protecting those who seek refuge in its territory or in its diplomatic missions, has decided to grant diplomatic asylum to Julian Assange." Patiño adds that Assange might face the death penalty if tried in the United States. Britain continues to reject the request for Assange to be moved from the embassy in London to Ecuador. Britain maintains its legal obligation to extradite Assange to Sweden where he is still wanted for questioning over accusations of sexual assault.

Punk Band Is Convicted of Hooliganism in Russia (Aug. 17): The three members of the all-female punk band Pussy Riot are convicted of hooliganism and sentenced to two years in a penal colony for performing an anti-Putin song on the altar of Moscow's main Orthodox cathedral. At the sentencing of one of the most high-profile trials that Russia has seen in years, activists outside of the courthouse protest, chanting "Free Pussy Riot!" Police arrest dozens of protestors. Rallies supporting the three women are held in cities around the world, including London, New York and Paris. Immediately following the verdict, the United States, other governments, and human rights groups criticize the decision, calling the sentence severe. The women's lawyers say they will appeal the decision.

September 2012 :

Violence Continues in Syria (September 1): Opposition fighters seize an air base in Deir el-Zour. Along with the base, they capture 16 Syrian soldiers, weapons, and ammunition. **(Sept. 4):** The United Nations reports that more than 100,000 people fled Syria in August. The surge accounts for 40 percent of the 234,000 people who have registered with the United Nations for assistance since the fighting in Syria began. The surge of refugees coincides with President Bashar al-Assad's government increase in attacks on areas in Syria where the opposition is strong.

(Sept. 5): Iran resumes sending military equipment to Syria to aid the government in its fight against the opposition. Iran is using Iraq's airspace to send the supplies. Iraq's role in the operation shows what little influence the United States has over them. The Obama administration has pressed Iraq to shut down the air corridor that Iran uses to ship the supplies to Syria.

Gunmen Storm U.S. Embassy in Libya (September 11): Armed gunmen storm the American consulate in Benghazi and shoot and kill U.S. ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens and three other embassy officials. Stevens, a widely praised diplomat who was an advocate for the opposition in Libya, is the first U.S. ambassador to be killed in the line of duty since 1979. The attack coincides with violent protests at the U.S. embassy in Cairo over the release of a YouTube film, *Innocence of Muslims*, produced in the U.S., that insulted the Prophet Muhammad and criticized Islam. U.S. officials say they believe that given the weapons used-antiaircraft weapons and rocket-propelled grenades-the attack had been orchestrated in advance. In response to the assault, the U.S. sends 50 marines to protect the embassy in Tripoli.

(Sept. 14): Libyan authorities arrest four people who are suspects in the U.S. embassy attack in Benghazi. U.S. officials believe the attack may have been planned in advance. President Obama vows to bring those responsible for the attack to justice.

More U.S. Embassies Attacked over YouTube film (September 13): The U.S. embassies in Egypt and Yemen are attacked in protest over a film which demonstrators feel insults Islam. At least 15 people are injured, some by gunfire, at the U.S. embassy in Sanaá, Yemen. In Cairo, demonstrators climb into the U.S. embassy compound and rip down the American flag. At least 200 protestors gather at the U.S. embassy in Kuwait. Demonstrations are also held at U.S. missions in Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. At the U.S. consulate in Berlin, Germany an employee becomes ill after opening a mysterious envelope. Afterwards, the consulate is partially evacuated.

(Sept. 14): Attacks spread throughout the Middle East as protesters attack the German Embassy in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and climb into the U.S. Embassy compound in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. In Tripoli, one protestor is killed in a clash with security forces after demonstrators set fire to an Arby's and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Protests even spread to Indonesia and Pakistan where hundreds carry banners criticizing the United States and the filmmakers.

October

2012

U.S. Begins Retaliatory Action against Embassy Attack in Libya (Oct. 2): The U.S. Special Operations Command prepares data to use in the capture of the militants suspected in the attack on its embassy last month in Libya. The suspects include members of Ansar al-Shariah, an Islamist militia group, and other militants with ties to Al-Qaeda. The suspects are wanted for the September 11, 2012 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, which resulted in the deaths of American ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other embassy officials.

(Oct. 15): During an interview with CNN, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton takes responsibility for the security situation in the Libyan embassy attack last month. Clinton points out that she makes the final call on diplomatic security overseas, not President Obama or Vice President Biden. Clinton's interview comes one day before Obama's second debate with Mitt Romney. Clinton vows to improve security for diplomats, but also says, "We can't not engage."

Turkey Retaliates Against Syria (Oct. 3): Turkey hits four targets within Syria in retaliation over the mortar attack in Akcakale, Turkey, which killed five civilians, including three children.

(Oct. 4): The Turkish Parliament authorizes further military action against Syria. Turkey continues to fire artillery into Syria.

(Oct. 9): The U.S. military sends a task force to Jordan to assist armed forces with Syrian refugees and to be on hand in case the Syrian conflict continues to expand.

(Oct. 10): Turkish warplanes force a Syrian passenger jet to land under suspicion that it is carrying military cargo. En route from Moscow to Damascus, the jet is forced down in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Turkish television reports that inspectors find parts of a missile on board, but authorities in Turkey decline to comment on exactly what is found. Turkish civilian airplanes begin avoiding Syrian airspace. Both countries continue to fire artillery across the border.

(Oct. 13): Syria bans Turkish flights from its airspace. Russia denies that any weapons were onboard the intercepted Syrian passenger jet. Meanwhile, the fighting in Syria continues. Human rights activists report that Syrian rebels are making progress in the Idlib district.

(Oct. 14): Officials from the U.S. and the Middle East report that most of the arms shipped from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to Syrian rebels are falling into the hands of Islamic jihadists.

Hugo Chávez Wins Third Term (Oct. 7): Hugo Chávez wins the presidential election in Venezuela. He receives 54 percent of the vote. His opponent, Henrique Capriles Radonski, receives 45 percent. Even though it is the narrowest margin of victory, Chávez still wins easily. This will be Chávez's third six-year term as president.

Taliban Gun Down 14-Year-Old Girl Who Defied Them (Oct. 9): In Pakistan, Taliban members shoot 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai in the head and neck. The shooting occurs while Yousafzai is on her way home on a school bus filled with children. Two other girls are wounded. All three girls survive, but Yousafzai is in a Peshawar hospital in critical condition. Ehsanullah Ehsan, a Taliban spokesman, confirms that Yousafzai was the target due to her outspokenness against the Taliban and her determination to get an education. Ehsan says, "She has become a symbol of Western culture in the area; she was openly propagating it. Let this be a lesson."

(Oct. 11): Yousafzai is transferred by air to an army hospital in Rawalpindi. The hospital is near the Pakistani Army Headquarters.

(Oct. 15): Yousafzai is flown to Birmingham, Great Britain for specialized treatment to her skull which was fractured when the bullet passed through her head. She will also receive long-term rehabilitation there.

One Member of Russian Punk Band Goes Free (Oct. 10): A court in Moscow frees one of the three members of Pussy Riot, the punk band convicted of hooliganism for protesting in a cathedral last February. Yekaterina Samutsevich is released after judges accept her new lawyer's argument that she played less of a role in the cathedral protest performance that landed her in jail with her band mates. The latest ruling maintains the guilty verdict against all three women on charges of hooliganism, but the judges order Samutsevich's release on the grounds that she had less of a role in the incident. The case continues to draw

international attention and condemnation of Russia.

Lebanon Is Dragged into War in Syria (Oct. 19): A bomb explodes in Beirut's Christian section. Eight people are killed and at least 80 are wounded. The explosion kills intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Wissam al-Hassan, a top security official and an ally of the slain Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Hassan, a foe of Syria, had been a driving force behind the arrest of Michel Samaha, Lebanon's former information minister who had close ties to Syria, on charges of orchestrating attacks and assassinations of Sunnis in Lebanon.

Hurricane Sandy Wreaks Havoc (Oct. 24): Sandy, which blew into the Caribbean as a tropical storm, is upgraded to hurricane status as it hits Cuba, Haiti and Jamaica. A category 2 hurricane, Sandy leaves 44 dead in the region.

(Oct. 26): Hurricane Sandy blows through the Bahamas. As it approaches Florida and the east coast of the U.S., it is downgraded to a category 1.

(Oct. 27): The storm continues to move up the east coast and spreads out. Sandy's tropical storm-like winds extend from the storm's center for a 520 mile radius. Hurricane Sandy causes greater concern because it is on path to collide with a winter storm system moving across the U.S. from the west as well as an arctic air system from Canada.

(Oct. 29): Hurricane Sandy makes landfall as a downgraded storm. Now a post-tropical cyclone, Sandy weakens as it blows through southern Pennsylvania. Still, millions of people in more than half a dozen states are affected. Many lose power and evacuations along the coast are extensive. Subways and Amtrak service are shut down in major east coast cities including Boston, New York, and Washington. Parts of the New York City subway system are flooded. Eleven storm-related deaths are reported, seven in the New York area.

2012 Events:

New Proposal Presented to End Conflict in Syria (Nov. 1): China, one of the Syrian government's main allies, presents a new proposal to end the conflict in Syria. The plan calls on stronger international support for refugees and a truce brought about in phases. The proposal does not call for President Bashar al-Assad to step down.

(Nov. 11): Syria's opposition groups agree to form a new governing body that will unify the many rebel groups under one umbrella. The 50-person body, the Syrian National Initiative, will replace the Syrian National Council, which has come under fire for being largely ineffective and having few leaders living in Syria. The new organization will include younger leaders and will have strong representation inside the country. It will also oversee the opposition's military and will manage the distribution of weapons and funds. The group's leader, Sheikh Ahmad Moaz al-Khatib, says he hopes the new body will be viewed with legitimacy and receive financial assistance and weapons from the international community.

(Nov. 12): Tanks from Israel fire on Syrian artillery units in response to mortar fire near an army post in the Israeli-held Golan Heights.

(Nov. 13): France becomes the first Western country to officially recognize the new Syrian rebel coalition.

(Nov. 14): The government in Syria calls France's recognition of the Syrian rebel coalition an "immoral" act. Meanwhile, for the third day in a row, Syrian authorities order airstrikes on the area near their border with Turkey. **(Nov. 26):** The Syrian rebels seize a key military base and airport near Damascus. They also take control of a hydroelectric dam on the Euphrates River.

(Nov. 29): Commercial air traffic is stopped and internet access is unavailable throughout Syria. U.S. government officials say that the Obama administration is getting closer to recognizing the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces as well as considering more intervention to remove al-Assad from power.

Israel Kills Hamas Commander in Gaza Attack

(Nov. 14): In one of its biggest attacks on Gaza since the invasion four years ago, Israel launches an aerial attack and hits at least 20 targets. One of those targets is a Hamas military commander, Ahmed al-Jabari. He is killed while traveling through Gaze in a car. The airstrikes are in response to recent, repeated rocket attacks by Palestinian militants located in Gaza.

(Nov. 15): Israel continues a second day of airstrikes on Gaza and the Palestinian death toll rises to 11. Meanwhile, Hamas fires rockets into southern Israel, killing three civilians. The Israeli deaths will likely lead to Israel increasing its military offensive in Gaza. In a nationally televised address, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi says that his country will stand by the Palestinians, "The Egyptian people, the Egyptian leadership, the Egyptian government, and all of Egypt is standing with all its resources to stop this assault, to prevent the killing and the bloodshed of Palestinians."

(Nov. 18): Israel continues to target members of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza, and Hamas launches several hundred rockets, with some hitting Tel Aviv. Egypt, while a staunch supporter of Hamas, attempts to broker a peace agreement between Hamas and Israel to prevent the conflict from further destabilizing the region.

(Nov. 21): Egypt's foreign minister, Mohamed Kamel Amr, and U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton announce that a cease-fire has been signed. Both sides agree to end hostilities toward each other and Israel says it will open Gaza border crossings, allowing the flow of products and people into Gaza, potentially lifting the 5-year blockade that has caused much hardship to those living in the region.

Morsi Declares Authority over Courts (Nov. 22): Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi announces a brazen power grab when he declares authority over the courts, thereby removing any check on his actions by the courts. He says the move is necessary because the judiciary, made up of Hosni Mubarak appointees, is threatening to suspend the constitutional assembly before it completes the task of drafting a new constitution. Progress on writing a new constitution has been stalled by members of the opposition on the committee. Morsi also says the edict would bring "political, social and economic stability" and remove barriers to a smooth transition of power. The decree is met with large protests in Tahrir Square, the scene of the uprising against Mubarak, and international condemnation. It also fuels accusations that one autocrat has succeeded another.

(Nov. 26): Morsi seems to be backtracking in response to the outpouring of rage, saying only "acts of sovereignty" will be exempt from judicial oversight. The clarification does little to placate his opponents.

(Nov. 29): Under threat of being suspended by the courts, the constitutional assembly hastily approves a draft document, which is widely criticized for its ambiguity and lack of depth and originality. The draft constitution passes because Morsi's opponents on the committee from secular groups and Coptic Christians boycott the vote. Morsi says he will hold a referendum on the constitution as soon as possible.

UN Approves Non-Member State Status for Palestine (Nov. 29): The United Nations General Assembly approves an upgrade from the Palestinian Authority's current observer status to that of a non-member state. The vote comes after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas speaks to the General Assembly and asks for a "birth certificate" for his country. Of the 193 nations in the General Assembly, 138 vote in favor of the upgrade in status. While the vote is a victory for Palestine, it is a diplomatic setback for the U.S. and Israel. Having the title of "non-member observer state" will allow Palestine access to international organizations such as the International Criminal Court (ICC). If they join the ICC, Palestine can file complaints of war crimes against Israel. In response to the UN vote, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announces that Israel will not transfer about \$100 million in much-needed tax revenue owed to the struggling Palestinian Authority and will resume plans to build 3,000-unit settlement in an area that divides the north and the south parts of the West Bank, thereby denying the Palestinians any chance for having a contiguous state.

December 2012 Events:

Egypt's New Constitution Continues to Cause Unrest (Dec. 1): While the Muslim Brotherhood organize hundreds of thousands of supporters for Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi at Cairo University, several thousand protestors rally in Tahrir Square to oppose the new constitution. Despite the unrest, Morsi continues to move forward with the new constitution, setting December 15th as the date for the national referendum on it.

As Fighting Continues, Syrian Merchants Attempt Peaceful Protest (Dec. 2): Throughout the country Syrian merchants close their shops as part of a nonviolent protest movement called "Strike of Pride." Meanwhile, a car bomb in central Syria kills at least 15 people and fighting in and around Damascus continues.

(Dec. 5): The U.S. confirms its support of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces when Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks at a news conference in Brussels. She says, "Now that there is a new opposition formed, we are going to be doing what we can to support that opposition."

The World Reacts to Royal Baby News (Dec. 3): Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, is hospitalized for a severe case of morning sickness. As soon as the news spreads that the world's favorite royal couple is expecting much speculation begins over the unborn child who will one day most likely ascend to the throne of England. During Kate Middleton's hospital stay, two Australian radio disc jockeys make a prank call to the hospital pretending to be Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles. The call is broadcast on the radio in Australia and later around the world.

(Dec. 6): Kate Middleton is released from the hospital. She returns home to rest. The prank by the Australian

D.J.'s turns tragic when Jacintha Saldanha, the nurse who took the call, commits suicide. The police announce her death as "being treated as unexplained." However, the two D.J.'s are blamed on social media.

North Korea Successfully Launches Rocket (Dec. 12): North Korea's next attempt to put a satellite into orbit is not a failure. The successful launch of the rocket indicates that the country is inching closer toward developing the expertise to build an intercontinental ballistic missile. It also boosts Kim Jong-un's credibility both domestically and internationally, illustrating his seriousness in advancing the country's military capabilities. The launch takes the world by surprise and prompts a call for another round of sanctions.

December **2012** **U.S.** **News**

Republicans Counter Obama's Deficit Reduction Proposal (Dec. 3): Republicans respond to President Obama's deficit reduction proposal with a plan of their own. Their proposal is for a \$2.2 trillion deficit decrease over the next ten years by cutting \$1.2 trillion in spending and raising \$800 billion in revenue. The revenue will come by limiting deductions. Republicans also propose saving another \$200 billion by changing the way inflation is calculated. This will slow down benefit increases for social programs like Medicare.

(Dec. 4): President Obama rejects the Republicans' proposal to avoid the rapidly approaching fiscal cliff. He tells them he will not agree to any proposal that does not include increases on tax rates for the wealthy.

(Dec. 9): President Obama meets privately with House Speaker John Boehner in an attempt to hammer out a deal and avert a fiscal crisis. Meanwhile, Republican Senator Bob Corker, of Tennessee, says in a TV interview that a growing number of Republicans are open to compromising on tax rates.

U.S. Supreme Court Will Hear Two Same-Sex Marriage Cases (Dec. 7): The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear two cases that challenge federal and state laws over the issue that marriage is defined only as a union between a man and a woman. One case, from New York, tackles the federal law that requires the U.S. government to deny all benefits to lesbian and gay couples who are married in states that allow same-sex unions. The second case is from California and the outcome will either reject or reaffirm the constitutional right to same-sex marriage. Decisions on both cases are expected no later than June 2013.

Gunman Kills 26 at Elementary School (Dec. 14): Adam Lanza, age 20, forces his way into Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, Connecticut, and kills 26 people. The victims include 20 children between the ages of six and seven. Then Lanza takes his own life while still inside the school. Before going to the school, Lanza shoots and kills his mother, Nancy Lanza, in the home they shared.

(Dec. 16): President Obama travels to Newtown. In a speech at the memorial service he says, "No single law, no set of laws can eliminate evil from the world or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society, but that can't be an excuse for inaction."