
Major International Events

Major International Events

January 1, 2004–December 31, 2004

Domestic		International	
January			
1	Prime Minister Koizumi visits Yasukuni Shrine.	1	Air travel between India and Pakistan restored after two-year interruption.
		4	Afghanistan's Constitutional Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) adopts a new constitution.
		5	Pakistani President Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee hold their first official meeting in Islamabad since July 2001.
9	Then Minister of State for Defense Ishiba orders the dispatch of an advance unit of the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) made up of approximately 30 personnel, and approximately 230 Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) personnel, together with a C-130 transportation aircraft, to Iraq.	14	Mr. Berger takes office as president of Guatemala.
16	The approximately 30 members of an advance GSDF unit depart Narita Airport on a civilian aircraft and arrive in Samawah in Southern Iraq on January 19. The 110-member main ASDF unit arrives in Kuwait on January 23. The personnel have been dispatched to Iraq to participate in humanitarian and reconstruction activities.	15	Eight countries and regions, including Japan, the European Union (EU), the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Canada request the World Trade Organization (WTO) for authorization to impose retaliatory tariffs on US goods because of the failure of the United States (US) to repeal the Byrd Amendment, which provides for the distribution of revenues from anti-dumping duties to domestic industries, etc. (The WTO grants authorization to the request on November 26.)
16	A note verbale is issued protesting the issuance of postage stamps depicting Takeshima Island by the ROK.	20	In his State of the Union Address, US President Bush insists that North Korea eliminate its nuclear program and demands Iran not to develop nuclear weapons.
		25	Mr. Saakashvili takes office as president of Georgia, becoming the first pro-Europe, pro-US president of a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
		26	President Karzai of the Afghani interim government signs the new constitution. The constitution, which gives substantial powers to the president, is formally promulgated.
29	A bill amending the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law is passed by a majority in the House of Representatives with the support of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), New Komeito, and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The bill will allow Japan to impose unilateral sanctions against North Korea.	30	The United Nations (UN) Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1526, which tightens sanctions against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

Domestic		International	
February			
		1	Bombs explode simultaneously at the offices of the two main Kurdish parties in Irbil, northern Iraq. Approximately 70 people are killed and about 270 injured.
3	Approximately 90 members of the first detachment of the main GSDF unit dispatched to Iraq leave the ASDF Chitose Air Base on a government aircraft and arrive in Kuwait on January 4 local time (same date in Japan).	3	The United Kingdom (UK) government announces the establishment of a committee chaired by Lord Butler to carry out an inquiry into intelligence relating to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in relation to the use of armed force against Iraq.
		4	Dr. Khan of Pakistan meets with President Musharraf and admits leaking nuclear technology to other countries. On February 5 President Musharraf announces that Dr. Khan will be pardoned.
		6	A powerful bomb explodes on a subway train in Moscow, killing approximately 40 people and injuring over 130. The Russian government concludes that the crime was committed by an armed Chechen group.
9	A bill amending the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Control Law is passed by a majority in the House of Councillors with the support of the LDP, DPJ, New Komeito, etc. The bill will allow Japan to impose unilateral sanctions against North Korea.		
9	A majority in a plenary session of the House of Councillors approves the dispatch of SDF units to Iraq, with the support of the LDP and New Komeito.		
11–14	Deputy Foreign Minister Tanaka and then Director-General of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Yabunaka visit North Korea for consultations on the abduction issue. North Korea rejects Japan's call for the unconditional return of eight members of abductees' families. Both sides agree to continue intergovernment talks.		
17	A joint LDP meeting approves the outline of a bill allowing specific vessels to be barred from entering Japanese ports. The bill is designed to prevent port visits by vessels from North Korea.		
21	Approximately 140 members of the second detachment of the main GSDF unit depart for Iraq from Chitose Air Base on a government aircraft.		
21	UN Secretary-General Annan visits Japan and holds talks with Prime Minister Koizumi in Tokyo.	19	Leaders of northern and southern Cyprus meet in Nicosia after an 11-month interval to resume talks on the reunification of the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.
24	UN Secretary-General Annan addresses members of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors in the chamber of the House of Councillors.		
		25–28	The second round of the Six-Party Talks is held in Beijing. A chairman's statement is issued, indicating that agreement has been reached on such points as the holding of another round of talks and the establishment of working groups.

Domestic

International

29 The UN Security Council holds an emergency meeting after President Aristide of Haiti resigns and leaves the country. The Security Council unanimously adopts a resolution calling for the dispatch of a multinational interim force to Haiti.

March

3-4 The 2nd Japan-Arab Dialogue Forum is held in Alexandria, Egypt.

7 Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki Moon of the ROK in Tokyo.

9 The government makes a cabinet decision to submit seven bills concerning emergencies, including the Bill Concerning the Measures for the Protection of the People in the Event of Armed Attacks, to the Diet, together with agreements requiring approval.

12 At the ministerial-level video conference, Japan and Mexico confirm that they have reached an agreement in principle on major elements of the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement.

2 In the Democratic primaries for the US presidential election, Senator Kerry secures the nomination after winning in nine states.

2 In Iraq, simultaneous terrorist bomb attacks strike Karbala, a holy city for Shiite Muslims in Iraq, and Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. The attacks, the biggest under the US military administration, target the Ashura festival, a major religious event for Shiite Muslims.

7 In the Greek general election, the New Democracy Party, the biggest opposition party, wins a landslide victory over the ruling Panhellenic Socialist Movement. On March 10, New Democracy leader Karamanlis takes office as prime minister and forms his cabinet.

8 The Iraqi Governing Council signs a basic law, which will function as the interim constitution after the restoration of sovereignty on June 30. The new law takes effect.

10 At its regular meeting, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) welcomes Libya's voluntary decision to eliminate materials, equipment, and programs leading to the production of nuclear weapons. The IAEA Board also adopts a resolution finding that Libya's past failures to meet the requirements under the IAEA Safeguards Agreement constituted non-compliance with the agreement.

11 Explosions occur at three stations including the main station, Atocha, in the Spanish capital of Madrid. The explosions, which target crowded commuter trains, kill 191 people and injure approximately 1,700 people.

12 The National Assembly of the ROK passes an impeachment motion against President Roh Moo Hyun.

13 At its regular meeting, the IAEA Board of Governors adopts a resolution that includes a call on Iran to continue and intensify its active cooperation with the IAEA.

14 Votes are counted in the Spanish lower house election. Victory goes to the center-left Socialist Workers' Party—led by General Secretary Zapatero—which has opposed the dispatch of troops to Iraq. On March 15, Zapatero confirms his pledge to withdraw the Spanish troops in Iraq (approximately 1,300) unless Iraq's sovereignty is restored by the end of June as planned.

Domestic		International	
24	Chinese activists land on Japan's Senkaku Islands. They are arrested by the Okinawa Prefectural Police and forcibly removed on March 26.	14	In the Russian presidential election, incumbent President Putin wins by a substantial margin over other candidates.
		20	In the presidential election in Taiwan, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party is reelected, defeating the Kuomintang leader Lien Chan, who stood on a combined opposition ticket.
		22	Israeli forces kill Mr. Yassin, founder of the Islamic fundamentalist organization Hamas, in a missile attack in Gaza.
		24	The US lifts its sanctions against Pakistan.
		26	The UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1535, which aims to revitalize the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) through the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and other measures.
31	A commemorative ceremony is held at the National Archives in Washington D.C. to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Amity between Japan and the US.	29	Seven Central and Eastern European countries formally join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by depositing their instruments of accession with the US, as the depository country for NATO. On April 2 an accession ceremony is held in Brussels.

April			
3	A commemorative ceremony marking the 150th anniversary of the Japan-US relationship is held at Kaiko Hiroba in Yokohama.	1	The International Conference on Afghanistan is held in Berlin and the Berlin Declaration is adopted.
5	The Ministerial Conference on Peace Consolidation and Economic Development of the Western Balkans is held in Tokyo.	10	US forces in Iraq offer Sunni Muslim militants a ceasefire in Fallujah. The ceasefire comes into effect from April 11.
8	The Qatar-based satellite television station Al-Jazeera reports that a group calling itself Saraya al-Mujahideen has abducted three Japanese in Iraq and threatened to kill them unless the SDF troops withdraw from Iraq within three days. On April 15 the three Japanese are released unharmed at the Al-Kubaisi Mosque in Baghdad.	13	US President Bush announces the deployment of additional US forces in Iraq and makes a statement that includes a firm commitment to the existing timetable for the transfer of sovereignty.
		14	President Bush meets with Prime Minister Sharon of Israel and expresses his support for a plan, announced by Mr. Sharon, under which Israel will withdraw from Gaza and part of the West Bank.

Domestic

- 15 Two other Japanese are abducted by an armed group in Baghdad, Iraq. On April 17 two Japanese are released unharmed at the Umm Al-Qura Mosque in Baghdad.
- 15 The UN Commission on Human Rights adopts the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which includes a call to bring about an early resolution of the abduction issue.
- 23 The government extends the time limit for the basic plan regarding measures based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law for six months.

International

- 15 US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld announces that 20,000 US troops previously scheduled to leave Iraq will now remain in Iraq.
- 15 In the ROK's general election, the ruling Uri Party wins a 152-seat majority in the 299-seat National Assembly.
- 15 The board of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) chooses South Africa as the host country for the 2010 World Cup.
- 16 Based on the results of the March general election, a majority of the lower house of the Spanish parliament elects Mr. Zapatero, general secretary of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, as the new president.
- 17 Armed helicopters from the Israeli military attack a car carrying Mr. Rantisi, the new leader of the Islamic fundamentalist organization Hamas. The attack, which occurs in Gaza City in the Palestine Autonomous Region, kills three people, including Mr. Rantisi.
- 19 Spanish President Zapatero indicates that he has directed Defense Minister Bono to withdraw immediately the approximately 1,300 Spanish troops in Iraq ahead of the June 30 schedule.
- 19 Following the Spanish government's decision to withdraw troops from Iraq, Honduran President Maduro announces the early withdrawal of the approximately 370 Honduran troops stationed in Iraq, which had been operating in collaboration with Spanish forces (withdrawal completed on June 1). On April 20 the Dominican Republic announces that it will repatriate its 302-member contingent in Iraq between late May and early June.
- 19–21 Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defense Committee of North Korea, visits China.
- 20 UK Prime Minister Blair announces in the House of Commons that a national referendum will be held concerning the ratification of the European Constitutional Treaty as the basic law for the 25-member EU.
- 22 A train explodes at Ryongchon Station in the northwest of North Korea, killing 161 people and injuring over 1,300.
- 23 The US drastically eases its sanctions against Libya.
- 24 A referendum concerning a proposal to reunify the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is held. The proposal is approved by Turkish Cypriots but rejected by a majority of Greek Cypriots.

Domestic	International
	<p>27 In Luxembourg, Russia and the EU reach agreement and sign the Protocol to apply the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, a basic framework covering trade, economic activities, and other areas, to new EU members from the former Soviet Union.</p> <p>28 The UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1540, which obliges all member states to establish laws prohibiting the development or possession of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons by non-state sectors, including individuals and organizations, in order to prevent the proliferation of WMD to terrorists.</p> <p>28 Militant groups mount a series of attacks on police stations and other facilities in three southern Thai provinces, including Pattani. Clashes with the authorities result in 112 deaths.</p> <p>30 It is revealed that some members of US forces in Iraq have mistreated Iraqi detainees. President Bush expresses “deep disgust” at the mistreatment.</p>

May	
<p>4-5 The governments of Japan and North Korea hold consultations in Beijing, in which the return of members of abductees’ families to Japan is the biggest issue.</p>	<p>1 Ten countries, including Central and Eastern European countries, join the EU, increasing its membership to 25.</p> <p>6 US President Bush apologizes for the first time over the mistreatment of Iraqi detainees. On May 7, US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld admits responsibility for the incidents and states that the US intends to compensate the victims.</p> <p>9 A terrorist bomb explodes in a stadium in Grozny, capital of the Republic of Chechnya, southern Russia, during a Victory Day celebration to mark the defeat of Germany. The bomb kills 6 people, including pro-Russian Chechen President Kadyrov. About 60 people are injured.</p> <p>10 A presidential election is held in the Philippines, and incumbent President Arroyo is reelected.</p> <p>11 The US imposes sanctions on Syria for reasons that include support for terrorism.</p> <p>11-13 Israeli forces discover underground tunnels used to smuggle arms in the Rafah area of Gaza. Houses in the area are demolished.</p> <p>12-15 The first meeting of the working group for the Six-Party Talks is held in Beijing.</p> <p>13 In India’s general election, an opposition coalition centering on the Indian National Congress defeats the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Vajpayee of the Bharatiya Janata Party.</p>

Domestic

- 14 Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi meets with then US Secretary of State Powell in Washington D.C.

- 20 A plenary session of the House of Representatives passes seven bills concerning emergencies and approves the signing of three related agreements.

- 22 After meeting in Pyongyang with Kim Jong Il, Chairman of the National Defense Committee of North Korea, Prime Minister Koizumi announces that five family members of the abductees who have returned to Japan will be repatriated and that Japan will provide 250,000 tons of food aid through the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

- 26 At a meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Japanese representative calls for cooperation toward the early resolution of the problem of abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea.

- 27 A car carrying two Japanese journalists is attacked in the south of Baghdad. The two Japanese and an Iraqi interpreter are killed and the driver is wounded.

International

- 13–14 The OECD Ministerial Council Meeting is held in Paris.

- 14 A G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting is held in Washington.

- 14 The Constitutional Court of the ROK overturns the impeachment of President Roh Moo Hyun, whose presidential powers are restored.

- 17 A car bomb explodes near the entrance of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) headquarters in central Baghdad, killing the President of Iraq's Governing Council.

- 17 In Myanmar, the national convention, established to decide the basic principles of the constitution, is reconvened after an eight-year interval.

- 19 A US court-martial gives the maximum sentence to a soldier convicted of mistreating Iraqi detainees. On May 24 US President Bush announces that Abu Ghraib Prison will be demolished.

- 21 Spanish forces complete their withdrawal from Iraq.

- 22 The administration of Manmohan Singh takes office in India.

- 22 The Arab Summit is held in Tunis, Tunisia.

- 24 The US and the UK formally present to the UN Security Council a new draft resolution concerning the transfer of sovereignty to Iraq at the end of June.

- 25 US forces step up their attacks on the militia organization of Muqtada al-Sadr in the Shia holy city of Najaf and elsewhere. Approximately 70 militia members are killed. The US forces cease their attack on May 27, and Sadr's forces also start to withdraw.

- 28 At the Plenary Meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which opened in Göteborg on May 24, participating governments agree to tighten controls on exports of nuclear materials.

- 28 The Iraqi Governing Council nominates Dr. Allawi, a Shiite Muslim, as prime minister of the interim Iraqi government.

- 28 The US and five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) sign the US–Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

Domestic		International	
		29	An armed group attacks foreign residential compounds for foreigners including Japanese nationals, in the Saudi Arabian city of Al Khobar. 22 people are killed and 25 are injured.
June			
		1	An Iraqi interim government is established. Ghazi Mashal Ajil al-Yawer of the Iraqi Governing Council takes office as president and Council member Allawi as prime minister.
		1	Mr. Saca takes office as the new president of El Salvador.
3	A bill allowing specific vessels to be barred from entering Japanese ports is passed by a plenary session of the House of Representatives and is passed into law by the House of Councillors on June 14.	6	The Israeli cabinet adopts a plan providing for the unilateral removal of settlements and military facilities and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank by end of fiscal 2005.
8	Prime Minister Koizumi holds a meeting with US President Bush at Sea Island.	8	The UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1546 on Iraq, which stipulates the full transfer of authority at the end of June.
9	Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Russian President Putin at Sea Island.	8–10	The G8 Sea Island Summit is held.
9	Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with German Chancellor Schroeder at Sea Island.		
10	Special Envoy of the Prime Minister Aisawa meets with Guide of the Revolution Muammar Al Qadhafi in Libya.	11	The UN Security Council unanimously adopts a resolution calling for the establishment of the UN Advance Mission in Sudan (UNAMIS).
		13	The EU holds its first European Parliament election as a 25-country organization. Ruling parties in key countries, including Germany and France, are defeated.
14	A plenary session of the House of Councillors passes seven bills concerning emergencies and approves three related agreements.	14	In the UK, a committee established to carry out an inquiry into WMD intelligence in relation to the use of armed force against Iraq (chaired by Lord Butler) publishes its report.
		15	Explosions in Iraq are seen as an attempt to sabotage oil pipelines. Further explosions on June 16 result in the total suspension of exports from the Persian Gulf.
18	The cabinet approves a plan for SDF personnel to engage in activities as part of a multinational force, following the full restoration of Iraqi sovereignty. A decision is made to amend the enforcement order of the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq and to change the basic plan for the dispatch of SDF personnel.	18	At its regular meeting, the IAEA Board of Governors adopts a resolution that calls on Iran to take all necessary steps on an urgent basis to help resolve all outstanding questions.
		18	The EU Summit adopts the European Constitutional Treaty, which will become the basic law for the EU.

Domestic	
21	The inaugural meeting of the Three-Party Committee of Japan, the People's Republic of China, and the ROK is held in Qingdao, China.
21	Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi expresses concern to Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing with regard to the development of Chunxiao oil and gas field and other matters and demands information.
22	Prime Minister Koizumi holds regular Japan-EU Summit Meeting with Prime Minister of Ireland Ahern (holding the Presidency of the EU), and President of the European Commission Prodi.
27	GSDF engineering units complete approximately 28 months of PKO activities as part of the UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). All personnel return to Japan.
28	Japan recognizes the interim government of Iraq, as governing authority is transferred to the latter from the CPA and Iraq's sovereignty is fully restored. The Japanese cabinet approves a plan for SDF personnel to engage in activities as part of a multinational force.

International	
21-22	The working group for the Six-Party Talks meets in Beijing.
23-26	The third round of the Six-Party Talks is held in Beijing. The meeting concludes with the presentation of a chairman's statement containing eight items, including the parties' agreement to resume the Six-Party talks by the end of September 2004.
28	The CPA formally transfers governing authority to the Iraqi interim government.
28	Canada holds a general election. The ruling Liberal Party wins another term.
30	The US tightens economic sanctions against Cuba.

July			
1	Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi meets with Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun of North Korea in Jakarta. They agreed on a reunion in Jakarta between Hitomi Soga, an abductee, and members of her family still in North Korea.	1	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) and ASEAN+3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting are held in Jakarta.
1	Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi meets with then US Secretary of State Powell in Jakarta.	2	The Chairman's Statement from the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Conference is issued.
7	Prime Minister Koizumi and then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi meet with then US National Security Advisor Rice during her visit to Japan.	3	UN Secretary-General Annan and President of Sudan Omar Al-Bashir issue a joint communiqué in Khartoum, and Sudan pledges the immediate start of the disarmament of Arab militias that have been attacking Darfur residents in western Sudan.
9	Soga Hitomi is reunited with three members of her family in Jakarta. The family returns to Japan on July 18.	6-8	The African Union (AU) holds a summit conference in Addis Ababa to discuss the Darfur conflict and other issues.
13-14	Israeli and Palestinian officials are invited to Hakone-machi, Kanagawa Prefecture, for the second Confidence-Building Meeting.	9	The International Court of Justice (ICJ) submits an advisory opinion stating that the barrier being built by Israel in the West Bank is in violation of international law and that Israel should dismantle the barrier and pay compensation.
		15	The Cambodian People's Party and the Funcinpec Party form a coalition government led by Prime Minister Hun Sen in Cambodia.

Domestic		International	
21–22	Prime Minister Koizumi meets with ROK President Roh Moo Hyun on Jeju Island.	19	The Philippines completes the withdrawal of its contingent in Iraq. Philippine hostages are released on July 20.
		19–22	The International Whaling Commission holds its general meeting in Sorrento, Italy. Proposals from the Japanese government, including a call for the abolition of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary, are not passed.
		27	The US Democratic Party convention formally nominates Senator Kerry as its presidential candidate. Mr. Kerry makes his acceptance speech in Boston on July 29.
		30	NATO holds an ambassadorial-level council meeting, resulting in an agreement to use a NATO contingent to provide training for the Iraqi military and security forces in Iraq.
		31	The WTO General Council adopts the “July Package.”

August			
		2	US President Bush announces measures including the creation of the new position of national intelligence director and establishment of the National Counterterrorism Center.
5	The Japanese government decides to provide 125,000 tons of food and medical assistance worth about US\$7 million through international organizations as part of its humanitarian assistance to North Korea.	4	Czech President Klaus appoints Mr. Gross, head of the Social Democratic Party, as prime minister, forming a center-left coalition government based on a three-party coalition.
9	Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi holds talks with Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wu Dawei concerning an incident in which Chinese spectators damaged a Japanese minister’s car during violent riots following the Asian Cup soccer finals and expresses Japan’s displeasure, and Ambassador Wu Dawei communicates China’s unwillingness to tolerate such an unpleasant incident.	12	Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong forms a new administration in Singapore.
11–12	Japan and North Korea hold working-level consultations in Beijing.	13–29	The Games of the XXVIII Olympiad are held in Athens.
13	A US Marine helicopter crashes and burns on the grounds of Okinawa International University, adjacent to Marine Corps Air Station Futenma operated by the US Marine Corps. Flights by the same type of helicopter restart on August 22 without sufficient investigation into the cause of the accident. Japanese and US governments hold a meeting of the Unusual Occurrence Subcommittee of the Japan-US Joint Committee on August 26 in Tokyo.	15–18	Iraqi National Conference opens in Baghdad.
		16	US President Bush announces in his speech a basic policy to reorganize US military forces on a global scale and declares the US will withdraw 60,000 to 70,000 military personnel, approximately one-third of US troops stationed in Asia and Europe, within 10 years.

Domestic

25–31 Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi visits Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) where the first “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue/Foreign Ministers Meeting is held in Astana.

International

- 16 Former President Fernandez forms a new administration after being inaugurated as president of the Dominican Republic.
- 24 Two domestic passenger flights departing from Moscow crash almost simultaneously in the Tula region south of Moscow and near Rostov-on-Don, killing 90 people.
- 26 A ceasefire agreement is reached between the “Mahdi Army,” a paramilitary group led by Muqtada al-Sadr, a strongly anti-America leader of Islam’s Shiite sect, and armed forces of the US and the UK through the mediation of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. On August 27, al-Sadr and his militia withdraw from the Imam Ali Mosque, the most sacred ground of the Shiite sect in Najaf, where they had barricaded themselves.
- 29 The Republic of Chechnya holds its presidential election under strict monitoring, and Interior Minister Alkhanov is elected president on September 1.
- 30 The Republican National Convention begins in the US, and President Bush is nominated formally as the party’s candidate for the presidential election on August 31. President Bush delivers his acceptance speech on September 2.
- 31 A suicide bombing occurs in the vicinity of Rizhskaya Station on Moscow’s subway line, killing 10 and injuring about 50.

September

- 1 Twenty-nine men and women, thought to be seeking asylum from North Korea, rush into a Japanese school in Beijing, China.
- 2 Prime Minister Koizumi becomes the first prime minister to view the Northern Territories from aboard a Japan Coast Guard patrol vessel.
- 10 The “Second Middle East Cultural Exchanges and Dialogue Mission” is dispatched to Iran and Jordan.
- 15 Prime Minister Koizumi visits Brazil and presents “A Vision for a New Japan–Latin America and Caribbean Partnership” in Sao Paulo.
- 16 Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Brazilian President Lula in Brasilia.
- 17 Prime Minister Koizumi visits Mexico and holds talks with President Fox, and signs the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement in Mexico City.

- 1–3 An armed group occupies a school in Beslan in the Republic of North Ossetia in southern Russia on September 1, where it takes more than 1,200 people hostage and barricades itself in the building and demands the Russian army withdraw from the Chechen Republic. About 330 of the hostages are killed and more than 700 are injured.
- 9 A suicide car bombing occurs in front of the Australian embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, killing 11 people and injuring 182 (including a Japanese infant who is injured slightly).

Domestic		International	
		18	The ROK announces the “Four Principles on the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy” concerning its domestic uranium enrichment and plutonium separation experiments, stating the ROK has absolutely no intentions to develop or possess nuclear weapons.
		18	The IAEA Board of Governors adopts a resolution urging Iran to provide complete information to the IAEA and suspend its uranium enrichment-related activities, and to submit a report concerning Iran’s response to the requests by the Board of Governors under previous resolutions to the IAEA Director General prior to the Board of Governors November meeting.
		19	The 4th Plenum of the 16th Central Committee of Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee approves the resignation of Jiang Zemin as Chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission and the appointment of Party General Secretary (serving concurrently as president) Hu Jintao to fill the post.
20	Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Prime Minister Dr. Allawi of the Iraqi interim government in New York.	20	Indonesia holds historic elections culminating in the first-ever direct election of Indonesia’s president, and former Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs Yudhoyono is elected over incumbent President Megawati by a wide margin.
21	Prime Minister Koizumi addresses the UN General Assembly in New York, and expresses Japan’s firm resolve to seek permanent membership on the UN Security Council.	20	The US lifts its remaining sanctions against Libya.
21	Prime Minister Koizumi holds a meeting with US President Bush in New York.		
21	Prime Minister Koizumi holds a summit meeting with President Lula of Brazil, Prime Minister Singh of India and Deputy Chancellor and Foreign Minister Fischer of Germany in New York. The four countries issue a joint press statement in which they support each other’s candidacy for permanent membership on an expanded UN Security Council.		
23	Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi holds talks with Palestinian Authority Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaath in New York.		
23	Then Foreign Minister Kawaguchi co-sponsors the “Friends of the CTBT” Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in New York.		
25–26	The Second Japan–North Korea working-level consultations are held in Beijing.	24	IAEA General Conference, which began on September 20, ends. During the General Conference sessions, resolutions concerning the North Korean nuclear issue and other issues are adopted.
27	The reshuffled Second Koizumi Cabinet is inaugurated and House of Representatives member Machimura is appointed foreign minister.		

Domestic

International

29 Two Israeli infants die in an attack on Israeli territory with rockets fired from the northern area of the Gaza Strip.

October

4 The Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, an advisory organ to Prime Minister Koizumi, publishes its report “Japan’s Visions for Future Security and Defense Capabilities.”

6 Foreign Minister Machimura holds meetings with then US National Security Advisor Rice, then Secretary of State Powell, and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld in Washington.

13 The Donor Committee meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq is held in Tokyo, and issues a joint statement. Foreign Minister Machimura announces Japan will contribute US\$40 million (approximately ¥4.4 billion) to support Iraq’s upcoming national elections.

4 The US House of Representatives unanimously approves the North Korea Human Rights Act, which US President Bush signs and formally enacts on October 18.

6 The US mission that searched for WMD in Iraq submits its report to the US Congress stating its assessment that although WMD stockpiles were not discovered, Iraq had the intention of maintaining the ability to reconstitute its WMD programs.

6 The ROK Ministry of Defense announces its formal agreement with the US plan to reduce the number of troops stationed in the ROK by one-third, or 12,500 personnel, by 2008.

7–9 The 5th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM 5) is held in Hanoi; it approves the participation of 13 new countries and adopts the chairman’s statement.

7 Three terrorist bombings occur in Taba and two other places in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, killing 34 people including 11 Israelis, and injuring 106.

8 The UN Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1566, which includes provisions calling on states to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

9 A presidential election is held in Afghanistan. On November 3, President Karzai of the Transitional Administration of Afghanistan is elected without a runoff election.

9 In Australia’s general election, the conservative coalition government, led by Prime Minister Howard of the Liberal Party, wins overwhelming victories both in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

11 The EU terminates weapons sanctions against Libya.

14 Russian President Putin, who is visiting China, and Chinese President Hu Jintao hold summit meetings and finally conclude negotiations to demarcate the border between China and Russia.

15 The UN General Assembly holds an election for non-permanent members of the Security Council, and five countries including Japan are elected.

19 In Myanmar, Prime Minister Khin Nyunt retires and Secretary-1 Soe Win is named the new prime minister.

Domestic

23	In a Japan-US joint press statement for the resumption of trade in beef and beef products, Japan and the US share the view the two countries will resume two-way trade in beef and beef products under specified conditions and modalities, subject to their respective domestic approval processes, based upon science.
24	Then US Secretary of State Powell pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Koizumi and holds a meeting with Foreign Minister Machimura during his visit to Tokyo.
25	Japan and China hold the first director-general level consultations concerning oil and natural gas field development by China in the East China Sea in Beijing.
26	An armed group calling itself the Qaeda Organization for Jihad in Mesopotamia posts the video image of a Japanese it claims to have kidnapped in Iraq on its website, and threatens it will kill the hostage unless the SDF troops withdraw within 48 hours. The hostage's body is found dead in Baghdad on October 31.
26	As part of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), Japan hosts a maritime interdiction exercise (Team Samurai 04) off the coast of Sagami Bay and within the Port of Yokosuka.
26	The government extends the Basic Plan regarding Measures Based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law for six months.

International

20	New Indonesian President Yudhoyono is inaugurated.
29	Leaders of 25 EU countries and Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey sign the European Constitutional Treaty.
29	Prince Norodom Sihamoni ascends the throne as Cambodia's new king.

November

1-2	The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Asia-Africa Trade and Investment Conference is held in Tokyo.
3	The court martial of Charles Jenkins, husband of abductee Soga Hitomi, is opened, and the military judge finds Jenkins guilty of desertion and collaboration and hands a verdict of 30-days confinement and a dishonorable discharge. Jenkins is released on November 27 when the prison term is shortened.
5-7	Foreign Minister Machimura visits the ROK, where he holds talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki Moon and pays a courtesy call on President Roh Moo Hyun.

2	US presidential election is held. The Republican Party candidate and incumbent President Bush's reelection is confirmed on September 3.
3	Hungarian Prime Minister Gyurcsany announces Hungary will withdraw its approximately 300 military personnel from Iraq by the end of March 2005.
8	Prime Minister Dr. Allawi of the interim government of Iraq gives authority to US forces in Iraq and government troops to begin mopping-up operations in central Fallujah to suppress armed resistance groups, and 15,000 troops begin full-scale operations.

Domestic

- 9–14 The third Japan–North Korea working-level consultations concerning Japanese abducted by North Korea are held in Pyongyang, and North Korea reports on the results of its reinvestigation concerning 10 victims whose safety is uncertain, claiming “eight of the individuals have died and two never entered the country.” The Japanese delegation returns home with evidence including photographs and bones said to be the “remains” of the deceased.
- 10 At the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Japanese representative appeals for cooperation on the cases of abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea.
- 10 A submarine of unknown nationality navigates under the surface of territorial waters off Sakishima Island in Okinawa Prefecture, and Minister of State for Defense Ono orders the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to take the Maritime Security Operations; the order is cancelled when the submarine sails outside the air-defense identification zone on November 12. Japan’s government determines the vessel was a nuclear submarine belonging to China’s naval forces and demands an apology from China, and China admits the incident and expresses its regrets on November 16.
- 10 Japan’s Diet approves the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement.
- 14 Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Lavrov declares that the conclusion of a peace treaty is important to fully coordinate Japan-Russia relations and that as the state retaining continuing identity with the Soviet Union Russia considers itself bound by the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration of 1956. The minister also states that the transfer of two of the four Northern Islands to Japan would be a final settlement of the issue under the declaration. President Putin expresses his support for the foreign minister’s statement the following day.

International

- 11 Palestinian Authority President and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Arafat dies at a hospital near Paris. As his successor, former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Abbas is elected secretary general of the PLO by the PLO Executive Committee.
- 11 Lithuania becomes the first of the 25 member countries in the EU to ratify the European Constitutional Treaty as its parliament approves the document.
- 12 Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs Bot, Minister of Defense Kamp, and Minister of Development Cooperation van Ardenne confirm and declare in a letter to the president of the House of Representatives that the Netherlands will station Dutch troops in Iraq until around mid-March 2005.
- 12 Then US Secretary of State Powell visits Israel and the Palestinian Territories.
- 14 At talks between Iran and the EU3 (France, Germany and the UK) concerning the Iranian nuclear issue, the four countries reach a mutual agreement that includes the suspension of uranium enrichment-related and re-processing activities by Iran.

Domestic	
17	Foreign Minister Machimura holds talks with Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pettigrew in Santiago.
20	Prime Minister Koizumi holds a meeting with US President Bush in Santiago.
21	Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Chinese President Hu in Santiago.
22	Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Chilean President Lagos in Santiago.
27	The foreign ministers of Japan, China, and the ROK hold a trilateral meeting (the Three-Party Committee) in Vientiane.

International	
17-18	16th APEC Ministerial Meeting is held in Santiago.
18	Russia deposits its instrument of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to prevent global warming to the UN.
20-21	12th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting is held in Santiago.
21	The second ballot of the presidential election is held in Ukraine and ruling coalition candidate Mr. Yanukovich proclaims victory on November 22. Opposition party candidate and former Prime Minister Yushchenko's claims of large-scale irregularities are followed by protest demonstrations involving more than 100,000 Yushchenko supporters, which continue until November 30. On November 23, Yushchenko one-sidedly declares himself winner of the presidential election, sparking a tense confrontation. On November 26, Yushchenko's supporters blockade the main government buildings, throwing government functions into a state of paralysis, and on November 27 the Ukrainian parliament adopts a resolution calling the runoff election invalid. On November 29, the Ukraine Supreme Court begins hearings on the validity of the Central Elections Commission's presentation of the election results in Kyiv.
21	Iraq decides the first democratic elections since the overthrow of President Hussein's government will be held on January 30, 2005.
22	Portuguese Prime Minister Lopes declares his intention to withdraw his country's military police contingent stationed in Iraq after the Iraq National Assembly elections in 2005.
22	The EU launches the European Commission with former Portuguese Prime Minister Barroso serving as President of the Commission.
23	Foreign ministers of approximately 20 leading countries, including the G8, participate in the Ministerial Meeting of the Neighboring Countries of Iraq, the G8, and China held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.
26	The IAEA Board of Governors shares the Director General's view that the failure of the ROK to report its activities is of serious concern and welcomes the corrective actions taken by the ROK.
26	The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) formally announces in New York it will maintain the suspension of the Light Water Reactor (LWR) Project in North Korea, which has been in place since December 2003 for another year.

Domestic

- 29 Prime Minister Koizumi, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, and ROK President Roh Moo Hyun hold a Trilateral Meeting of the Leaders of Japan, China, and ROK in Vientiane.
- 29 Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Philippine President Arroyo in Vientiane, and the two leaders confirm that they have reached an agreement in principle on major elements of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement.
- 30 Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in Vientiane.

International

- 29 The IAEA Board of Governors adopts a resolution welcoming the fact that Iran had decided to continue and extend its suspension of all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, and requests the IAEA Director General to report to the Board of Governors on his findings.
- 29 The ASEAN Summit opens in Vientiane. Participating leaders decide to convene the first East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur at the end of 2005, and the ASEAN+3 Summit also supports the decision.
- 30 At the ASEAN+Japan Summit in Vientiane, the leaders agree to hold the first negotiations of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement in April 2005.
- 30 UN High-Level Panel issues its report that refers to specific measures for UN reforms.

December

- 3 The UN General Assembly adopts the resolution on nuclear disarmament, "A Path to the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," submitted by Japan with support of the vast majority of members.
- 7 The permanent representatives to the UN of Japan, Germany, Brazil, and India hold talks with UN Secretary-General Annan in New York to directly convey their will to seek permanent membership on the UN Security Council.

- 2 The ceremony to hand over command of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) conducting peacekeeping activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina from NATO to EU is held at a NATO camp near Sarajevo.
- 3 The First Review Conference (Nairobi Summit) of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) ends in Nairobi.
- 4 A spokesman for North Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially clarifies for the first time North Korea's position that the Six-Party Talks cannot be resumed until the inauguration of the second term of US President Bush in January 2005.
- 6 An armed group attacks the US consulate in Jeddah in western Saudi Arabia, taking several hostages and occupying a building. Saudi security forces storm the building, kill three of the gunmen, and capture two others to end the siege, which leaves five local employees of the consulate dead.
- 7 Hamid Karzai takes the oath of office as Afghanistan's first democratically elected president, and the country's formal name is changed to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Domestic	International
<p>8 Bones delivered as the “remains” of abductees Yokota Megumi and Matsuki Kaoru during the Japan–North Korea working level consultations are determined to contain those of different persons based on DNA analysis, and on December 24 the Japanese government announces the results of its close examination in which it finds North Korea’s reexamination and related materials concerning the 10 abductees whose safety remains unknown are “unacceptable.”</p>	
<p>9 At a provisional cabinet meeting, the Japanese government decides to revise the Basic Plan on the measures based on the Law concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq, including extending for one year the period of dispatch of the SDF.</p>	
<p>9 Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks with German Chancellor Schroeder in Tokyo.</p>	
<p>9 Senior Vice-Minister Aisawa visits Sudan, and makes appeals for solving the Darfur problem.</p>	
<p>10 The Japanese government approves the National Defense Program Guidelines after meetings of the Security Council and announces the chief cabinet secretary’s statement claiming that the government will exempt exports to the US related to the missile defense (MD) joint development and production project from the regulations of the Three Principles on Arms Export and their related policy guidelines.</p>	<p>10 The Norwegian Nobel Committee awards the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize to Kenya’s Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Maathai.</p>
<p>16 The Japanese government announces its policy to issue an entry visa to Mr. Lee Teng-hui, and Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wang Yi protests to MOFA and demands the decision be revoked; Japan issues the visa on December 20, and Lee visits Japan on December 27 for a sightseeing trip.</p>	<p>11 Initial meeting of the “Forum for the Future” is held in Rabat, Morocco.</p>
<p>17 Prime Minister Koizumi holds talks at a summit with ROK President Roh Moo Hyun in Ibusuki City in Kagoshima Prefecture.</p>	<p>16 The EU Council meets in Brussels and formally decides to begin accession negotiations with Croatia on March 17, 2005, and Turkey on October 3, 2005.</p>
<p>17 Seven men and women believed to be refugees from North Korea seek asylum at a Japanese school in Beijing.</p>	<p>17 US President Bush signs the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, a key component of which is creation of the position of Director of National Intelligence.</p>
<p>23 Russian President Putin confirms that Russia is bound by the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration and states that since the transfer of two of the islands to Japan would be a final settlement of the issue under the declaration, Japan’s demand for the transfer of four islands seems “rather peculiar.”</p>	<p>19 Consecutive suicide car bombings occur in Najaf and Kerbala, two of the most sacred cities to Shiite Muslims in Iraq, killing more than 60 and injuring scores of bystanders.</p>
	<p>20 Hungary’s parliament ratifies the European Constitutional Treaty.</p>

Domestic

28 Minister of State for Defense Ono orders the dispatch of the MSDF to areas struck by the major earthquake off the coast of Sumatra and tsunami in the Indian Ocean based on the Law Concerning the Dispatch of Japan Disaster Relief Teams.

International

- 26 A magnitude 9.0 earthquake occurs in Indonesia off the coast of Sumatra, triggering a huge tsunami that strikes coastal regions of the Indian Ocean and in east Africa. Over 150,000 are killed, including Japanese tourists, in 10 countries, such as Indonesia and Sri Lanka.
- 26 The runoff presidential election is re-held in Ukraine and former Prime Minister Yushchenko is declared the winner.