

World weary of wars

In 2006 the world grappled with wars, security threats, an escalating confrontation over nuclear proliferation with Iran and North Korea, and yes, even the loss of one

of the solar system's nine planets, Pluto. The shadow of Iraq put Democrats in charge of the U.S. Congress, and presidential elections elsewhere saw gains for the left.

Selection of events from around the world

— Countries with presidential elections

CANADA
Nov. 28 Parliament passes motion to recognize the French-speaking people of Quebec as a nation within Canada.

NETHERLANDS
March 11 Former Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic found dead at detention center.

CZECH REPUBLIC
Aug. 24 International Astronomical Union declares Pluto is no longer a planet.

RUSSIA
July 10 Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev killed in explosion.

IRAN
Feb. 14 Says it has resumed uranium enrichment.

AFGHANISTAN
Oct. 5 NATO takes over eastern Afghanistan from U.S.-led forces, extending its role to entire country.

CHINA
Aug. 10 Most powerful typhoon to hit China in 50 years kills at least 441 people.

UNITED STATES
Jan. 15 Space capsule returns in Utah with first dust ever fetched from a comet.

ITALY
May 2 Premier Silvio Berlusconi resigns.

GREAT BRITAIN
Nov. 23 Former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko dies from poisoning.

NORTH KOREA
Oct. 9 Says it conducted underground nuclear weapons test.

June 29 Supreme Court rules use of military tribunals to try Guantánamo Bay detainees violates U.S. and international law.

CUBA
July 31 Fidel Castro gives power temporarily to brother Raul due to surgery.

LIBYA
May 15 U.S. to restore full diplomatic relations, remove country from a list of terror sponsors.

SOUTH KOREA
May 12 Cloning scientist indicted on charges linked to faked stem-cell research.

Oct. 26 President signs bill authorizing fences along U.S.-Mexico border.

ECUADOR
Nov. 26 Left-leaning Rafael Correa wins presidential run-off.

LEBANON
July 12 Hezbollah guerrillas' capture and killing of Israeli soldiers ignites 34-day war with Israel.

IRAQ
March War enters fourth year.
Dec. 30 Saddam Hussein is hanged for crimes against humanity.

THAILAND
Sept. 19 Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra ousted in coup.

JAPAN
Sept. 6 Princess Kiko gives birth to first male heir in more than 40 years.

CHILE
Dec. 10 Dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet dies at 91; escapes trial for human-rights abuses.

SUDAN
Dec. 13 Aid workers say food and other relief is not reaching thousands in Darfur.

SOMALIA
Dec. 28 Government troops, backed by Ethiopia, retake Mogadishu from Islamic militants.

INDONESIA
July 11 Eight bombs on commuter rails in Bombay kill more than 200.

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INDONESIA
May 27 Earthquake kills at least 5,800.

AUSTRALIA

Sept. 4 "Crocodile hunter" Steve Irwin killed by stingray.

GAZA
June 25 Palestinian militants sneak under border crossing, killing two Israeli soldiers, kidnapping another.

ISRAEL
Jan. 4 Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffers massive stroke.

GAZA STRIP
Jan. 26 Islamic militant Hamas wins landslide victory in Palestinian elections.

Selection of presidential elections and relevant wins of various countries

JAN. FEB. MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUG. SEPT. OCT. NOV. DEC.

Jan. 15 Socialist Michelle Bachelet elected as Chile's first female president.

Feb. 16 René Préval declared winner of Haiti's presidential election.

April 21 Nouri al-Maliki is nominated as Iraq's prime minister.

May 8 Nobelist Oscar Arias sworn in as Costa Rica's president.

June 4 Former Peruvian President Alan Garcia wins runoff election.

July 3 Felipe Calderón declares himself president-elect of Mexico.

Sept. 26 Shinzo Abe wins election, becoming Japan's youngest postwar prime minister.

Oct. 29 Brazil's leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva wins re-election.

Dec. 2 Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez wins re-election.

Jan. 23 Conservative candidate Stephen Harper wins Canadian presidential election.

March 16 Iraq's new parliament is sworn in.

April 28 Nepal's parliament reconvenes for first time in four years.

May 17 Romano Prodi sworn in as Italian premier, ending conservative rule.

Calderón

July 30 Congo holds first democratic vote for president since 1960.

Nov. 7 Leftist Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega wins back the Nicaraguan presidency.

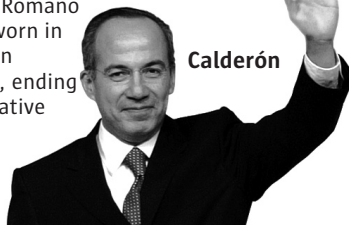
Nov. 8 Democrats win control of U.S. House and Senate.



Bachelet



Maliki



Calderón



Chávez