

AP/Wide World Photos

In June, Thabo Mbeki succeeds President Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president.



Liaison Agency

Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" is unveiled in June after 21 years of restoration. The centimeter-by-centimeter rehabilitation cost \$7.7 million and involved electronic microscopes.



After almost nine years in power, Russian President Boris Yeltsin announces his resignation in January 2000. Yeltsin names Prime Minister Vladimir Putin acting president pending elections in March.



AP/Wide World Photos/Robert King

In September, Russia begins a military campaign against Chechen nationalists to regain control of the breakaway republic. More than 200,000 people flee the region, but a fierce rebel resistance stays to fight for control of the capital, Grozny.

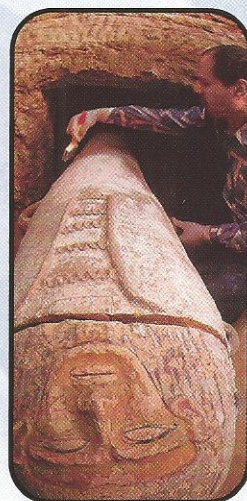


AP/Wide World Photos/Cheng Chieh-wen



Pierre Venturi/Cortis Sygma

In September and October, powerful earthquakes strike around the globe, killing 15,000 people in Turkey, 1,450 in Taiwan and at least 122 in Greece.



Kenneth Garrett/NGS Image Collection

Archaeologists excavate 105 mummies in a 2,000-year-old underground Egyptian tomb believed to contain a total of 10,000 mummies. The necropolis will shed new light on the Greco-Roman era and will allow scholars to chart demographic data and the incidence of disease.

Flash

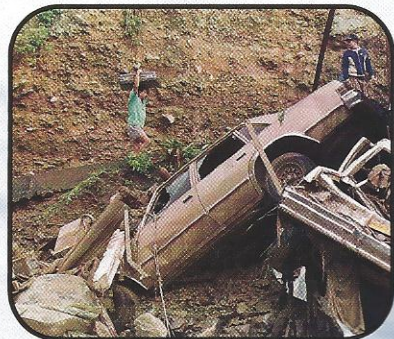
A tropical depression producing heavy rain hits Mexico in November. The resulting floods kill more than 350 people and cause 100,000 to evacuate.

In August, the U.S. pays \$4.5 million to victims of NATO's accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. Three Chinese are killed and 27 are wounded in the May 1999 bombing.



AP/Wide World Photos

On December 31, the U.S. returns control of the Panama Canal to Panama. Opened to the world in 1914, the canal is considered one of the greatest construction achievements in American history.



AP/Wide World Photos

In December, torrential rains cause Venezuela's worst natural disaster of the century. Mudslides and flash floods kill up to 30,000 people, while damage estimates run into the billions of dollars.

2000