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Myanmar signed diplomatic ties with North Korea during May 07. During the same month Russia was reviving a dormant plan to supply a small nuclear reactor to Myanmar. Pakistan's nuclear dealer, Abdul Qadeer Khan had visited Rangoon. But it would take more than a decade for the Myanmar junta to produce nuclear bombs. The country does not possess the resources and the expertise. Myanmar all along opposed nuclear proliferation. The Myanmar generals have been obtaining the help of alternative great powers in fighting pressures to restore democracy. Russia and China who have signed big oil and gas deals with Myanmar, vetoed USA's proposed censure of the junta in Myanmar, in the UN security council, in January 07. India is involved in "constructive engagement" with Myanmar, even though it is aligning with the western bloc in thrusting democratic change, India has offered Myanmar with weapons sales, ranging from artillery to reconnaissance aircrafts, which are superior to Chinese arms.

China imports much of its oil through the Malacca strait. By developing Myanmar's oil and gas fields, and by constructing pipelines to Myanmar's ports along the Indian Ocean, China plans to build alternative, in the event of a blockade of the Malacca Strait. In spite of renewed sanctions against the Myanmar junta, imposed by USA and the European Union, Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi continues to live under house arrest.



From 20 May 07, Lebanon has witnessed the highest sectarian casualties in internal strife since the end of its civil war, that raged in 1975-90, in the exchange of fire between the Lebanese army and radical Islamists living in a Palestine refugee camp, at least eighty people have been killed, and hundreds wounded. The Lebanese army has been fighting relentlessly to root out the several hundred armed fighters from the Nahr al-Bared camp, close to the northern city of Tripoli. Many of the camp's thirty thousand residents have fled during respites in the shootings. Earlier police had raided a flat in Tripoli, following evidence that linked a recent spate of bank robberies to a radical jihadist faction, called *fatah al-Islam*. A widely disparaged Sunni Muslim group has been attacking Lebanon's national army, that coalesces all the religious faiths in Lebanon.

The Lebanese government has charged Syria of backing the *fatah al-Islam*. The ideology of *Fatah-al-Islam* is similar to *al-Qaeda*. *Fatah al-Islam's* leader was in Syrian custody, before appearing in Lebanon during 2006. The group has recruited from among Lebanon's destitute and forelorn 400,000 Palestinian refugees; and also from international jihadists, comprising Saudis, Algerians and Yemenis, who are suspected to have entered Lebanon from the Syrian border. Before the departure of the Syrian military presence from Lebanon, in 2005, the twelve Palestinian camps in Lebanon, were being controlled by Syrian military intelligence. Syria has been trying to block the establishment of an international tribunal for the Trial of suspects involved in political murders, beginning with the killing of Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, in February 2005. The pro-Syrian opposition in Lebanon, is not supporting a law to create the Proposed court. The UN Security Council could set up the international Tribunal under Chapter 7 of the UN charter, which allows sanctions against countries that refuse to cooperate. Meanwhile, electricity and water supply stands cut-off to the terrified camp residents of Nahr al-Bared.

