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LaRouche's enemies push for Taiwan war

by Jonathan Tennenbaum

With only days until the decisive Presidential elections in Taiwan on March 18, there is a growing danger that outside manipulation of tensions across the Taiwan Strait could detonate a strategic crisis, and even lead to military conflict between the United States and China. The basic scenario is, that some combination of events seen by Beijing as completely unacceptable—including a hypothetical further move, by the Taiwan authorities, toward *formal* separation from the mainland—could precipitate some sort of military action by Beijing against Taiwan, and draw in the United States on the basis of commitments to guarantee Taiwan's security. The danger of a strategic crisis around Taiwan is greatly heightened by the fact, that a powerful section of the international oligarchy is presently in a “flight-forward” mode, reacting to the impending financial collapse by deliberately trying to ignite conflicts and wars in a variety of regions, from the Balkans, eastern Europe, and the Middle East, all the way to the Pacific.

The ‘Blue Team’s’ war push

On Feb. 23, the *Washington Post* published an exposé documenting the role of U.S. right-wing billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife—a figure tied to the dirtiest and most dangerous, pro-war faction of Anglo-American intelligence—in directly organizing and financing a long list of operations in the U.S. Congress and elsewhere, to orchestrate and provoke a U.S.-China military confrontation. Scaife, it should be remembered, was the main sponsor of independent counsel Kenneth Starr’s campaign to destroy the Clinton Presidency, and is as well, a leading personal enemy of Lyndon LaRouche.

According to the *Washington Post*, Scaife’s anti-China group, known as “Blue Team” (the term used by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army for the enemy side in PLA military exercises), includes leading figures from the intelligence-connected “Taiwan lobby,” key Congressional offices, and academic purveyors of the “China threat” thesis. Launched last year through the Scaife-financed “Project for the New American Century,” the “Blue Team” has already played a key role, among other things, in drafting and promoting inflammatory anti-China legislation in the U.S. Congress, including the recent Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, as well as pushing for sales of advanced weapons systems to Taiwan. The *Washington Post* points out that “though little noticed, the Blue Team has had considerable success.”

One of its latest projects appears to be the push to sell Taiwan warships equipped with the advanced AEGIS anti-missile radar system. This radar system is a key component of Theater Missile Defense (TMD) systems being developed by the U.S. Navy, which among other things are being considered for deployment around Japan in the context of U.S.-Japanese defense cooperation. As Taiwan’s outgoing President, Lee Teng-hui, has openly called for Taiwan to join a future U.S.-Japanese TMD system, a U.S. decision to sell AEGIS warships to Taiwan will be read in Beijing as a further signal of an emerging military alliance between Taiwan, the United States, and Japan, against China—making it one of several short-term tripwires for a new Taiwan crisis.

The “Blue Team” is evidently one of the nastiest, most dangerous elements inserted into the whole anti-China machine in Washington—a machine which includes the gang in Congress run by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair-

man Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and House International Relations Committee Chairman Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), and featuring, most prominently, Sens. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.), Frank Murkowski (R-Ak.), and Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.), and Reps. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), Christopher Cox (R-Calif.), John Shadegg (R-Ariz.), and Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.). Virtually all of these are hostile to Lyndon LaRouche's defense of the perfect sovereignty of nations-states.

Now, as the March 18 Taiwan election approaches, the networks connected with the "Blue Team," such as notorious Reagan administration neo-conservative Frank Gaffney, are going all-out to whip up public hysteria about an impending mainland invasion of Taiwan and an alleged threat by Beijing to launch nuclear missiles at the United States. Their answer to the alleged war danger, however, is that the United States should take actions, calculated to push Beijing even further toward the edge of an actual military intervention around Taiwan.

Exemplary is also former U.S. Defense Secretary Sir Caspar Weinberger, who told a meeting on Capitol Hill on Feb. 28, "It might not be wise for America to go to war with China, but *it might be necessary*." Weinberger said that Beijing's "threats" to the United States require an "unequivocal, immediate, unambiguous, firm response." He blamed President Clinton for leaving the United States unprepared for a military conflict with China. Weinberger, who was awarded an honorary knighthood by the British Queen, is the author of *The Next War*, a 1996 docu-thriller which featured a scenario for a nuclear war in East Asia.

Manipulation of Taiwan

However, the public drumbeat for a near-term U.S.-China confrontation may only be the most evident among other, more behind-the-scenes attempts to orchestrate a dangerous new Taiwan crisis.

As of now, the outcome of the Taiwan elections appears to be up in the air. One of the three Presidential candidates, the independent James Soong, takes a moderate position in favor of dialogue with Beijing. Another, the current Vice President, Lien Chan, is close to Lee Teng-hui, but is expected to be at least relatively cautious with respect to making any move toward formal independence. He is apparently regarded in Beijing as someone China could live with. The third candidate, Chen Shui-ban of the Democratic Progressive Party, takes a stronger anti-Beijing line.

The major difficulty is, that regardless of who wins the election, the situation inside and around Taiwan will remain subject to powerful influences by certain U.S., British, and Japanese interests which have a stake in provoking a new Taiwan crisis.

The same Anglo-American faction behind Scaife, the "Blue Team," and the Congressional anti-China mob generally, together with counterparts in Japan, has long sponsored

President Lee Teng-hui, whose provocative activities on behalf of formal independence of Taiwan—a prospect absolutely unacceptable to Beijing—deliberately undermined the *modus vivendi* which had existed across the Taiwan Strait, and precipitated the series of Taiwan crises, beginning especially with Lee's trip to the United States in 1995.

LaRouche warned explicitly about the danger coming from these Anglo-American-Japanese circles, in a Jan. 10 memorandum entitled "Puppet Emperor Lee Teng-hui" (*EIR*, Jan. 21, 2000). LaRouche pointed to the role of the British government and such British-linked operations as Christian Solidarity International (also an important influence in the U.S. Congressional "Taiwan lobby"), as well as Lee's close connection to circles associated with former U.S. CIA deputy director Ray Cline, and warned: "President Lee's behavior has clearly demonstrated, that he is not representing the interest of the people of Taiwan, but is acting as an agent of influence of certain forces in Japan, Great Britain, and the U.S.A., who are trying to provoke a war between the U.S. and Mainland China."

The circles behind Lee Teng-hui's attacks on the One-China policy, LaRouche said, are "the same interests who backed the launching of the two earlier Sino-Japanese wars against China, in 1894-95 and the 1930s. From my personal knowledge of U.S. and other relevant intelligence circles from the 1980s, I have a well-marked road-map of the British and U.S. complicity in this deployment of exactly those forces within Japan, who were the authors of the first Sino-Japanese war, and who launched the second."

LaRouche explained that he was obliged to clarify this matter, because official statements from Beijing, warning that Lee Teng-hui's provocations threatened a war across the Taiwan Strait, while understandable and correct, were insufficiently precise concerning the actual authors of the war threat, and the British role in particular. LaRouche added: "Before wise men allow themselves to be drawn into war, they should first discover who is the enemy which must be defeated."

Beijing's view

Recent statements from Beijing have in fact been strongly focussing on the backing Lee Teng-hui and the Taiwan separatists have received from "certain forces in the United States." These Chinese statements, however, hardly go beyond vague references to the "Cold War thinking" and American tendencies of "hegemonism," do not bring up the British angle, and generally lack the historical and strategic depth of LaRouche's analyses. Nevertheless, Beijing is clearly trying to maintain a differentiated position toward the United States, and to appeal to reason in the attempt to explain its position.

On Feb. 21, the People's Republic of China's State Council released a "White Paper," laying forth Beijing's principled position on the "One China Policy and the Taiwan Issue."

The bulk of the 11,000-word paper is devoted to a careful, reasoned exposition of the “One China policy,” including the historical reasons why Taiwan has never ceased to be a part of China, in spite of the effects of the civil war; noting, also, that reunification was the policy of the ruling Kuomintang party in Taiwan for more than three decades; and tracing the history of U.S. commitments to the “One China policy.” Refuting point-by-point the arguments of Lee Teng-hui in favor of separatism, the White Paper emphasizes the enormous trade and investment ties between Taiwan and the mainland, and reiterates, in conciliatory language, Beijing’s proposal for reunification negotiations “on a basis of equality” and the principle of “one nation—two systems.”

At the same time, the document does state, in a single sentence, that “if a grave turn of events occurs leading to the separation of Taiwan from China under any name, . . . or if the Taiwan authorities refuse, *sine die*, the peaceful settlement of Straits reunification through negotiations, then the Chinese government will be forced to adopt *all drastic measures possible, including the use of force*, to safeguard China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and fulfill the great task of reunification.” It also declares that the Chinese government “cannot allow the resolution of the Taiwan issue to be postponed indefinitely.”

Reacting to the uproar in the Western press, which ignored 99% of the White Paper in order to claim that Beijing was issuing a “war ultimatum” to Taiwan, Chinese Vice Prime Minister Qian Qichen on March 1 publicly denied any change in the Chinese government’s policy on the Taiwan issue. China’s policy remains “peaceful reunification and one country, two systems,” he said. The position, that the Taiwan issue “cannot be delayed indefinitely,” was already stressed by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in October 1984. The new White Paper was aimed at “pushing forward the development of cross-Strait relations and urging the Taiwan authorities to sit down to hold talks with us,” Qian said.

In fact, while not essentially different from what Beijing has voiced in various forms before, in the *present* context, the White Paper and other official statements leave Beijing with little room to back down, in case some combination of events—such as a further move toward formal independence by the new Taiwan government after the election, for example, or something else—were to occur, that would “call Beijing’s bluff.”

The danger of provocation

One also cannot ignore the fact, that, as in any country, there exist factions inside China, including inside the military, who are not as cool-headed and rational as the official authors of the “White Paper.” It is in this context that the deliberately inflammatory activities of Scaife’s “Blue Team,” and related operations run through the United States, are particularly dangerous. They are calculated to encourage the buildup of an “enemy image” of the United States in China, where, for

example, the impact of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade is still very much present. A mild example of the hardening position inside China, is an article published in the official daily of the People’s Liberation Army on Feb. 28. The article states, in part:

“After the end of the Cold War, the U.S. government’s China policy has undergone great oscillations, but the use of the ‘Taiwan card’ to contain China, has remained the unchanged element among a thousand changes. . . .

“If this U.S. behavior vis-à-vis the Taiwan question is not quickly stopped, then it can destroy the external conditions for the Chinese government’s striving for peaceful reunification of the country. It is exactly thanks to the public and covert support by the anti-China forces in the United States, and their instigations, that the separatist forces in Taiwan, as represented by Lee Teng-hui, have dared to proceed ever further along the road of splitting the Fatherland, causing relations across the Strait to remain for a long time in a state of unrest and tension. . . .

“*Supporting ‘Taiwan independence’ will backfire on the perpetrators.* Concerning the Taiwan question, the U.S. could very well come to suffer losses and harm its own situation. As everyone knows, the supporters of ‘Taiwan independence,’ if they flagrantly insist on division, will finally force a situation, in which the Chinese government cannot avoid using armed force to settled the Taiwan issue.

“Once a Taiwan war has broken out, the U.S. government will face a dilemma: if the U.S. does not intervene, then U.S. allies, in view of the U.S. ‘Taiwan Relations Act,’ will doubt whether U.S. promises can be counted upon. If the U.S. intervenes in a substantial way, then U.S. decision-makers cannot avoid considering the fact, that they may come under enormous pressure and could pay a very high price. China is not Iraq, China is not Vietnam, China is an extremely special country: On the one hand, she is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and on the other hand, she is also a country possessing a certain degree of strategic counterstrike capability and long-range attack capability. To resort to arms against such a country, would not be a wise course of action, and U.S. decision-makers are aware of this.”

Senior European experts, while acknowledging the existence of hot-headed sentiments among some sections of the Chinese military and other institutions, at the same time stress the cautious, rationalistic mentality of China’s present ruling elite, and its overriding focus on economic consolidation of the country. According to their view, for China to launch into any sort of military adventure today—not to speak of confronting the world’s only superpower—would be virtually unthinkable under any but the most extreme circumstances.

The problem is, that such “extreme circumstances” are exactly what the Anglo-American “flight-forward” faction, as exemplified by the activities of the “Blue Team,” is now trying to create.