

Lee obviously felt encouraged to engage in this provocation following NATO's bombing of China's Belgrade embassy. The increase in sale of advanced weapons systems by the U.S. to Taiwan (the U.S. has tentatively agreed to sell AIM-120 advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles to Taiwan), as well as the introduction of the so-called "Taiwan Security Enhancement Act," which was introduced into the U.S. Senate in March, are part of the context of Lee's provocations. That bill, which calls for extending U.S. military intervention in the Taiwan Straits, by including Taiwan in the proposed "Theater Missile Defense" (TMD) system, was introduced in the Senate by Senators Jesse Helms (R-North

Carolina) and Robert Torricelli (D-New Jersey), and was co-sponsored by Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska). The orchestration of Lee's provocations is underscored by the fact that Murkowski, with Senator Trent Lott (R-Mississippi) and others, was the key sponsor of President Lee's tour in the U.S. in 1995. A similar bill was introduced into the House of Representatives.

Also related is the fact, that, on August 14, Texas Governor George W. Bush declared, that if he were to become President, he might choose to defend Taiwan by force. Bush said, that the U.S. must be "tough and resolute" when dealing with China as a "strategic rival."

The stakes in Taiwan's Presidential election

On March 18, Taiwan will hold Presidential elections, the outcome of which will have major international strategic importance.

Over the past ten years, Taiwan has been subject to intense outside interference, intended to use the island as a key geopolitical player against Mainland China. As LaRouche writes, Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui, who has been in power since the death of President Chiang Ching-kuo in 1987, has been the main puppet. But also, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), whose main political platform is Taiwan independence, is completely controlled from outside. Both have been working, one covertly and the other overtly, to foster Taiwan's independence.

To this end, Lee has hindered the natural tendency for collaboration across the Taiwan Strait with a "no haste, be patient" policy, which has seriously restricted Taiwan business investment in Mainland China, and opposed direct cross-strait transportation and commercial and postal service links. In vain, he has tried to silence his critics, by monopolizing the electronic media, including the three main television networks, throwing opponents out of the Kuomintang (KMT) party, and firing leaders of think-tanks and other institutions who would not kowtow to him. In addition, Lee has amassed a lot of wealth, personally as well as within the KMT. Lee's buying support and propaganda by wining and dining foreign elected officials is well known. (A former U.S. Congressman told *EIR* that the two places in the world which are notorious for such practices are Israel and Taiwan; he himself had been invited to Taiwan 12 times, until Lee Teng-hui's government finally realized that he supported Mainland China.)

Despite Lee's efforts, the last ten years have demonstrated an ever-increasing interdependence—economy,

culturally, and politically (albeit unofficial)—between Mainland China and Taiwan. And, in Taiwan, the heirs of Sun Yat-sen have waged a tenacious fight to expose the traitorous nature of Lee Teng-hui and to get him out of the way. Now is the chance, with the Presidential elections on March 18.

The election has three main contenders: DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian, who is outspokenly for independence; KMT candidate Lien Chan, who is handpicked by Lee Teng-hui; and, independent candidate James Soong, former elected Governor of Taiwan.

A responsible program

James Soong is opposed to the Theater Missile Defense (TMD) proposal, and wants to open up the three direct links with China—for travel, trade, and communications. In his economic and trade platform presented on Jan. 12, Soong attacked Lee's "go slow, be patient" policy, saying that it is hindering Taiwan's investment in Mainland China. Instead, he proposed a "go straight, be positive" posture. Soong also stated that the government should help small and medium-sized businesses explore the Mainland market for their originally designed products, and help local industries increase the added value of their products. He called for steps to normalize and institutionalize bilateral economic and trade relations.

By contrast, Lee Teng-hui, at a public meeting on Jan. 10, declared that the people of Taiwan should agree with each other on the identity of Taiwan and speak out, that Taiwan is a sovereign state.

If Soong wins the Presidential elections, the most important tool for geopolitical manipulations directed against China, will be lost. That is the background for the recent, vicious attacks on Soong. These attacks will escalate, and, as one parliamentarian told *EIR*, "If they don't succeed in stopping Soong, they might use their last option, and assassinate him." But, as LaRouche writes, "the matches with which they play, and the tinder amidst which they are sitting, are both real." —*Leni Rubinstein*