

Thailand's Thaksin Threatened With Bhutto Treatment

by Mike Billington

On the eve of the Dec. 23 election in Thailand, *The Economist*, the journal of the liberal-fascist Fabians in the City of London, published a warning to the deposed Prime Minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra, that he can expect the “Benazir Bhutto” treatment if he proceeds with his plans to return to Thailand. In an article titled “Thailand’s Election: Southeast Asia’s Pakistan?,” *The Economist* of Dec. 19 wrote: “Pakistan is not the only Asian country where a dodgy military regime is running a general election under dubious electoral rules in the hope of keeping out a similarly dodgy civilian whom it overthrew.” This was just one week before the British-orchestrated assassination of Benazir Bhutto on Dec. 27 (see www.larouche.com/other/2008/3501bhutto_killing.html).

Although the situations are different in character, the intention behind the British policy of maximum chaos, and the undermining of sovereignty, driven by the reality of the global financial collapse, is the same—as it is for crises being created and fanned by the British empire throughout the world.

Despite extensive efforts by the Thai military junta to fix the election, the newly established People’s Power Party (PPP) in Thailand, founded by Thaksin’s supporters to replace the former prime minister’s Thai Rak Thai Party (which had been dissolved by the military junta that deposed him), swept the election handily, and quickly formed a coalition with several smaller parties, giving it a strong majority in the parliament.

The implications of the Bhutto assassination, and *The Economist* warning, were not lost on Thaksin and his supporters in Thailand, nor on the junta. Thaksin, who announced that he would return from exile sometime after the new parliament is seated in February, took the opportunity of a New Year’s Day interview with the Thai newspaper *Matichon*, to discuss the several assassination attempts against him during the period leading up to the coup in September 2006. As to the junta which ran the coup, Gen. Surayud Chulanont, the junta’s appointed prime minister, tried to assure the nation, which had just shown its continuing support for Thaksin in the election, that there would be no repeat of Pakistan in Thailand. “Naturally we are not violent people, so we should not copy that. We

should not resort to violence,” said General Surayud.

Whatever the intentions of the junta, the situation is not under its control. A primary target of London’s “Operation Chaos” is the disruption of the growing alliance between Russia, India, and China, as reflected in Southeast Asia policy, and, in particular, the orientation of that alliance toward the historical policies of Franklin Roosevelt, and the representation of that orientation today by Lyndon LaRouche.

Chaos vs. the General Welfare

Thailand, and its neighbor Myanmar, serve as a vital crossroads, both geographically and politically, between India and China, while also maintaining increasing relations with Russia. The hysteria in London and Washington against Myanmar’s sovereignty stems from this reality, and both have held Thailand largely responsible for the fact that Myanmar’s Asian neighbors have refused to participate in the hypocritical Western human rights diatribes against Yangon. A massive destabilization of Thailand, such as an assassination of Thaksin, would spread the intended chaos throughout South and Southeast Asia, with repercussions in China.

There are other factors at play in Thailand, in addition to the global economic crisis plaguing all nations. The King of Thailand, now 80 years old and in the 60th year of his reign, has undergone several serious operations, and may be close to death. This has sent the various military factions, which have been held together to some extent by official loyalty to the King, scurrying to establish their positions for the impending crisis. The crisis is greatly exacerbated by a general distaste for the Crown Prince. Despite extremely strict *lèse majesté* laws in Thailand, which prevent any public criticism of the King, the dislike for the Crown Prince, and a widely held belief that the dynasty should end with this King’s death, is hardly a secret in Thailand.

Thaksin’s huge support in Thailand’s rural communities and among the urban poor stems from his dedication to the general welfare—which has also won him the enmity of the financial elite at home and abroad. He was the first Thai prime minister to serve out a four-year term, and the first to be re-elected (by an overwhelming margin). Thaksin implemented a policy of universal access to hospital care for about \$0.75 per visit, and gave access to cheap credit to farmers and other rural poor. His opponents’ accusations regarding Thaksin’s alleged personal corruption have little impact on the poor who have benefitted from his policies.

However, the middle class mobs which were mobilized by the Wall Street-linked media and NGOs have been forced to swallow the fact that their support for overthrowing Thaksin in the name of democracy, actually brought on the extremely unpopular military junta, which has left the country with a military-imposed constitution and a repressive new internal security act. Also, the fact that Gen. Prem Tinsulalonda, the head of the Privy Council, is recognized as the coup-master who brought on the military junta, makes it difficult

for those who try to discredit Thaksin by labelling him as anti-monarchist.

The head of the PPP and the likely next prime minister, Samak Sundaravej, is an old political warhorse, who was most recently the governor of Bangkok and a popular radio/TV talk show host. (Samak, the Communications Minister in 1983, was the welcoming speaker at a conference sponsored by Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR* in Bangkok that year, promoting the building of the Kra Canal in southern Thailand as a major regional infrastructure project).

Samak has pledged to lift the five-year ban on political activity, imposed by the junta on Thaksin and 110 of his Thai Rak Thai associates, and to revive the popular policies of Thaksin.

The reign of the junta has had some achievements, as it appointed established professionals to several leading positions. The governor of the Bank of Thailand, Tarisa Watana-gase, imposed currency restrictions to halt the manipulation of the currency by speculators. Although the economy (as measured by GDP) has not grown at the pace of several of its Southeast Asian neighbors, the growth in those countries is largely hot money fleeing the collapsing dollar and investing in speculative markets, not real development. This is the kind of “growth” that Thailand is better off without.

Also, the Health Ministry, under Dr. Mongkol Na Songkhla, led a courageous and successful fight against the international pharmaceutical companies, and their genocidal sponsor Al Gore, in demanding the right to produce generic drugs to save their populations from death by AIDS and other diseases (see www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2007/2007_20-29/2007_20-29/2007-22/pdf/36-38_722.pdf).

These and other beneficial policies of the past year should be sustained by the new government. Whether it will be prepared to cope with the global financial collapse by joining in the growing momentum for a new world financial system, a new Bretton Woods-style agreement, is yet to be seen. However, if Britain’s “Operation Chaos” is allowed to unsheathe its sword in Thailand, it will soon be prey to the Four Horsemen of the new Apocalypse.

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