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FOR BANGKOK:

LAROUCHE ORGANIZATION ACTIVE IN ASIA, THE WORLD

(Article based on interview with Dennis King) (3,110)

Washington -- Lyndon LaRouche may be in prison now, but he continues to direct a political organization which remains active in the United States and in countries as far off as Thailand and Australia.

Who is Lyndon LaRouche? And why should people care about him and his followers?

He's an amazing man whose organization made rather astounding inroads into American politics in the 1980s.

"He's extremely brilliant," according to Dennis King, who has been a dedicated LaRouche watcher ever since he first heard him speak at Columbia University in the summer of 1968. King ultimately wrote a book about LaRouche, which was published in 1989 and continues to follow the LaRouche organization's activities.

According to King, LaRouche is able to synthesize the ideas of many different thinkers and weave them into a total world view that has something for everyone in answering all of life's problems.

In a recent interview with USIA, King said that LaRouche is "concerned with how in the world today there are really two international elites that cut across national boundaries.

"One of them is what he calls the 'oligarchy,' and they are what LaRouche calls the 'evil elite,' King explained. "LaRouche uses various names for them, but it usually boils down to code language meaning the rich Jews of the world.

"And then there is the 'good oligarchy,' which is underground, doesn't have power any place but is fighting back," King said. LaRouche refers to this group as the "humanists," he said.

"LaRouche has his vision of a different type of society," King explained. "Ultimately he believes that history is based on race. But his idea of race is not just to divide people up into Aryans and this or that; his idea is that scattered throughout the human race there are essentially three separate species. One of these is the 'evil oligarchs' who have become so morally depraved that they are no longer human." Evil thoughts, in LaRouche's view, can actually change an individual's genes, thereby contributing to the spawning of an evil race, King said.

"Then there's the great masses out there that LaRouche says are not anti-human like the oligarchs, but they're subhuman. They're not really human yet because they're mainly sort of genetically programmed to be only concerned with sleeping, eating, and fornicating, and so on," King said.

"And then there's the third group which is the humanist faction, whom LaRouche says are people who really are evolving for the first time into real humans. These people are going to be the 'golden souls,' the super race that rules over the rest of the world and gradually raises everybody to the level of 'golden souls,'" King explained.

"I think LaRouche is an ideological fascist in the old 1930s sense of a fascist (and) who identifies the ideology of fascism with his own personal drive for power," King told USIA. "LaRouche gave a speech back in 1978 where he said to his followers, 'It is not necessary to call oneself a fascist to be a fascist. It is simply necessary to be one.' That sums up the man's tactics." LaRouche's strategy, King said, is to transform the human race into a race of "golden souls."

"The man is a megalomaniac. I would say that definitely about him: (he is) a megalomaniac who uses fascist ideology because that best fits in with his personal megalomaniac fantasies."

LaRouche and his followers, according to King, "have become increasingly in favor in recent years of the military taking a hand in politics and indeed, taking over and sort of sweeping out the corruption that is endemic in Third World democracies. They want military regimes in those countries."

In his book, "Lyndon LaRouche and the New American Fascism," King notes U.S. Army intelligence reports that reveal that in the mid-1970s, LaRouche's people began calling and sending suggestive memos to high-ranking U.S. military officers. For example, the XVIII Airborne Corps commander at Fort Bragg in 1976 was warned by LaRouche followers that a presidential victory by Jimmy Carter would pose a threat to the Republic. General Frederick C. Weyand, the Army Chief of Staff at the time, received a letter from LaRouche's group claiming that Jimmy Carter and the Wall Street bankers were plotting to destroy the Constitution. The way to stop this, the LaRouchians advised, was to crush Wall Street's "command structure" and undertake a massive "economic reorganization."

Major General John K. Singlaub, removed as commander of U.S. forces in Korea in 1977 after criticizing President Carter's defense policies, was approached by LaRouche's people when he was stationed at Fort McPherson in Georgia, King notes in his book. The LaRouchians wanted "to work closely" with Singlaub, who has right-wing views, according to King. "Singlaub cut them off and denounced them in press interviews," King writes. King also notes in his book that he received a letter from Singlaub in 1983, in which Singlaub compared the LaRouchians to the Nazis and said they were one of the most dangerous extremist groups in America.

King told USIA that eventually reality set in among the LaRouche followers. "The nature of the American military is such that it is just not susceptible to this stuff," King said. So the LaRouchians "transferred that particular fantasy to countries where a military role in politics is part of the historic political culture." According to King, among the countries where LaRouchians have been

actively trying to cultivate ties with nationalist-minded military officials are: Thailand, Taiwan, Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, and Panama -- to name just a few.

LaRouche has run in American politics as a presidential candidate. He established a "multi-candidate political action committee," called the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC), which was aimed at capturing control of the official U.S. Democratic Party, King notes in his book. In the 1984 elections, NDPC candidates numbered over 2,000 in more than 30 states -- perhaps the high point for LaRouchians in U.S. politics.

In his book, King writes that "Although no surveys were conducted of the LaRouche candidates' movement, two Furman University professors did the next-best thing. In 1986 they interviewed a random sample of the thousands of LaRouche campaign donors listed with the Federal Election Commission.

"Their survey found that LaRouche contributors tended to be 'populist' conservatives, 'profoundly uncomfortable with modern America and susceptible to conspiratorial explanations of their distress.' To many, LaRouche's views offered 'a plausible answer' to the question of who controls their lives." Those surveyed listed communists, drug dealers, Jews, bankers, intellectuals and the mass media as especially dangerous. "Most were lower-middle-class people whose income and status lagged behind those of average donors to other right-wing causes," King writes.

LaRouche has boldly courted ideologically opposing groups at the same time, King said. For example, LaRouchians have supported Louis Farrakhan, leader of a black nationalist, separatist movement called the "Nation of Islam." At the same time LaRouche developed close ties with the Klu Klux Klan, well known in the United States as an extremist group that hates black-skinned Americans.

How is it that LaRouche can deal with such ideologically different groups at the same time?

According to King, LaRouche's approach to politics is so opportunistic that it is beyond the understanding of most people. Americans realize that their politicians might try to misrepresent themselves a little bit, King told USIA. Nonetheless, what American politicians say is pretty much what they really think and practice in the broadest sense,

he said.

But in the case of LaRouche, his ideology is "to seize power, and anything goes -- every means to the desired end is justifiable," King said. This rationale allows LaRouchians to lie, misrepresent themselves, and deal simultaneously with ideologically opposed groups, he said.

"It's so weird that people don't know to look for this kind of pattern because they haven't seen it that much in American politics, at least not in recent years," King said.

While none of LaRouche's political candidates have been elected to any significant office in the United States, it's not outside the realm of possibility that one could eventually slip into the U.S. Congress, according to King. He added that he does not see any immediate threat of a LaRouchian government coming to power in the United States. But he warned that LaRouchians could conceivably build a kind of quasi-permanent movement that could win public offices in some places and do a lot of damage to the body politic by creating a divisive, paranoid atmosphere.

By King's estimates, LaRouche has never had more than one thousand followers worldwide, but their incredible dedication and zeal allows them to work around-the-clock. Through fund-raising and a successful computer software business, LaRouche was able to net millions and millions of dollars a year, which he used to fund his campaigns, conferences and publications.

LaRouche, who is now 70 years old, is in prison serving a 15-year sentence after having been convicted in January 1988 of fraud and tax evasion. King told USIA that in Latin American countries especially, where LaRouche was able to build a certain credibility as a political economist and thinker, some people think LaRouche has been imprisoned as a result of a conspiracy by President George Bush and the Central Intelligence Agency.

King told USIA that in countries where conspiracy and coup d'etat really are a part of the political culture, the idea that LaRouche was imprisoned for political reasons seems plausible. "They just don't understand the legal process in the United States and how difficult it is to convict somebody in a controversial case," King told USIA. "They don't understand how Lyndon LaRouche was able to play the

court system and use his constitutional rights for years and years to avoid prosecution.

"And they don't understand that there really were charges against him. The man was really guilty of loan fraud and income tax evasion on a massive scale. He wasn't convicted of political crimes. He was convicted because he stole 35 million dollars from old ladies. And the old ladies -- dozens of them -- went on the witness stand and told their heart-rending stories and convinced the jury that the man was indeed a thief."

Even now that LaRouche is in prison, there is evidence his organization has been able to raise enormous amounts of money through fund-raising, typically targeting wealthy, elderly women. One of them, Helen Overington, has given a number of television and press interviews explaining how she was persuaded by LaRouchians to turn over to them a total of 741,268 dollars -- all the money she had left of an inheritance.

The now 84-year-old widow, who is fully competent mentally, told her story to "Woman's Day" magazine and it appeared in the Jan. 15, 1991 edition. The LaRouchians, she said, courted her by telling her that her money was going to be used to help fight drugs, prevent waste in government, and to help promote peace. She said she thought they wanted to make the world a better place, and that was her wish also. In reality, her money simply helped fuel the LaRouchian political machine.

According to the article, law enforcement officials investigating the LaRouche organization found that "much of the money raised goes to pay phone bills and legal fees. Some is used to keep up the LaRouche mansion in Virginia. Based on evidence presented in previous cases, it is unlikely that any of the money goes to the humanitarian causes Helen thought she was supporting."

"They've made thousands of old people destitute. They have no mercy and no remorse," Overington told "Woman's Day."

LaRouche continues to actively direct his organization from his prison cell in Rochester, Minnesota, King said. "It's not a maximum security place," he told USIA. "His followers come there to meet with him and get their marching orders. He talks with them on the phone." According to King,

LaRouche has written a number of books while in prison and given hundreds of media interviews. Even television crews from other countries have filmed and interviewed him in prison, King said.

LaRouche's followers remain active in the United States and in countries around the world, most especially Latin America, but also Asia, according to King.

"I continue to get calls from people around the country that get victimized by them and also from people overseas who are having increasing troubles with them," King told USIA. "Recently I've talked to people in Venezuela and also from Australia. And in both of those countries the LaRouche organization is very noisy and very visible."

King said that in Australia, for example, LaRouchians have captured control of a right wing movement among farmers and are now running candidates for public office. In Venezuela, King said, LaRouchians have been carrying on a "smear campaign" against a prominent Jewish family, claiming it is involved in conspiracies to subvert Latin America.

The LaRouchians maintain news bureaus in Tokyo and India, King said. In Taiwan, he said, they have managed to find a couple of elderly generals who will talk to them. One of them had written a book about how to create total war in China, according to King. "I think they translated the book and started selling it in this country," King said. "Frankly I think this was a case of (the general being) an old man that they were victimizing in the same way they victimized old people in this country."

LaRouchians have been successful in making important connections in Thailand, where they have had a presence since the beginning of the 1980s, according to King.

Through a well-connected, wealthy land-owning family in Northern Thailand, the LaRouchians were able to gain entree to highly placed civilian and military Thai officials, King told USIA.

LaRouche made several trips to Thailand where his fusion energy foundation -- one of LaRouche's pet projects -- held conferences, King said. They started promoting the idea for a canal to cut across the Isthmus of Kra, he said.

"This is part of the LaRouchian fascination with giant public works projects," King told USIA. "It seems that in every country where they are trying to organize, they will concoct some public works project that they can focus on. In the case of Thailand it was the Kra Canal.

"I've always said that what's behind this is that these people believe in a kind of industrial, a kind of state capitalism where all of industry is sort of taken over, reorganized and centrally directed by the State in a classic fascist form. And of course if you're going to do something like that, you need a rationale. A big public works project is a good rationale for them to argue for the need for reorganizing the political structure, the social structure and so on," King said.

Why are LaRouchians so interested in establishing a presence in foreign countries?

"LaRouche has this grandiose idea that his ideology can save the world," King told USIA. "And even though he likes to play on nationalist sentiments in various countries, he doesn't really think in nationalist terms himself. He's an internationalist."

LaRouche encourages his followers to fan out across the world and try to set up movements in every country, King said. "And if he can't come to power in America, maybe he can influence some generals" in some other country, King said. By courting the military in many countries, LaRouchians think that if a nationalist general comes into power, then maybe they can persuade him to implement part of the LaRouche program, King said.

And what does the future hold for LaRouche and his organization? According to King, the "explosive growth" of LaRouche's organization has slowed down but it's still "on a level where they can make a lot of trouble. They're still a force out there that should be watched."

In 1990, for example, LaRouche campaigned from his prison cell for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives representing the 10th District of the State of Virginia. Norm Gonlak, a reporter for "The Journal" newspapers interviewed LaRouche by phone in October 1990. He reported that LaRouche was able to raise some 150,000 dollars for this campaign, which included radio advertisements.

Gonlak noted in his article that "Although Larouche, as a convicted felon, would be prohibited from seeking state office, he is not barred from running for Congress." The U.S. Constitution says only that candidates must be at least 25 years old, a resident of the state they wish to represent, and a U.S. citizen for the past seven years. Even if he had won that race (and LaRouche did not), the House of representatives could decide not to seat him, Gonlak pointed out.

Alex Heard, a free-lance writer in Washington, seems to agree that LaRouche could continue to be a political force worth watching. Writing for the February 27, 1989 issue of "The New Republic" magazine, Heard said "LaRouchians are a resilient bunch who thrive on societal disfavor."

Author John Judis dismisses the long-term impact of LaRouche, but does not discount the damage that could be done by other politicians, who, like LaRouche has done, could appeal to a rather ugly side of the voting public.

Writing for the May 29, 1989 issue of "The New Republic" magazine, Judis said "LaRouche's personal success rested largely on his own reckless disregard for the rules of politics, journalism and morality.... If there is to be a 'new American fascism,' it will probably not come from a crackpot like LaRouche. It will come from practicing politicians who are willing to court the voters' darker impulses."

Whatever one thinks of LaRouche, who will be eligible for parole in another two years, one cannot deny his effectiveness in slipping into the American political system, notes David Corn in an article for the June 26, 1989 issue of "The Nation" magazine. "They fielded candidates in elections across the country, collected \$1.7 million in Federal matching funds (that's taxpayer dollars) for LaRouche's presidential bids and convinced two million California voters to support a ballot initiative calling for the quarantining of AIDS patients. They stole more than \$200 million, much of it through credit card and loan fraud, before the Feds (Federal government authorities) finally nailed them....

"King's message," writes Corn, "which rings true, is that a democratic system has to be ever alert and ready to confront

all strains of fascism, even those that appear too nutty to worry about."

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