
Interview: Vice-Admiral Sir Ian Hogg

Admiral denounces the 'Russian party' in Whitehall, supports beam defense

Vice-Admiral Sir Ian Hogg entered the Royal Navy in 1929. Master of the Fleet (1946-47); British Admiralty delegation, Washington, D.C. (1948-49); commanded HMS Sluys (1950-51); on staff of Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean (1952-53); a Royal Navy captain in 1953; British Joint Staff, Washington, D.C. (1955-57); Staff of Chief of Defense (1959-60); Commodore, Cyprus (1961-62); Rear-Admiral (1963); flag officer, Medway and Admiral Superintendent, HM Dockyard, Chatham (1963-66); Vice-Admiral (1966); Defense Services Sec. (1966-67). Vice-Chief of the Defense Staff (1967-70); Retired 1971. The interview was conducted from London on Nov. 29 by Laurent Murawiec.

EIR: What is your evaluation of the danger of a decoupling of the United States and Europe?

Adm. Hogg: Needless to say, this is a most serious, the most dangerous thing that could ever happen. Britain and America are natural allies. I do not know that they rely on us as much as we rely on them, but there is undoubtedly an attempt to decouple us from the United States which is being actively pursued by our socialist party. It is an extremely dangerous trend. We are an island, we are a natural ally; a close association with the United States is in my mind almost more important than our association with the continent.

EIR: What dangers threaten continental Europe?

Adm. Hogg: The danger before continental Europe and to a certain extent this country is the studied attempt of the Soviet Union to undermine our determination. Modern appeasement and the talk of a "renewed dialogue" with the East: This is pure wishful thinking. I am quite certain that the Soviet Union would prefer to destabilize this country and the European members of NATO to make them easy prey for a takeover without conventional or nuclear war. Whether they will succeed or not I do not know. But there is far too much appeasement, far too much "renewed dialogue" by ministers of all the countries of NATO. And we are giving way to this. Recently, Mrs. Thatcher made a powerful speech about "the enemies of democracy." Well, in this country, and in most NATO countries including the United States, there is a "Russian party," people whose sympathies lie with the Soviet Union. They color and distort briefs and information reach-

ing the highest levels of ministers. . . .

EIR: Including in the United Kingdom?

Adm. Hogg: . . . Very much so.

EIR: The present British government is supposed to be a Conservative government. . . .

Adm. Hogg: It is a Conservative government. I would regard Mrs. Thatcher, to some extent, as a modern Churchill. I am not talking of Churchill's strategy, of course, but he did see way ahead in the 1930s, and Thatcher is to some extent the Churchill of the day, in the sense that she sees the dangers of "dialogue" while constantly being undermined by the left.

EIR: Why is the prime minister herself calling for a "renewed dialogue"?

Adm. Hogg: She has little option. The great British public, who are barely aware of the threat, would hardly take too much of the Iron Lady.

EIR: However, Chatham House and kindred minds make it clear—and they are not the uninformed public—that they are gung-ho for this "new dialogue."

Adm. Hogg: I am aware of what you say and do not really have an answer: Everywhere one can read about the "renewed dialogue." Whether this is a necessary diplomatic ploy, I really do not know, but in the last resort, the Soviet Union will use it to weaken the resolve of the West.

EIR: How do you evaluate the Soviet military threat?

Adm. Hogg: It is intensely serious. I do not for one moment question the Soviet capabilities. I am an ex-sailor, I am more interested in the sea, but their naval forces could virtually isolate this island. Admiral McDonald of the U.S. Navy was the one who said that the combined Atlantic fleets could not keep the North Atlantic sea lanes open—that in itself is an extreme hazard to us. Our navy is too small. The American navy is extremely strong, but the Soviets with their resources at sea are a very serious threat to us. As for land battle, I feel that this is a very serious threat—which the Soviets would prefer not to use. My feeling is that West Germany would go to almost any lengths to secure reunification even if she had

to pay a considerable price to the Soviet Union rather than find herself overrun.

EIR: The West generally has been pulling down its shipyards and cutting naval budgets to an extent which has produced the situation you describe.

Adm. Hogg: That is true, and it is catastrophic. The loss of our shipbuilding capacity and the very sharp diminution of our merchant fleet. In the last four years, our merchant fleet has dropped from 1,100 ships to little more than 700. This is catastrophic, as we learned in the last war. Merchant ships are vital—they did a marvellous job in the Falklands affair. As for shipbuilding, it is catastrophic. But if we cannot build ships competitively, we are not going to get the orders. It is very sad. But our shipbuilding industry is full of trade union practices and so on, which make our shipbuilding slow, expensive, and, inevitably, customers go elsewhere. But I would still rebuild our shipbuilding industry if we could possibly get the orders to fulfill.

EIR: This is a case where the exigencies of national survival demand that Adam Smith be discreetly scrapped and the industrial capability built.

Adm. Hogg: I agree with you. I would like to see what you might call a crash building program, at whatever the cost in economic terms. But I do not, somehow, see that this will come about. The administration of Mrs. Thatcher would not embark on that sort of cause. Even Churchill in the 1930s made very little impact on our naval and aircraft building program until 1939. . . .

EIR: As a result, Britain nearly lost the war. . . .

Adm. Hogg: Exactly.

EIR: Our modern appeasers are singing hymns to arms control. What do you think of their strategy?

Adm. Hogg: It will never get off first base. Incessant dialogue has gotten practically nowhere. I do not think that nuclear weapons are a response to anything—nobody, even in the Soviet Union, would contemplate using them. They are a deterrent to conventional warfare, no more than that. But while they exist, I am very much in favor of President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative which includes the neutralization of missiles in space. The Soviet Union is extremely scared that their capability could be undermined in this way. Although nuclear weapons will never be used, I still think that President Reagan is absolutely right to go ahead with a crash program to develop the SDI, although he has his own pro-Soviet advisers who are discouraging him.

EIR: Like Kissinger, for example. . . .

Adm. Hogg: Yes. It would make the Soviet Union think again about how it pursues its strategy for world communism. All the time we are talking, they are having success all around

the world. They are successful in the undeveloped countries of Africa, in South America, in many places around the world, and could, by applying economic pressure and control of vital minerals, gain their objective even without conventional warfare.

EIR: Why has established British opinion been so overwhelmingly opposed to the SDI?

Adm. Hogg: Fear of escalation, of more weaponry. The opposition to the SDI both in this country and other countries, is fueled by the Russian party. This thread runs through all my thinking: There is a strong, or rather influential force in Whitehall generally and in the corridors of power in European capitals, which is a Russian party. I have seen it myself in Whitehall, how information intended for ministers can be slanted by staff. There are influential people in Whitehall who are slanting the advice they are giving to ministers.

EIR: What could Britain contribute to the SDI?

Adm. Hogg: Our technical know-how. We have very bright scientists and still work closely with the Americans.

EIR: In the first few years of the Thatcher government, she gave very fiery anti-Soviet speeches. Now, she may be lashing out strongly at the domestic "enemies of democracy," but she will be receiving that great friend of democracy Mikhail Gorbachev soon. Why this turn?

Adm. Hogg: I do not know the answer. But let me repeat that her advisers may not necessarily be pro-Russian, but they are telling her to cool it and be more forthcoming towards the Soviet Union. I do not believe that in her heart of hearts, Mrs. Thatcher really believes that there is accommodation to be achieved with the Soviets, who ultimately want a world communist state, a goal which in his foolish little way [Mineworkers' Union chief Arthur] Scargill is attempting—but he is only a pawn in the game, as a professed Communist. I am talking about the dangerous ones who are in the shadow but are influential. Even Mrs. Thatcher's loyal advisers may suggest to her that it is diplomatically good to be softer. Whether she believes it, I do not know. At heart, I think she recognizes the threat. . . .

EIR: What kind of an appeal would a modern Winston Churchill address to the country and the world today?

Adm. Hogg: It would be to recognize the threat to democracy coming from the East and also point out the way in which we are losing all the time: the way in which president Reagan was totally misguided in taking his forces out of the Lebanon. . . . But we do not have anybody like that, like Churchill now. We do have a number of people that feel like that, but Churchill was a member of parliament. You need to be a public person to make your voice heard. There are many who think very much like he did. But a public person is needed.