

I feel privileged to have this opportunity to talk to you today, because everyone who believes in human equality and dignity can subscribe to the Freedom Forum's objectives of promoting a free press, free speech and a free spirit.

I am particularly impressed by the Forum's International Division, which is providing timely information, training and support for the development of a free and independent press in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the countries of the former Soviet Union. A free press and free speech are essential ingredients for the growth and health of the fragile democracies in that part of the world.

Why did the old order ultimately collapse inward on itself? In part, because it failed to understand that the desire for freedom can be suppressed for a time, but it cannot be destroyed without destroying humanity itself.

For our part, we should never believe that the struggle for freedom is complete. It is not a mortgage that can be paid, once and for all. Instead, it is organic, and it must be protected and nourished. Helping new democracies succeed is an investment not only in their futures, but also in ours.

It's hard to believe that it was only three years ago that we were celebrating the defeat of Communism and the end of the Cold War. The Iron Curtain has been drawn back, the Berlin Wall has fallen, the threat of nuclear Armageddon has given way to the promise of a new order, but we are left with a world that is as troubled as ever, and in some ways more troubled than ever before.

The world is no longer divided between two opposing camps facing each other in a nuclear stand-off. However, instead of enjoying an unprecedented era of peace, order and prosperity, we find ourselves struggling with the ugliest forms of nationalism, interethnic hatred and religious rivalries that have been released from their Cold War constraints.

Martin Jacques's excellent essay last month in *The Sunday Times* magazine, which was entitled "The End of Politics," pointed out the irony of how Communism may have lost the ideological struggle, but the West has lost its sense of unity and purpose:

The collapse of Communism did not leave the West unscathed, triumphant and unchallenged, as most expected in 1989. On the contrary, the demise of bipolarism has thrown the West into crisis. An overriding enemy provides a sense of purpose, helps to subordinate and discipline other potential conflicts, gives a clear moral framework, and furnishes a sense of identity. Without it, all these questions rise to the surface in a new way, begging answers that are novel and profound.