

'THE THIRD WORLD WAR IS OVER'

Reform and reconstruction are needed

Highlights from an address by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to Stanford University, California.

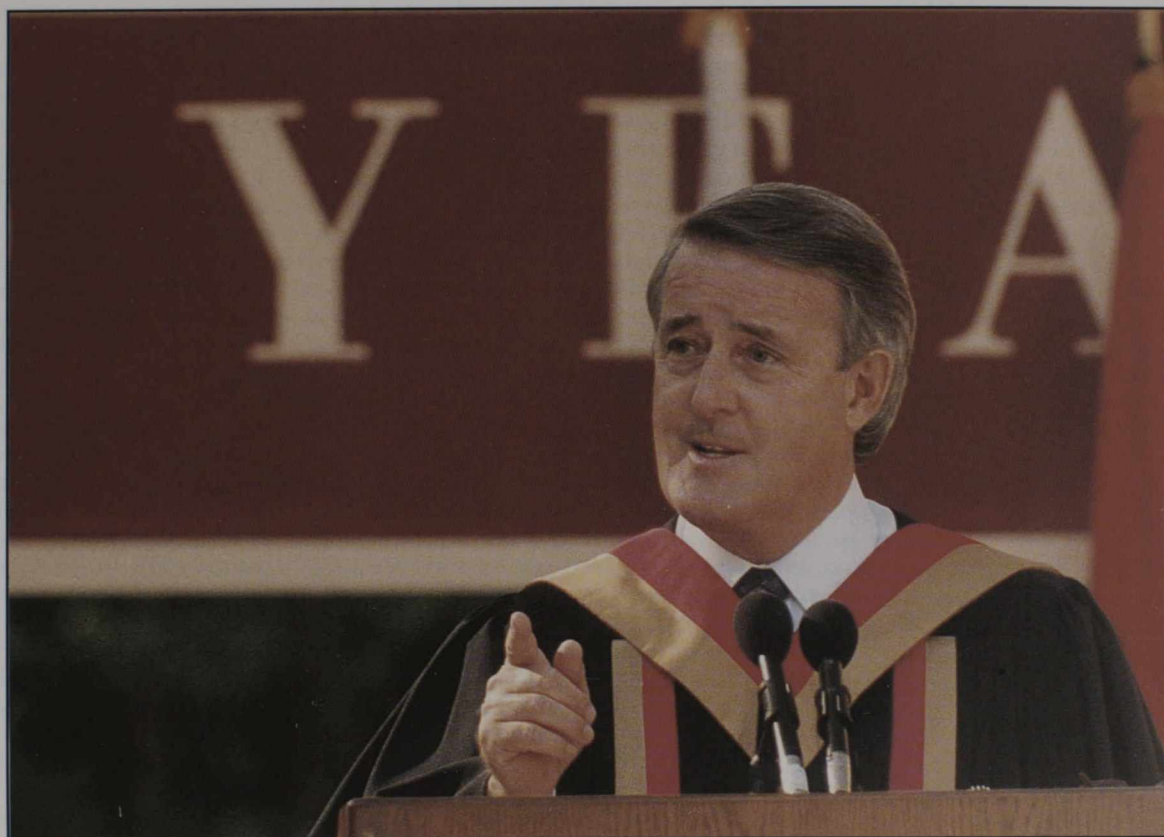


Photo: Bill McCarthy

'The Third World War is over – a cold war, fought and won on the field of values and ideas. The great battles took place, not on the Central European plains or in the jungles of Asia, but in East and West and in North and South, for the minds and hearts of people. The end came this summer in the Soviet Union, in a series of unforgettable images of people putting their lives on the line for freedom. The result is a victory less costly in lives lost and human misery but every bit as significant and momentous as was won in the First or Second World Wars. It is time now to chart the course of peace. There is no map to the future, no instruction book to the new world order – we have only our values and the hard-earned lessons of the past to go on.

In the decades following the Second World War, we learned that security could not be achieved in isolation but must be based on collective defence. We learned that open markets, liberal trade rules and international investment were the keys to rising living standards and human dignity. And, we learned how to submerge excessive nationalism in mutually beneficial cooperation and common purpose.

The definitive list of lessons to be drawn up now, at the end of the Third World War, will have to wait for the dust to settle. In 1945, at the end of World War II, we knew we still faced a clear and present danger, vast armed forces in the service of an ideology inimical to our values and alien to our traditions. In 1991, at the end of World War III, the dangers are less defined but more numerous – nations drifting into chaos and despair; ancient

hatreds backed by modern weapons; a natural environment so damaged that our children stand to inherit a devalued legacy; drug abuse so destructive that it consumes the freedom on which it depends; and poverty so pervasive and so unyielding, in Africa and elsewhere, as to mock the very idea of human progress. In the global age, danger respects no borders. Opportunity admits few limits. And responsibility is indivisible: global problems yield only to global solutions.

The greatest opportunities and the most dangerous problems the world faces arise from the fragmentation of the Soviet Union. The bloody indulgence of nationalism in Yugoslavia is a case study of the carnage that is possible in the former USSR, with its 15 republics and 38 autonomous districts, each with its minorities and its unsettled borders. The birth of newly independent states will be a tragedy and not a triumph if hatred is their only 'raison d'être', if minorities are singled out for abuse, if economics flounder and people starve and perish for lack of food and medicine, and if wars are started to settle old scores and establish new borders.'

Mr Mulroney pointed out, 'Only if all states are confident that they are secure will there be any chance of containing nationalistic impulses that can be so destructive and so unaffordable. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is part of the answer; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is another. The North Atlantic Treaty remains an indispensable insurance policy against a return to the autarchy of the Thirties. Association could be extended eventually to former adver-