



*Margaret Thatcher*

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Twenty years on from the downfall of the Berlin Wall it is right that we should reflect on those crucial months and place them in their historic context. So I am delighted that The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and The Heritage Foundation have joined together to mark this anniversary and to celebrate the life of the man, who more than anyone else, made it all possible: Ronald Reagan.

Before Ronald Reagan entered the White House the West had come to accept that the best hope for peace with the Soviet Union was through a sort of armed stand-off, with spheres of influence dividing the world. But President Reagan was not a man to accept what others believed to be inevitable or unchangeable. First, Ronnie understood that Soviet communism had not, and could not, curb its expansionist ambitions. It was by its very nature an aggressive creed which sought every opportunity to undermine liberty. Second, he believed that to seek to accommodate any political system which left millions of people in oppression, was *morally* wrong. Our task was not merely to contain communism but to reverse its hold so that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, and in the wider world, could enjoy the freedoms so long denied to them.

At the time there were those who scoffed but they underestimated their man. Ronnie cared nothing for what the critics thought of him. *His* actions would speak much louder than *their* words. And today, those actions are a magnificent testament to all that Ronald Reagan achieved. Thanks to him, millions of people enjoy freer, more prosperous and happier lives – what more could any of us hope for as a legacy.

So as you gather together, with such a distinguished collection of speakers and friends, including Nancy whose unstinting love and support gave such strength to Ronnie throughout his Presidency, let us remember the importance of those momentous days two decades ago and celebrate the greatness of the man who changed history.

I wish you well.

*All good wishes*

*Margaret Thatcher*