

Forties Years on from Famous Reagan Speech to Parliament.

Comment Extract by Lord Howell of Guildford, (who was present as member of Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet) at Hamilton Society Commemorative meeting. National Liberal Club June 8th 2022.

“ The message from President Reagan’s 1982 speech remains crystal clear and of the highest topicality. The authoritarian threats to world stability have to be driven back and the forces of freedom and democracy re-asserted.

But Forty Years on we have to use *new* ways of meeting the challenge in an entirely different world.

Ukraine may be the most visible and ugly example of violent and brutal challenge to free nations and the rule of law. But in the digital age and the age of empowered populism there are now a dozen less visible and more shadowy wars we have to fight every day against despotism.

As well as Russian menace, there is the quieter and more insidious advance of China across the developing world and notably into many Commonwealth countries, including numerous island and coastal states. The new avenues are not just trade deals and loans but military training and cooperation, buying up land and port facilities, gradual take-over.

And all the time there is the war against fake news and misinformation, the war on food supplies and starvation threats, the war of dangerous energy disruption, the war through financial manipulation and corruption, the wars in cyber space and through GPS systems, the hacking wars, the wars of drugs and health threats, the wars on climate issues, the wars of cultural clash, the wars of distorted history, the wars of migration and refugee victims – and a string of others.

All these areas and more have been weaponised and demand new responses. We have to confront them every day with renewed vigour and imagination to reverse the deep international instability and disturbance they are designed to provoke

That is the Reagan message that comes down through four decades to us now, today. “

ENDS Lord Howell of Guildford