Interpreting the Source
Margaret Thatcher (1925–) is one of the most well-known women in history. Sometimes called the “Iron Lady” because of her strength and confidence, Lady Thatcher was the first woman to be prime minister of the United Kingdom. She held the office from 1979 to 1990, the longest term in more than 150 years. Although she was not always the most popular leader, Lady Thatcher’s hard work and leadership helped bring Britain out of a recession and restore its ailing economy.

Reader’s Dictionary
- **totalitarian**: a type of government that has control over peoples’ lives
- **Warsaw Pact**: the 1955 defensive organization that included the Soviet Union and eastern European countries
- **Berlin Wall**: a wall surrounding West Berlin, built by Soviet-controlled East Germany
- **Cold War**: the power struggle from 1945 to the late 1980s between pro-democracy and pro-communism countries
- **resolution**: determination

Guided Reading
Margaret Thatcher gave her final speech as prime minister of the United Kingdom on November 22, 1990. In this excerpt, she reminds listeners that during her time in office, the world changed greatly. Lady Thatcher also reminds people about the importance of liberty.

From Margaret Thatcher’s Final Speech to the British Government

Ten years ago, the eastern part of Europe lay under totalitarian rule, its people knowing neither rights nor liberties. Today, we have a Europe in which democracy, the rule of law, and basic human rights are spreading ever more widely; where the threat to our security from the overwhelming conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact has been removed; where the Berlin Wall has been torn down and the Cold War is at an end.

These immense changes did not come about by chance. They have been achieved by strength and resolution in defense, and by a refusal ever to be intimidated. No one in eastern Europe believes that their countries would be free had it not been for those western governments who were prepared to defend liberty, and who kept alive their hope that one day eastern Europe too would enjoy freedom.

Document-Based Questions

Directions: Use information from the primary source to answer the questions below.

1. Describing  How did Margaret Thatcher describe eastern European rule before she became prime minister?

2. Listing  Name three things that Thatcher says democracy brought to eastern Europe.

3. Analyzing  Does Thatcher believe that the struggle for democracy was an easy one? Explain.

4. Evaluating  In her speech, does Margaret Thatcher take full credit for the changes that took place during her time in office? Explain your answer.