

Walls in a troubled world

In the 1980s the West rejoiced at helping pull down the Berlin Wall. That wall which divided a German city was constructed by the USSR to keep people in. Knowing how far their living standards and freedoms had fallen below the West, the USSR denied most of their people any access to western media or to the West itself. People were shot if they tried to cross into another part of their city.

It was the visible evidence of the lengths communists went to to detain their citizens that turned me against communism in my youth. My first political and economic writings were about the failures of the communist system, and the cruelties communist states imposed on people.

In recent years countries on both sides of the Atlantic have put up walls and fences to keep people out. Mr Trump's wall added to Mr Clinton's. The Anglo French fence in Calais is a small example of border fences that are common along the miles of EU border, especially to the south and east. The aim is to deter illegal migrants, drawn by the relative prosperity, the freedoms, jobs and benefits of living in an advanced western society.

There are signs of a cyber curtain coming down across the world. As the USA challenges China over alleged theft of Intellectual property, and seeks reassurances that its own systems will be safe from cyber attack, the world moves towards two systems and two alliance patterns. Countries are having to answer the US question, are you with us or against us? It will prove increasingly difficult to mix Chinese and US components and services within technology products and services.