

But let me first assure you that such progress has been halting, hesitant and fraught with difficulties. Indeed, as the process of revising our methods continues, it would seem that the difficulties to be overcome only proliferate. Let me cite only the example of terminology. The diplomatists' task is difficult enough when governments disagree over policy, but when the same governments disagree in their semantics, the task of negotiation sometimes tends to assume the nightmarish proportions of Orwellian double-think. Upon words and ideas which we had thought were long familiar to us and which for centuries had been used for what we supposed to be a fairly precise means of communication between man and man or nation and nation have been super-imposed, novel and not infrequently contradictory meanings. "Liberty", which throughout Western history has hitherto denoted something reasonably pointed and clear, now seems to have acquired a variety of new connotations, including the liberty of citizens to do promptly and exactly what they are told to do, and the liberty of writers, artists and scientists to write or to compose or to discover whatever may be required of them. Nations which venture to ally themselves together for protection against the perils of unannounced and unprovoked assault have somehow come to be described as bloodthirsty imperialists. It is indeed a confusing world in which we live; and it is often against this incomprehensible background of semantic confusion that we must now attempt to construct, in an atmosphere of mistrust, the foundations of a new world order. Confronted with difficulties of this nature, the tasks of the peacemaker have become progressively more difficult. We do not forget that the peoples of authoritarian states prefer a more democratic system; and there is no doubt that the Russian people in 1917 desired a more liberal dispensation than they were vouchsafed by destiny. It is encouraging to know that authoritarian régimes must retain the language of democracy, in order to appeal to the inherited predispositions of their people, but this knowledge is of relatively little immediate help to the negotiator.

At the time of the First World War, Sir Edward Grey, then Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, remarked that "in time of war the first casualty is always the truth". To up-date this wise observation, to give it a more contemporary relevance, it could be claimed that in the period of cold war and constant tension and gnawing anxiety which have prevailed since 1946, the most significant casualty has been the clear and considered use of language as a means of reaching understanding and agreement.

These semantic difficulties reflect - and I am not sure whether they do not contribute substantially to - the increasingly rigid positions taken by the two contending power groups at the present time. Backed by the threat on either side of unlimited and catastrophic force, the resulting