

All of us gathered here are, I know, acutely aware of the extraordinary importance of this tenth session of the General Assembly. Ten years ago the golden gates of San Francisco, where we signed our Charter of Peace, seemed to open on the bright vista of a future free from conflict. And then the gates to that future suddenly narrowed and a war-weary world has had to live through a decade of division and difficulty.

But once again, ten years later, we are given a fresh opportunity to establish here, on this Island of Manhattan, a new beach head of hope.

So much has been said here and elsewhere about the new atmosphere and the new spirit abroad in the world that I hesitate to speak of it again. Indeed, there is perhaps a danger that the vitality will be squeezed out of this so-called Geneva spirit if it becomes no more than a stale phrase, a muddy conception trotted out to bemuse us, to befog the hard issues we still face, or to cover a multitude of sins -- whether of omission or commission.

This would be a pity, because I believe there is something which can come alive if it is only nourished. If it is too early to say that confidence has been re-established -- or perhaps one should say "established", for international confidence would be something quite new in the history of the world -- one can at least say that there is evident a search for confidence, a struggle for mutual understanding which did not exist before.

It seems to my delegation that, in the dark years through which we have passed, it was not so much the matters at issue which created a sense of frustration and despair but the absence of any real anxiety to solve them. What encourages us most now is not that the issues have been solved -- although the gaps are closing -- but that the leaders of the great powers in particular now seem to be seeking to define the issues and to understand and, if possible, to meet each other's objections.

This may seem to be little enough in the way of progress, but it is a beginning in the right direction. Our very processes of thought have become corrupted by the deadening spirals of propaganda and counter-propaganda in this forum and in lesser councils. So deeply have we been mired, that this evidence of simple honesty and sincerity in our dealings with one another seems in the nature of a fundamental regeneration.

Confronted by the appalling spectre of disaster, the world has sobered up in the nick of time.

at least, we trust that it has. We cannot yet be sure. The test is whether those who bear the chief responsibility for debauching international relations by the manipulation of truth for their own purposes and the denial of civilized ethical traditions have finally renounced their old habits and methods. Unhappily, during the brief history of this organization, appeals to the mind and conscience of the peoples of the world, which is the rightful work of the United Nations, have too often become a sordid effort to trick and seduce mass opinion.