

which may, also, subsequently, produce equally unconstructive items on our agenda designed to apply counter-pressures with equally negative results.

Quite apart from this intrinsic reason for us to exercise responsibility and restraint, there is always the consideration that in a deliberative body such as this Assembly, with the whole world as our agenda, we must apply priorities, and show a sense of proportion in selecting those matters which should occupy our resources.

Since those resources, including time, are limited, it is essential, if we are to use them wisely, that we should examine the various demands which are made on them in the light of our basic purposes and against the background of the fundamental total problem of maintaining peace in the world.

It is, of course, true that our title, the United Nations, denotes at this time aspiration rather than achievement. But this, I think, does not give any ground for cynicism or despondency. That our world is deeply and dangerously divided is nothing new in history. What is new is the fatal consequence, not merely for peace, but for existence itself, if this division deteriorates into world conflict.

In a further effort to prevent such a tragedy, the scope of which is almost beyond our comprehension, those of us who are permanent members of the Disarmament Commission attempted to reach agreement this spring on agreements and safeguards which could make possible prohibition of atomic weapons and a general movement toward disarmament. It was disappointing on this occasion for us to find that the Soviet Union seemed as unwilling as ever to accept any adequate system of supervision and control, the indispensable prerequisite to progress in this field. Instead, they sought refuge in a slightly modified version of the old proposal, which they have made year after year, that every government should first agree unconditionally to prohibit the use of atomic weapons - putting reliance on each other's word. If we could have this degree of confidence in mere verbal assurances, mutual trust and confidence in the world would be so great that the need not only for disarmament agreements, but for disarmament itself, would hardly exist. The hard reality is that we have learned, through costly experience, that we cannot trust unsupported promises: hence, we have to put our trust in something else. The Soviet Union, for instance, refuses to accept our solemn assurance that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is purely defensive and will never be used for any aggressive purpose. Why, then, would they accept a mere declaration that we would never use methods of atomic warfare.

However, the meeting in London this spring was, I think, far from futile, in that a new basis was worked out, by the British, French, Americans and ourselves, on which, once good faith and a general desire for progress is shared among all concerned, a real advance could be made.

In the meantime, whatever reliance can be placed on a reciprocal capacity to blow each other up gives at best cold and limited comfort. I hope that before it is too late something better and more civilized can be found. Thermonuclear devices are too dangerous - the threat that