

traditions of yours, that I wish to share a few thoughts with you today. Where do we stand in this year 1954? What part is the United Nations playing, what part might it reasonably be expected to play, in the struggle for peace in circumstances that seem so different from those which attended its birth in 1945? Do the Charter and institutions of the United Nations really fit any more with the realities of today? Or has the United Nations become a symbol of frustrated hopes, still worthy of salute for its high purposes, of preservation for some future and better day, but in the meantime put away on the shelf insofar as the realities of policy and power are concerned?

I suppose it is not surprising that these questions should be asked. It is certainly true that the wartime concert of five Great Powers, upon which the peace-keeping functions of the Charter was intended to rest, broke down in the earliest days of the United Nations' existence. And it is, of course, an understatement to say that the prospects of healing this breach have not improved with the passing years.

In a world so deeply and dangerously divided as ours today the United Nations cannot be regarded as an agency for the enforcement of peace. But this does not mean that its role in the maintenance of peace has lost significance. It is too often forgotten that even in 1945 the governments were unwilling to give to the United Nations Council's power to order enforcement action to prevent or suppress armed aggression when -- and only when -- the five Great Powers agreed unanimously to do so. In every other respect, the United Nations was always intended to rely for the accomplishment of its purposes upon the moral power of the undertakings of the Charter and upon the influence which its recommendations could exert upon the policies of its Member Governments.

The central principle of the United Nations is not -- and never has been -- the principle of police power exerted by a supra-national authority. The very limited police powers with which it is constitutionally endowed obviously cannot be applicable to a war between the Great Powers. For the most important task of all for our generation -- the prevention of another world war -- the role intended for the United Nations is a different and more realistic one. The United Nations exists because the nations who compose it, no matter how great the differences between them, or how deeply some of them may be divided in many of their interests, recognize an over-riding common interest in avoiding the mutual self-destruction of a third world war.

To do this in a world that has become so closely and irrevocably inter-dependent as ours requires world organization -- a centre, in the words of the Charter, "for harmonizing the actions of nations" in the attainment of common ends. It is, of course, true that at almost every session of the United Nations you will find more evidence of disharmony than of harmony. In this respect the United Nations is only too accurate a mirror of the actual state of affairs in the world. But disharmony is the very reason why a centre for harmonizing is necessary. We may regret and even deplore the frequent bitterness of the debates in the United Nations, but we should never make