

As a mechanism for helping us to do this, for bringing us all together, the United Nations, as it exists today, is not far short of what we wished it to become ten years ago. Its doors for discussion and negotiation have been kept open. They may not always have been wide open, but they have never been closed and through them progress has more than once been made in settling conflicts and solving problems. More than one agreement has been worked out in the United Nations which has prevented a war or brought a dispute to an end. There has been more than one instance where the moral force of public opinion working through the United Nations has brought about an honourable arrangement where no basis for a settlement had previously existed. There has been more than one example of the application, in and through the United Nations, of both private and public diplomacy joined together for a good objective which was successfully achieved.

Not all United Nations debates or initiatives, however, have been fruitful. It is easy to retrace, in retrospect, where we have gone wrong during these past ten years. It is not so easy to see how we should try to steer our course for the next ten. We can perhaps admit that we have been carried along by events more than we have controlled them. It may be drift, rather than design, which is now our greatest danger. Yet one of the most hopeful omens for the years ahead is the fact that we are becoming increasingly aware of where events may carry us in this nuclear age, if we do not control them; and direct them away from war and toward a peace that is more than a symbol for propaganda or an uneasy interlude between fighting. To any man, of whatever nation or race or creed or colour, who has looked squarely at the shadow of the hydrogen bomb over his own country, "there is", as President Eisenhower has truly said "no alternative to peace".

The H-bomb was not written into the Charter; it was not created for peace; it was the product of a desperate anxiety not to be left at an impossible defence disadvantage in a time of fear and crisis. But now, because of this weapon, there stands behind our Charter pledges never to resort to war as a means of settling our differences, a deeper urgency, a more impelling incentive even than that of ten years ago. It is the prospect of mutual annihilation. The balance of terror has replaced the balance of power and that is not a comfortable or strong or permanent foundation for security. Peace rests uneasily on one, even less easily on two, hydrogen bombs. It is the tragedy of our first ten years that peace has found no better resting place.

The United Nations has another vital role; in acting as an agency through which international public opinion can express itself. Though the United Nations can be and has been misused for propaganda and even for abuse, it has, in my opinion, a legitimate and necessary part to play as a place where opposing views are aired, for the peoples of the world to hear and draw their own conclusions. It is in this sense that the United Nations acts as a kind of "town meeting of the world". Public opinion would, of course, continue to have its effect on all Governments if there were no United Nations, for no Government in these days of mass media of communication can entirely ignore what those in other parts of the world are thinking. No curtain - of any kind or shape or pattern - can completely stop the winds of opinion. But our world organization helps in this regard.

It is one of the premises of free and democratic societies that "you can't fool all the people all the time". A great deal can be said about "peace", for example. It is something we all want,