

How To Tackle Big Problems

FOR hope to have any meaning, it must be founded on reality, on truth. False hopes only blinds people to reality. Therefore, we need to ask: do we appreciate just how big the problems are that must be solved to bring genuine peace and security? Do we realise how urgent the situation has become? Is there any evidence that human solutions would be equal to the immensity of the task? For thousands of years men have sought lasting peace and security on earth, without success. But now the situation is most urgent because of the threat of war between nations, ethnic tribes, religions and families. In addition, other threats imperil life on earth. One is the world wide pol-

lution of land, air and water. Another is population explosion with its associated hunger and disease such as AIDS. Regarding the profound crisis pervading almost all spheres of human activity: economic and social, political and military, spiritual and moral, violence is on the increase and the use of force as an instrument of policy and diplomacy has become widespread, the balance between peace and war has become even more precarious. Where is this leading? The United Nations warned: "We are perilously near to a new international anarchy".

Is there any reason to believe that men can bring an end to war? Historically, there have been only a few scattered years when this

earth was totally free from war. In the 20th century alone, about 100 million people have been killed in war, neither yesterday's League of Nations nor today's United Nations has been able to stop this slaughter. But won't the fear of nuclear weapons change this? Wasn't sufficient fear of nuclear weapons aroused back in 1945 when atom bombs annihilated two Japanese cities? Since then stockpiles of vastly more powerful nuclear weapons have grown a thousand-fold. And since 1945 many, many people have been killed in wars and rebellions involving more than 100 countries.

In recent years more than 45 nations were involved in con-

flicts, no fear of nuclear weapons has and will stop the war. Granted nations do and continue to sign disarmament pacts or treaties. Over the century literally more than thousands of these have been signed. Yet, whenever war sentiments become strong enough, those treaties become worthless scraps of paper. The United Nations has also failed to stop war, because although nearly all the countries today are part of the UN, they ignore it at will. So we hope that future world leaders will keep their word more than they have done in the past.

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