

her very uncertainty over future American developments and her present pre-occupation with Germany and with Europe make it unlikely that she will undervalue the Anglo-Soviet alliance, however great a strain she may put upon our patience and understanding.

16. There are clearly dangerous potentialities in a country which remains as highly mobilised for industry and war as the Soviet Union is likely to remain in the coming years. Neither the Soviet people nor their rulers look to a calm and peaceful existence free from strife and stress. We shall disregard this fact at our peril, for the rulers of Soviet Russia are very human and have many primitive instincts. More than most people they respect strength and despise weakness. If we value our relations with them we shall have to achieve in our own way some comparable degree of national strength, mobilisation and organisation. But we can, I think, take comfort in the fact that there are elements of weakness as well as of strength in present Soviet measures. The rulers of Russia are faced with immediate practical problems more formidable than those confronting either of their major Allies, and they know better than anyone the failings of their countrymen. They know that the Russian, although capable of tremendous exertions in a crisis, is only too prone to slacken and fade away, once the crisis is over. They also remember that Russia has won other great victories in the past, and more particularly that in 1815 she played what was in Russian eyes the dominant rôle in the defeat of Napoleon. They consider that Russia, partly through her own mistakes and weaknesses, and partly through the superior skill and cunning of her Allies, never drew from those victories the material advantages or the national security to which she was entitled. The present rulers of Russia are determined that this time the fruits of victory shall not be thrown away. They are taking no chances, either with their own people or with their Allies. In this mood we shall often receive scant consideration. We shall meet with hard words and inflexible opposition on all issues regarded as vital to the security of the Soviet Union. But, so long as its rulers do not suspect us of any fundamental hostility to the Soviet Union and its interests, their attitude towards us is likely to remain at bottom defensive rather than aggressive, and there seems no reason to modify the view expressed in Sir A. Clark Kerr's despatch No. 211 of the 27th March, that the Anglo-Soviet alliance should continue to serve us well in the years ahead as it has done in the more dangerous, but in many ways less difficult, years behind us.

17. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador in Washington.

I have, &c.

F. K. ROBERTS.