

often as well armed as the soldiers. In theory, disbandment would be the right course, but who is going to enforce it, and how can soldiers be prevented from going off with their arms as brigands? Another sound theory would be to insist that no recruits should be enlisted, but how can this be enforced? Now that the foreign communities on the coast have at last woke up to the gravity of the situation, they will clamour for things being put right without considering how it can be done, or the difficulties to be faced.

I think the best thing would be to raise a small model army under young and energetic foreign officers, starting in some more or less isolated place, say at Tientsin, and to enforce Chinese agreement, this force to be paid regularly out of fixed sources of revenue in the hands of the foreigners. At the same time Manchuria might be handed over to the Japanese, who could cope single-handed with Chang Tso-lin. This model army would be increased gradually according to circumstances until it could be extended all over the 18 provinces.

But this would mean a very slow beginning, and might also meet with opposition from the nation generally and the local chiefs in particular. It would therefore be advisable in particular to secure the co-operation of the best man who can be found. The man who appears to be the most suitable is Wu Pei-fu, who might be willing to act with the co-operation of the "Christian" General Feng Yu-hsiang. Wu can be classed as the best General in China; as far as I know, he has retained his reputation for honesty, and his troops are very nearly the only disciplined soldiers in the country,