TROUBLE IN THE EAST

It was to be expected that the transition from war to peace would be even more difficult in Asia and Oceania, with their vast distances, teeming populations and incomplete deployment of Allied troops, than in Europe. It was also generally accepted as inevitable that peace would demand great changes in the former colonial regimes in line with the new spirit of nationalism and independence sweeping through these areas. But there is also cumulative evidence that at least part of the trouble in the Orient is being caused by Japanese treachery and by violation of the surrender terms.

Under these terms the Japanese commanders were instructed to surrender their forces in China to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, in the Netherlands Indies and Indo-China to Admiral Mountbatten, and in Manchuria to the Russian commander. The surrender was to include all military equipment and civil property. But it is now confirmed that, in violation of these terms and the command of their own Emperor, the local Japanese commanders have been turning over arms and equipment to the Indonesian and Indo-Chinese revolutionaries and to the Chinese Communists. They have planted agents of unrest throughout the Far East, trained in special Japanese treason schools to propagate in underground warfare the same aims Japan sought to gain in the war she lost. They are furnishing military leadership and even men to native groups fighting the Allies. And in the Indies they even created, five days after their surrender, an "Indonesian Republic."

The British Command in Indonesia has already arrested two Japanese generals for turning over arms to unruly elements, and the Indonesians themselves are beginning to turn to more moderate elements like the new "Premier," Sutan Sjahrir, who expresses willingness to negotiate with the Dutch, who have already offered the Indonesians home rule and full partnership in a Dutch Commonwealth of Nations. In Indo-China the situation is more obscure, and appears to call for a more explicit statement on French Empire policy than has appeared so far. But the most explosive situation exists in China, where the end of the war and Japanese arms turned over to them have inspired in the Chinese Communists even greater resistance to the recognized Government of their country than they displayed in the past. The Communists are not only delaying the disarmament and dissolution of the Japanese armies on Chinese soil but are also raising the specter of civil war, which could set all Asia afame again.