

Special Feature

The Wartime Economy in Imperial  
Japan and the Mobilization of Munitions  
in Its Colony: With a Special Focus on  
the Implementation in Joseon of the  
Munitions Company Law during the  
Final Period of the War\*

Joung An-Ki

## Introduction

This study analyzes the implementation of the Munitions Company Law (軍需會社法) in Joseon. In this regard, this law transformed the existing economic contract-based relationship between capital and labor into a state-based relationship, and clearly defined the stateness and publicity of capital at the end of 1943. In addition, the present study also analyzes the policy differences that emerged between the imperial and colonial governments regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law, their conflicts pertaining to administrative rights over munitions, as well as the characteristics of the munitions mobilization policy implemented by the Government-General of Joseon (Chosŏn) that were exposed during the process of mitigating these conflicts. Put differently, this study focuses on the struggle that emerged between the position of the Government-General of Joseon (內地分離統制原則, principle of split control within the empire) and that of the Japanese imperial government (內地一元統治原則, principle of unitary control within the empire) with regards to the implementation of the Munitions Company Law, and the former's implementation of an independent munitions mobilization policy known as the munitions production responsibility system (朝鮮軍需生產責任制), all of which is approached from the standpoint of the history of economic policy at the colonial government level. The conflicts and differing goals pursued by the imperial and colonial governments in conjunction with administrative authority over munitions occasioned by the munitions company system put in place at the height of the wartime economy in 1944 can be linked to the following research interests in terms of the study of colonial economic history.

One of the recognized leaders in the field of the economic history of Japan's colonial holdings, Yamamoto Yuzo employed a quantitative methodology to the study of economic history as part of his efforts to conduct a comparative macro-level historical analysis of colonial economies as well as of the structural characteristics thereof (Yamamoto 1992:3-62). As part of an institutional analysis conducted prior to the dynamic macro-level analysis

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of colonial economies, Yamamoto identified assimilation as one of the key structural characteristics of Japan's rule over its colonial holdings. Focusing on the political and institutional aspects of colonial rule, Yamamoto sought to identify inherently Japanese characteristics of colonial rule. He attempted to do so by zeroing in on the process of conflict and concord that existed between the assimilation policy and the principle of treating Joseon as an extension of Japan proper (内地主義), and between segregationist and colonial logic. The colonial ruling ideology adopted by imperial Japan was one that was on the surface rooted in the notions of *Isshi Doujin* 一視同仁 (Universal Brotherhood) and *Naisen Ittai* 內鮮一体 (Japan and Korea are one). However, in reality, it maintained a method of rule that, taking into account the special circumstances that prevailed in each of its colonial holdings, was based on political and legal-institutional organizations that could clearly be distinguished from those found in Japan.

However, the onset of the Asia-Pacific War saw these differing political and legal-institutional organizations be integrated into the imperial government in accord with the principle of unitary administration within the empire (内外地行政一元化原則) adopted at the end of 1942 and the policy of regarding the colonies as an extension of Japan proper. Yamamoto Yuzo perceived the assimilation-based ruling ideology as the end result of an institutional reorganization process that was designed to facilitate the movement of human and material resources, including the export of capital to colonies such as Joseon. On the other hand, a recent study has argued that the attempts of the imperial government (Ministry of Internal Affairs) at the end of 1942 to establish supervisory power over the Governor-General of Joseon based on the principle of unitary administration within the empire eventually fizzled out due to the resistance of the latter and the cautious attitude adopted by the Privy Council (Mizuno 1997). In this regard, Yamamoto Yuzo's perception of the principle of unitary administration within the empire as the institutional epitome of an assimilation-based colonial ideology designed to refuse the Governor-General system becomes problematic. This line of reasoning, which involves a political and economic reevaluation of the status of the Government-General of Joseon, can be regarded as one of the main points of debate when it comes to the Japanese empire's purported hierarchical structure during the final period of the war.

To this end, the present study perceives the abnormal Joseon economy

during wartime as a historical observation platform from which to analyze the peacetime Joseon economy of the 1930s as well as the Korean economy after liberation. In this regard, this study focuses on the munitions mobilization policy implemented by the Government-General of Joseon that included the munitions production responsibility system, and the reorganization of administrative organizations responsible for munitions conducted as part of efforts to support the munitions mobilization policy. More specifically, this study will examine the position of the Government-General of Joseon vis-à-vis the imperial government's administrative matters pertaining to munitions from the standpoint of the relationship between the imperial government and Government-General of Joseon, and between the Government-General of Joseon and munitions companies. Such an exercise is undertaken in order to highlight the conflicts and intentional distance between the imperial and colonial governments over administrative control of munitions that began in November 1943. The present study does not view the imperial and colonial governments in a unitary manner as previous studies on colonial economic history or imperialist history have tended to. Rather, it adopts a methodological standpoint that technically separates the imperial government from the colonial power so as to analyze the position of each party regarding the relevant issues as well as the rationale behind their responses, and then seeks to reorganize these elements in order to develop a new interpretation of the essential nature of the problem.

### **Problems Related to the Implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon and Administrative Authority over Munitions**

In October 1943, the 83rd Imperial Diet announced the passage of the Munitions Company Law. This epochal legislation led not only to the widespread mobilization of munitions from private businesses, but also to the organization of the Ministry of Munitions as a unified administrative body responsible for increases in munitions productivity and the implementation of a super-priority-based production structure. While the imperial government also decided to implement the Munitions Company Law in Joseon, the

Government-General of Joseon opposed this decision.<sup>1</sup> Let us now analyze the conflicts that emerged between the imperial government and the Government-General of Joseon with regards to administrative authority over munitions that surfaced in conjunction with the proposed implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon.

*The Position of the Ministry of Munitions and the Negotiations over Administrative Authority*

As part of the Munitions Company Law announced at the end of 1943, the imperial government sought to implement a system of unified administration of munitions across its colonies. The first policy initiative to this end that has to date been uncovered is the ‘Proposal Regarding the Establishment of the Ministry of Munitions’ prepared by the Japanese Cabinet on September 28, 1943. The proposal stated: “The Ministry of Munitions shall seize direct control and supervision rights from the governors-general of colonial holdings when it comes to the industries that fall under its jurisdiction. A supervisor from the Ministry of Munitions shall be dispatched to key factories in colonies attached to industries under the control and supervision of the Ministry of Munitions in order to enhance productivity” (The Japanese Cabinet, September 28, 1943). Meanwhile, both the Basic Principles of General Economic Mobilization (經濟總力動員方策基本要綱) (Hara and Yamazaki 1997:46) and the Basic Principles of Industry Mobilization during Wartime (proposal) (決戦産業動員方策基本要綱(案)) announced in January 1944 stated, “Colonial governments shall closely abide by the policy measures of the imperial government and take measures that reflect this basic principle...As far as the management of the Munitions Company Law is concerned, colonial governments shall pursue the implementation of a unitary administration system within the empire” (Hara and Yamazaki 1997:81-82). This extension of the ‘principle of unitary administration within the empire (内外地行政一元化原則)’ implemented at the end of 1942 was closely related to the munitions mobilization policies that were implemented in colonies.

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1. For more on the process through which the munitions company system was established in Japan, and the contents thereof, see Shimotani 1992.

However, the imperial government's implementation of the Munitions Company Law within the entire empire meant the suspension of the comprehensive administrative power and governing responsibility exercised by the Governor-General of Joseon within the colony. In this regard, it was inevitable that the Government-General of Joseon would oppose the implementation of such principles. Although this will be discussed more at length in a latter section, the Government-General of Joseon's response to the imperial government took the form from November 1944 onwards of an independent munitions mobilization policy called the munitions production responsibility system (朝鮮軍需生産責任制) that included the reform of the government structure. This policy was implemented while the Government-General of Joseon engaged in administrative negotiations with the imperial government regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon. While full-scale negotiations on this topic began to be carried out in March 1944, the body in charge of the administrative negotiations on behalf of the colony of Joseon was the Tokyo Office of the Government-General of Joseon. Furthermore, although the parties to the negotiations were initially the Ministry of Munitions and the Government-General of Joseon, the subsequent inclusion of other government organizations led to a virtual cacophony of debates and opinions. Consequently, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau had to intervene in the negotiations in June 1944 in order to oversee the development of a compromise agreement. To this end, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau established a draft agreement in July of that same year. Although the Ministry of Munitions and the Government-General of Taiwan immediately agreed on the draft, the Tokyo Office of the Government-General of Joseon held off on its reply on the grounds that it had to await instructions from headquarters. However, the resignation of the Hideki Tojo Cabinet and the appointment of a new Governor-General of Joseon in mid-July 1944 provided the impetus for the Government-General of Joseon's acceptance of the draft put forward by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (Ministry of Internal Affairs 1944a).

## **The Position of the Imperial Government and the Opposition of the Government-General of Joseon**

Let us now address the position of the imperial government and the Government-

General of Joseon's opposition thereto. On March 18, 1944, the Management Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs summarized the opinions of the Ministry of Munitions and the Government-General of Joseon on a total of 14 issues related to the implementation of the Munitions Company Law within the empire, including the 'designation of munitions companies.' The results of this summary can be found in Table 1. Above all, the Ministry of Munitions desired to dispatch a supervisor to the colony in order to oversee and ensure the implementation of munitions production orders not only within the branch factories of Japanese munitions companies, but also at local munitions companies as well (Ministry of Internal Affairs 1944a). This initiative on the part of the Ministry of Munitions was rooted in the legal situation that the writ of the Ministry of Munitions did not expand to local factories and businesses in its colonies as long as the Munitions Company Law was not implemented in the said colony, and this even if the head office of the pertinent enterprise had been designated as a munitions company. Thus, the imperial government was aware of the legal differences between Japan and its colonial holdings. More to the point, although the imperial government implemented a unitary administration system within the empire in 1942, the legal and administrative rights within the colony of Joseon continued to be vested in the Governor-General of Joseon.

**Table 1. Comparison of the proposals made by the Ministry of Munitions and the Government-General of Joseon regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon**

No.	Munitions Company Law	Main contents	Proposal by the Minister of Munitions (MM)	Proposal by the Government-General of Joseon
1	Article 2	Designation of munitions companies	MM	Consultation between the MM and the Governor-General of Joseon (GGJ)
2	Articles 4 and 7	Matters related to the production director	MM	Consultation between the MM and the GGJ
3	Article 5	Matters related to the production manager	MM for the companies in Japan	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
4	Article 8	Matters related to production orders	MM for the companies in Japan	GGJ for the companies in Joseon

No.	Munitions Company Law	Main contents	Proposal by the Minister of Munitions (MM)	Proposal by the Government-General of Joseon
5	Article 9	(1) Establishment, expansion and improvement of contracted facilities	MM for the companies in Japan	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
6	Article 10	(1) Accounting matters	MM for the companies in Japan	Consultation between the MM and the GGJ
		(2) Labor management	GGJ	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
		(3) Fund coordination	Same as now	-
7	Articles 11, 12, and 17	(1) Changes in corporate bylaws, mergers, dissolution of companies	MM	Consultation between the MM and the GGJ
		(2) Consignment, trust, transfer and dissolution of businesses	MM	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
8	Article 16	Supervision orders and actions	MM	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
9	Articles 17 and 27	Screening	MM	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
10	Article 18	Inspection	MM	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
11	Article 19	Dismissal of the board of directors and auditors	MM	Consultation between the MM and the GGJ
12	Article 20	Punishment of production director	MM	Consultation between the MM and the GGJ
13	Article 20	Punishment of production managers	GGJ	GGJ for the companies in Joseon
14	Article 21	Punishment of staff and workers	GGJ	GGJ for the companies in Joseon

Note: With regard to the 'same as now' entry found in column no. 7, the proposal by the Ministry of Munitions related to Article 10 (3) of the Munitions Company Law, the present study estimates that the Governor-General of Joseon would exercise financial administrative authority in Joseon as this had always been the case.

Source: Cabinet Legislation Bureau (1944b).



Let us now examine the position of the Government-General of Joseon vis-à-vis the imperial government's undertaking. The principle of unitary administration within the empire was designed to allow the Minister of Munitions to exercise direct control and supervision over the Governor-General of Joseon, thus transforming the Government-General of Joseon into a mere production agent acting on behalf of the Ministry of Munitions or a body that passively engaged in the administration of munitions. The Government-General of Joseon opposed this decision on several grounds. For instance, it argued that such a move would weaken the ruling power in Joseon by increasing distrust of the Governor-General, and that the imperial government's limited information about local areas and the lack of government-private sector collaboration would result in rendering colonial rule and munitions mobilization inefficient. During the process of trying to reach a compromise with the Ministry of Munitions that began in March 1943, the Government-General of Joseon suggested the following, "As far as the munitions companies whose head offices are located in Japan and their factories in Japan and Joseon are concerned, a unitary management structure under which the matters related to the head office should be governed by the Minister of Munitions and those concerning Joseon by the Governor-General of Joseon should be established" (The Government-General of Joseon, October 11, 1944). The main issues that emerged during negotiations regarding administrative rights over the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon that began in March 1944 were the following (*Tairiku Tōyō Keizai*, March 15, 1944).

The first matter was that of establishing the right to supervise and select production directors for the enterprises designated as munitions companies under the Munitions Company Law. The problem stemmed from the fact that many of the Japanese companies designated as munitions businesses in Joseon at the time had head offices in Japan and branch offices or subsidiary companies in Joseon. Leading examples include the Heungnam Factory of the Japan Nitrogenous Fertilizer Company (日本窒素) and other factories located in Joseon. This exposed the legal limitations of the Munitions Company Law in that the Ministry of Munitions could not wield influence over factories in Joseon even if the said law was implemented there.

The second matter was that of whether the Minister of Munitions could also designate the production director for the head offices of companies in

Japan as the party responsible for overseeing production within factories in Joseon as well. Amidst circumstances in which the Governor-General of Joseon had seized comprehensive administrative power over colonial Joseon, the allocation of production goals in Joseon as part of the Materials Mobilization Plan became the sole responsibility of the Governor-General of Joseon from 1939 onwards. Therefore, it became difficult under the Materials Mobilization Plan to allocate responsibility for production within the factories of Japanese munitions companies located in Joseon to the production director assigned to the company's head office in Japan. In other words, the integration of the production manager within a factory or business into such a dual command structure ran a strong risk of leading to confusion as far as the administration of munitions was concerned.

## **The Intervention of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau and its Draft Agreement**

The negotiations pertaining to administrative authority over munitions bogged down over the fact that while the imperial government (Ministry of Munitions) sought to unify the administration of munitions within the empire, including its colonial holdings, under the Ministry of Munitions, the Government-General of Joseon perceived the decision of the imperial government as establishing a dual munitions administrative structure that imputed upon it responsibility for munitions production while negating the comprehensive administrative authority of the Governor-General of Joseon, which had effectively become a direct implement of the Japanese emperor.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Government-General of Joseon opposed the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon as long as it limited the comprehensive administration rights of the Governor-General of Joseon (The Management Bureau of the Ministry of Finance 1947, 9:45-47).

Meanwhile, the conflicts pertaining to administrative authority over munitions that revolved around the implementation of the Munitions Company

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2. For more on the political status of the Governor of Joseon during the colonial period, see Yamazaki (1943:24-40).

Law in Joseon from May 1944 were further complicated when the ministers of the imperial government became involved in the negotiation process. Both parties requested that the Cabinet Legislation Bureau intervene in the negotiating process and review possible arrangements pertaining to administrative authority over munitions. To this end, after a detailed review, the Cabinet Legislation Bureau established the so-called 'draft agreement prepared by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau' at the end of June 1944. The Cabinet Legislation Bureau's draft called for the separate application of the Munitions Company Law in Japan and Joseon, permitting the Governor-General of Joseon to prepare production orders and exercise managerial control over not only the head offices of munitions companies located in Joseon, but also the branch factories of Japan-based companies situated in Joseon (The Cabinet Legislation Bureau 1944a). The contents of this draft can be regarded as having been more in keeping with the position put forward by the Government-General of Joseon than that of the imperial government and the Ministry of Munitions. In this regard, the then Secretary of the Government-General of Joseon Makiyama Masahiko stated (1944a):

The responsibility for munitions production in Joseon should be shared by the Governor-General and munitions companies. As such, in order to thoroughly achieve the original objectives of the Munitions Company Law, the management of munitions companies should be rendered the exclusive responsibility of the Governor-General. We should not allow ourselves to be sidetracked by calls for unitary administration within the empire that only result in the introduction of complicated debates that have little to do with reality... Securing independent production capacity in Joseon's mining and manufacturing industries represents an urgent task.

The *Gyeongseong Ilbo* (July 26, 1944) stated the following with regards to the administrative negotiations pertaining to the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon, "The designation of munitions companies, production orders, as well as the appointment of directors in charge of production and production managers was on the surface made the responsibility of the Minister of Munitions. In reality however, the proposals of the Government-General of Joseon were by and large accepted. This can be regarded as the manner in which the draft of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau was drawn up.... The Government-General of Joseon's general acceptance

of the draft agreement put forward by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau can be viewed as having been motivated by the current political situation.” In other words, the nearly one-year delay in the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon allowed the principle of split administration and control that lay at the center of Governor-General-based politics to gain the upper hand as the ‘principle of unitary administration within the empire’ which the imperial government had initially sought to apply to the administration of munitions was withdrawn. As such, the Government-General of Joseon could ensure the “autonomy of Joseon” regarding the management of the Munitions Company Law and the administration of munitions in Joseon.

### **The Government-General of Joseon’s Reform of the Government Structure and the ‘Munitions Production Responsibility System’**

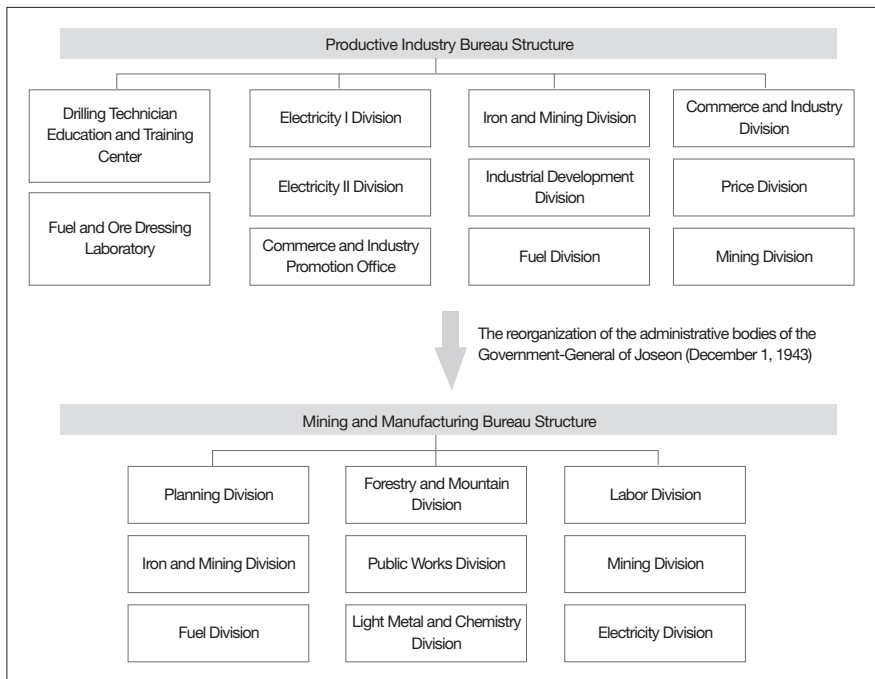
As part of the reform of the government system undertaken in the name of the establishment of a system designed to enhance self-reliance and an independent war capacity, the Government-General of Joseon announced in December 1943, at which time the Munitions Company Law had yet to be implemented in Joseon, the three principles of the newly minted production responsibility system. (Joseon was to be responsible for munitions production, the administration of munitions was to be the responsibility of the Government-General of Joseon, and Joseon was to be responsible for the production of timber.) As part of its efforts to facilitate the advent of a truly independent munitions administration responsibility system, the Government-General of Joseon abolished the existing Productive Industry Bureau and established the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau. While this new body was established as part of large-scale reforms of the government structure, the process and actual state of this reform can be summarized as follows.

#### *The Reform of the Government Structure and the Establishment of the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau*

The Government-General of Joseon responded to the imperial government’s establishment of the Ministry of Munitions in November 1943 by undertaking

a large-scale reform of the government structure in December 1943. The stated goal of this reform was the ‘reorganization of the unitary wartime administration system and simplification of overall administration.’ This reform involved the abolishment of the Productive Industry Bureau, Agriculture and Forestry Bureau, General Affairs Bureau, and Home Bureau and the subsequent establishment of the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau, Transportation Bureau, Agriculture and Commerce Bureau, and the integration of the Monopoly Bureau and Railway Bureau into another bureau (*Chōsen*, January 1944). As a result, the Government-General of Joseon went from eleven to eight bureaus, namely the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau, Transportation Bureau, Agriculture and Commerce Bureau, Financial Bureau, Legislation Bureau, Education Bureau, Police Bureau, and Post Service Bureau.

Figure 1. Reform of the government structure and the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau



Consequently, the work duties of the Productive Industry Bureau were transferred to the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau, thus bringing an end to the structure of the Productive Industry Bureau that had prevailed for 24 years. The various divisions of the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau can be

seen in Figure 1. Responsibility for plans related to the mobilization of core materials pertaining to munitions and other related planning duties were transferred from the General Affairs Bureau to the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau's Planning Division. Meanwhile, the Electricity Division was created through the integration of the previous Mining, Electricity I and Electricity II, and Forestry and Mountain Divisions. A Public Works Division was installed to handle general administrative matters related to public works that had heretofore been addressed by the Internal Affairs Bureau's Public Works Division, with the exception being matters associated with ports, the responsibility for which was transferred to the Transportation Bureau. As such, the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau was organized into nine divisions (Planning, Mining, Iron, Light Metal and Chemistry, Fuel, Electricity, Public Works, Timber, and Labor), which were in large part created by placing the Productive Industry Bureau's Light Metal Chemistry Division that controlled munitions-related work duties and the Home Bureau's Labor Division within the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau, and four institutes (Fuel and Ore Dressing Laboratory, Drilling Technician Education and Training Center, Forestry Technician Education and Training Center, and Public Works Laboratory).

Meanwhile, the Government-General of Joseon announced 'The Principles Regarding the Responsibility for the Administration of Munitions' (總督府軍需行政責任制度要綱) on March 11, 1944 (*Chōsen*, April 1944). This administrative measure can be regarded as having been in keeping with Joseon's implementation of its munitions production responsibility system. These principles called for the following measures. First, the administrative responsibilities of the official responsible for production of munitions materials that were closely related to the implementation of the munitions production responsibility system were clearly spelled out. Second, the administrative director within each bureau related to munitions programs to which the munitions production responsibility system applied was authorized to act on behalf of the Governor-General of Joseon. Third, the scope of the responsibilities of the administrative director within each bureau as pertains to the administration of munitions was expanded upon. This was designed to gauge performance with regards to the administration of munitions based on the extent to which production-related responsibilities were met as well as on actual munitions companies' outputs.

Furthermore, the Government-General of Joseon's full-scale implementation of the munitions production responsibility and munitions administration responsibility systems was accompanied from April 1944 onwards by a strengthening of the munitions administrative system, with the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau at the forefront of this endeavor. The emergence of urgent problems such as the need to relocate an aircraft manufacturing factory spurred the Government-General of Joseon to establish the Headquarters for the Increase of War Capacity and Production within the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau. It also established industrial affairs mechanisms that revolved around overseeing the provision of information, guidance, and supervision to the key factories and mines in charge of bringing about an increase in productivity (Gyeongseong Ilbosa 1945) with regards to their production and management. These measures were necessitated by the fact that although the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau was designed to eliminate the difficulties associated with munitions production in Joseon and bring the related organizations together, close coordination amongst the pertinent administrative bodies became increasingly essential when production-related difficulties expanded to include transportation and food distribution.

### *Implementation of the Joseon Munitions Production Responsibility System*

The onset of administrative negotiations between the Government-General of Joseon and the imperial government was accompanied by the former's decision, as part of its independent munitions mobilization policy, to implement a munitions production responsibility system. This response on the part of the Government-General of Joseon was the result of the fact that the success of the materials mobilization plan implemented in Joseon in 1944 remained a matter of great urgency even during the negotiations with the imperial government over who would exercise control over munitions companies. In other words, "the emergence of issues between the Ministry of Munitions and the Government-General of Joseon over who would control Japanese companies' factories in Joseon that surfaced during the process of implementing the Munitions Company Law in Joseon spurred the Government-General of Joseon to respond to the imperial government by implementing, as a proactive measure, the munitions production responsibility system" (*Tairiku Tōyō Keizai*

November 15, 1944). The objectives of the Joseon munitions production responsibility system were as follows.

Imperial Japan has responded to the current crisis by enacting the Munitions Company Law and establishing the Ministry of Munitions at the end of 1943. Although it is also necessary to implement the Munitions Company Law in Joseon, it is more urgent to ensure increases in terms of the production of munitions materials. To this end, the decision has been made to implement the munitions production responsibility system in a manner that reflects the spirit of munitions companies in terms of administrative measures until the legal implementation of this law. No one will object to increasing production and the desire to do so will not be decreased because the law has not been implemented. Viewed from this standpoint, the objectives of the munitions production responsibility system are to be set by the government and munitions companies, more specifically, by Governor-General Kuniaki Koiso and the owners of munitions companies based on promises forged between men and between kindred spirits. (The Management Bureau of the Ministry of Finance 1947, 9:45)

In conjunction with the proactive Joseon munitions production responsibility system put in place to serve as a substitute for the yet to be implemented Munitions Company Law, the Government-General of Joseon announced the ‘Principles of the Joseon Munitions Production Responsibility System’ on April 11, 1944. These principles revolved around the introduction of a munitions production responsibility system in the mining and manufacturing industries that was designed to increase production of the core munitions materials for which Joseon was responsible (Gyeongseong Chamber of Commerce 1944:340). The main elements of the Principles of the Joseon munitions production responsibility system can be summarized as follows.

First, the objectives of the munitions production responsibility system were introduced. This system was designed to meet the national demand to strengthen the war capacity in industrial fields related to the production, processing, and repairing of core munitions materials in Joseon. It was based on goals that the Joseon munitions production responsibility system had announced.

Second, the scope of those who would be subject to this system was spelled out. The entities to which this system was to be applied were corporations or privately owned enterprises involved with the production,



processing, and repairing of munitions materials (such as weapons, aircrafts, vessels, and vehicles).

Third, the method through which this system was to be implemented was delineated. The designated companies were to be those involved in the production, processing, or repair of munitions materials deemed essential. The designated companies should fulfill their responsibilities vis-à-vis munitions production. Furthermore, the Government-General of Joseon was to be responsible for assigning production directors and managers to the designated companies. The production director could in turn appoint a production manager for individual factories or business places.

Fourth, tasks related to investigations were also expounded upon. These investigations were designed to mitigate the difficulties associated with the implementation of the Government-General of Joseon's principles as relates to the management of munitions companies. A team made up of an official in charge of the investigation and his attendants was to be organized. While the official in charge of the investigation was to be an imperial appointee, the attendant was to be selected from amongst the ranks of senior officials within the Government-General of Joseon.

Fifth, the awards and punishment to be given and meted out to those responsible for munitions production were enumerated. While the Governor-General of Joseon was to provide awards for those that met their production responsibility or brought about outstanding achievements, those who proved to be negligent in terms of their responsibilities were to be disciplined.

As such, although the Government-General of Joseon designed the Joseon munitions production responsibility system in an independent manner, the majority of its contents reflected the management logic of the Munitions Company Law that was already in place in imperial Japan at the time.

### *The Implications of the Joseon Munitions Production Responsibility System and the Limitations Thereof*

At the end of March 1944, the Government-General of Joseon issued instructions pertaining to munitions production to the designated companies and assigned production directors (Gyeongseong Chamber of Commerce 1944:339). The designated companies, which included the Joseon Sumitomo Light Metal Industries, consisted of 138 companies and 300 factories engaged in the

light metal, iron and steel, special minerals, non-ferrous metal, coal, liquefied fuel, chemistry, and electricity fields (*Tairiku Tōyō Keizai*, May 1, 1944). The production responsibility system was applied not only to companies from fields that were identified as target industries under the Munitions Company Law, but also to other fields such as vehicles, rare metals, electricity, and timber. This was rooted in concerns that Joseon's munitions industry was not as developed as that of Japan's, and more specifically, in fears that the inability of entities indirectly related to munitions to meet production goals could result in limiting the ability of those directly related to the production of munitions to do so as well. However, the Joseon munitions production responsibility system featured the following problems.

First, the presence of existing industrial control laws, such as the Aircraft Manufacturing Industry Act, had the potential to limit relevant business activities.

Second, while the complexity of the administrative process had the effect in some cases of limiting companies' ability to engage in business activities, in other cases the limitations of the rights of shareholders meant that companies' success rested solely on the instructions of the production director.

Third, no legal action could be taken in cases where the government's instructions led to losses or difficulties for the designated companies.

Although the Joseon munitions production responsibility system reflected the spirit and overall form of the Munitions Company Law implemented in Japan at the time, it lacked the capacity to legally enforce the desired relationship between the Government-General and companies, a fact that is evidenced by the use of such expressions as 'promises between men and between kindred spirits.' To supplement the institutional deficiencies of the Joseon munitions production responsibility system, the Government-General of Joseon enacted the Factory Management Decree<sup>3</sup> on March 11, 1944. This legislation, which regulated the state control and inspection of the factories or business places possessed by the private sector, effectively replaced the outdated sections of the National General Mobilization Act (國家總動員法) passed in 1938. This decree was applied to five core industries identified as being of top priority, namely iron, light metal, vehicles, machinery, and

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3. For more on the promulgation and implementation of the Factory Management Decree in Japan, see Shimotani (1990:20-31).

shipbuilding. (*Tairiku Tōyō Keizai*, April 1, 1944). However, the Factory Management Decree did not carry the legal enforcement capacity of the Munitions Company Law, a legal enforcement capacity that was needed to ensure the forced mobilization of employees, the placing of limits on the rights of shareholders, and the appointment of board directors. As such, as the implementation of the munitions production responsibility system was closely related to the management of institutions, the implementation of the previously mentioned munitions administration responsibility structure became essential. As performance in terms of munitions administration was based on whether the relevant munitions programs were properly conducted, the munitions administration responsibility structure was designed in a manner that facilitated the determination of the performance of the munitions production responsibility system.

As such, the munitions production responsibility system was a proactive measure that reflected the problem of coordinating the rights of the Government-General of Joseon and the Ministry of Munitions regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law. However, it also encompassed industries that were not covered under the Munitions Company Law. For example, it included target industries that had no direct relationship with those focused on under the Munitions Company Law, such as vehicles, rare metals, and electricity. The munitions production responsibility system was also applied to timber production. In other words, the munitions production responsibility system included not only fields directly related to munitions, but also those with an indirect link (agriculture, fisheries, livestock, food, transportation, medical, and life necessities). Consequently, the implementation of the Joseon munitions production responsibility system contributed to a more rapid development of ‘munitions industrialization’ in Joseon than was the case in Japan (*Tairiku Tōyō Keizai*, March 1, 1944).

## **The Implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon and General Controls over Munitions Companies**

The easing of the administrative conflicts between the Government-General of Joseon and the Ministry of Munitions following the intervention of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau in the negotiations in July 1943 paved the way for the

Enforcement Decree of the Munitions Company Law based on the draft proposed by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau. Let us now delve into the contents of the amended Enforcement Decree of the Munitions Company Law, the system of control that was placed over Joseon munitions companies, and the reorganization of the administrative bodies responsible for munitions that took place.

### *The Amendment of the Enforcement Decree of the Munitions Company Law and its Implementation in Joseon*

On October 24, 1944, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, based on the proposal for the implementation of the Munitions Company Law within the empire made by the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, announced the ‘Proposal for the Partial Implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon.’ (Ministry of Internal Affairs 1944b) The Government-General of Joseon responded by announcing on October 27, 1944 the ‘Proposal for the Implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon’ and the ‘Special Proposal for the Implementation of a Joseon Civil Affairs Ordinance (朝鮮民事令) Pertaining to the Management of Munitions Companies,’ the main contents of which included the enforcement of the Joseon Munitions Company Law, limitation of the rights of shareholders and the strengthening of the rights of management. In addition, the Government-General of Joseon passed a measure on December 8, 1944 to ensure that the Factory Management Decree<sup>4</sup> did not apply to Joseon munitions companies. It also took steps to ensure that the Industry Control Act, which consisted of 34 laws and regulations such as the Aircraft Industry Act, did not apply to the companies designated as munitions companies (The Government-General of Joseon, October 28, 1944).

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4. Article 3 of the Special Proposal for the Implementation of a Joseon Civil Affairs Ordinance stated, “In cases where the need to do so for the purpose of the management of munitions production is recognized, the production director may proceed with work duties despite the failure to abide by resolutions in conjunction with such tasks that call for the securing of an agreement at the general assembly of shareholders or general meeting of employees, the securing of a majority agreement from the board of directors, employees, and partners with unlimited liability, or the securing of an agreement from all employees in cases where the approval of the Governor-General of Joseon is to be sought” (The Government-General of Joseon, October 28, 1944). This clause can be regarded as limiting the rights of shareholders while strengthening those of management.

Furthermore, the imperial government promulgated an imperial decree entitled 'Amendment of the Responsibility for the Munitions Production Review Board System' (*Osaka Asahi Simbun*, October 25, 1944) and amended the phrase, 'the responsible minister,' found in the provisions of Article 1, to 'the responsible minister, including the Governor-General of Joseon.' In addition, as far as a munitions production responsibility review board was concerned, the decision was made to not install such a body in Joseon, but rather have the Governor-General of Joseon handle pertinent issues whenever requested to do so by the Munitions Production Review Board in Japan. The provisions of Articles 29, 30, 37, and 38 of the Enforcement Decree of the Joseon Munitions Company Law, which were deemed to cause problems in terms of the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon, were also amended on October 27, 1943.<sup>5</sup> To this end, the provisions of Articles 37 and 38, which stipulated the administrative rights of the Governor-General of Joseon with regards to the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon stated the following.

#### Article 37

With regards to munitions companies whose head office and factories or business places are engaged in munitions-related business activities in Japan, Joseon or Taiwan, the term 'different ministers' found in the text of Article 31 shall include the Governors-General of Joseon and Taiwan. The term 'munitions minister' found in the text of Article 33 shall refer to the Governor-General of Joseon in the case of Joseon and the Governor-General of Taiwan in the case of Taiwan.

#### Article 38

The term 'government' as found in the Munitions Company Law refers to the Governor-General of Joseon in the case of Joseon and the Governor-General of Taiwan where Taiwan is concerned. The Ministers of the Army and Navy shall be in charge, with the exception of the matters pertaining to labor management found in the provisions of Articles 9 and 10 of the Munitions Company Law, of the munitions-related business conducted

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5. Article 29 (7) shall be amended to Article 29 (8). The reference to Article 36 in the text of Article 37 (1) shall be amended to Article 38 (The Government-General of Joseon, December 8, 1944).

by the munitions companies that pertain to their respective spheres of influence. The Minister of the Army shall be responsible for all pertinent matters related to the Army, the Minister of the Navy for matters pertaining to the Navy, and the Governors-General of Joseon and Taiwan for matters pertaining respectively to Joseon and Taiwan.

In addition, the Government-General of Joseon also enacted the Enforcement Regulations of the Joseon Munitions Company Law on October 28, 1944. For his part, the Director of the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau clearly identified the objectives behind the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon, “the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon will allow the Government-General of Joseon to gain widespread control over matters related to the management of private sector munitions companies, such as the allocation of production responsibility, the implementation of business management orders and facilities related measures, and the effectuation of changes to business types” (*Chōsen*, November-December 1944).

### *The General Control System over Joseon Munitions Companies*

In the aftermath of the amendment of the Enforcement Decree of the Munitions Company Law in November 1943, an agreement was reached in conjunction with cases where unitary administration was necessary, such as those involving the designation of munitions companies whose head office was in Japan and factories were in Joseon, or the appointment of production directors for such companies. With regards to these matters that had emerged as a major point of contention during the administrative negotiations between the two governments, the conclusion was reached that while the Minister of Munitions exercised general control for convenience purposes, the Governor-General of Joseon was the one who had the actual right to instruct and inspect munitions companies and appoint production managers. Consequently, the Governor-General of Joseon was able to secure exclusive control over the management of munitions companies whose head offices were located in Joseon as well as over their factories and branch offices in Joseon.<sup>6</sup> The final agreement regarding the

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6. On October 28, 1944, Governor-General of Joseon Nobuyuki Abe stressed in Governor-

main actors involved in the control of Joseon munitions companies, as well the scope of such control, was characterized by the following (Makiyama 1944b).

First, while munitions companies could be divided into those in Joseon and Japan when it came to instruction and inspection, the establishment of a unitary control structure became inevitable. As such, while the instructions and inspections involving munitions companies could be divided into those that applied in Japan and in Joseon, the right to control and inspect the companies located in Joseon was to be the prerogative of the Governor-General of Joseon; meanwhile, the inspection of the companies whose head offices were located in Japan was to be controlled by the Minister of Munitions.

Second, the matter of who would exercise general control over jointly managed munitions companies that were located in Japan and Joseon was also addressed. This issue involved not only the question of which entities could be designated as munitions companies, but also as production director. In this regard, the decision was made to place the right to control the instruction and inspection of jointly managed munitions companies in the hands of the Minister of Munitions. While this decision reinforced the fact that the Governor-General of Joseon was on equal footing with a minister from the imperial government in terms of their political standing, it also signaled the acceptance of the special status of the Minister of Munitions. However, this was limited to cases in which the application of unitary control over munitions companies located in Japan and within other areas of the empire became inevitable.

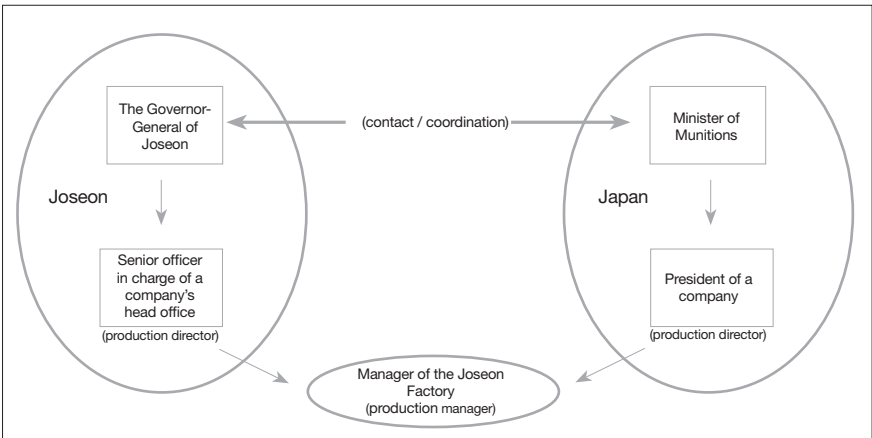
Third, the issue of the general control over munitions companies which did not fall under the control of the Minister of Munitions was also addressed. For example, the transportation industry which included vehicle production was identified as the responsibility of the Minister of Transport and Communications. In cases where such companies operated in Joseon, both the Governor-General of Joseon and the Minister of Transport and Communications were involved. However, as the relationship between these two entities was also

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General of Joseon Order No. 32 the fact that, as far as companies identified as munitions companies under the Munitions Company Law were concerned, the Government-General of Joseon could take special measures in conjunction with business activities, general assembly of shareholders, general meeting of employees, the convocation and resolution of general meetings of bondholders, as well as any other management matters (The Government-General of Joseon, October 28, 1944).

one amongst equals, it became impossible for the Minister of Transport and Communications to establish sole control over these companies. As such, the decision was made that the matter of sole control would be determined depending on the location of a company's head office. For example, while the Governor-General of Joseon assumed sole control when the head office of a company was located in Joseon, the Minister of Transport and Communications did so when the head office was located in Japan.

Figure 2. The Joseon factory of a Japanese munitions company and the general control structure



The issue of the selection of production directors and the right to inspect the factories of Japanese munitions companies located in Joseon, matters which had emerged as core issues during the debates over who should wield administrative rights with regards to munitions, was finally resolved based on the arrangement found in Figure 2. The production director for factories and business offices located in Joseon was to be selected independently of Japan by the Government-General of Joseon from amongst government officials (chief level of the related department). Meanwhile, relations between the production managers in Japan and Joseon were to be based on contacts and coordination arranged between the Minister of Munitions and the Governor-General of Joseon. Furthermore, the post of production manager within Joseon factories was reserved for officials from the Industrial Affairs Office established as part of the Joseon munitions production responsibility system announced in April 1944. The status of these officials from the Industrial Affairs Office was



regarded as being equivalent to the munitions supervisors dispatched to private munitions companies by the Ministry of Munitions.

### *The Reform of the Government System and Simplification of Administration*

As part of the implementation of the Munitions Company Law announced on November 23, 1944, the Government-General of Joseon implemented a partial reform of the government system (*Chōsen*, November-December 1944). In order to establish the Daily Materials Division that was to be in charge of securing essential everyday materials, the existing Agriculture and Commerce Bureau, which was made up of the Agricultural and Commerce Divisions, was reorganized into three divisions: the Agriculture and Commerce Division, the Agricultural Production Division, and the Daily Materials Division. In addition, the duties of the Public Works Division of the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau were extended and strengthened as it was reorganized into a new Construction Division designed to facilitate the management of public works and construction within the mining industry, as well as the provision of instructions to and the conduct of inspection of public works and construction-related entities. In addition, the reform of the government system also involved the transfer and separation of work duties at the division level through such means as the reorganization of the Government Secretariat for Documents Division within the Government Secretariat into the General Affairs Division, and the General Affairs Division of the Judicial Affairs Bureau into the Judicial Affairs Division.

Furthermore, the Government-General of Joseon implemented a full scale reform of the government system on April 17, 1945 (*Tairiku Tōyō Keizai*, May 1, 1945). The administrative system was decreased from one secretariat and 47 divisions to one secretariat and 36 divisions (Government Secretariat, Financial Bureau, Mining and Manufacturing Bureau, Agriculture and Commerce Bureau, Education Bureau, Police Bureau, etc.). As a result of this shuffle, about 400 officials and 600 employees, or 20% of senior officials and 50% of junior officials, were transferred to local administrative bodies. This government reform was intended to simplify wartime administration and strengthen administration on the front lines. In other words, an effort was made to move towards a decisive war administration system in which while

the center would be in charge of the planning function, local administrations would be in charge of implementation. This was to be achieved by separating the planning and implementation functions pertaining to munitions administration based on a large-scale reform of the government. In addition, the twelve divisions that had existed under the Mining and Manufacturing Bureau that served as the core body responsible for controlling munitions administration were integrated into seven divisions, including the mobilization, production and labor divisions. This was designed to facilitate air defense, production increase, and economic stability through the expansion and strengthening of munitions administration on the proverbial front lines.

The above-mentioned government reform was limited to organizations within the headquarters of the Government-General of Joseon. Meanwhile, the Post Service and Transportation Bureaus, as well as provincial administrative bodies, were not only reformed, but also underwent a rearrangement of their staffs. The Government-General of Joseon intended to strengthen the munitions administration system put in place to facilitate the ability to cope with the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in colonial Joseon through a large-scale government reform that included the administrative organizations at the provincial level.

## Implications

The debate over the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon led to conflicts between the Government-General of Joseon and the imperial government over who should exercise administrative control. The parties respectively appealed to the special status of Joseon and the need for comprehensive administration within the empire. The fact that the original opinions of the Ministry of Munitions regarding the implementation of this law in Joseon were largely withdrawn, the nature of the eventual solution to this problem, and the imperial government's requests at the end of the war that Joseon develop its own independent war capacity as part of its status as the forward base for the assault on the Asian mainland, proves that these conflicts led to a situation in which administration, by bestowing vested rights to government officials, effectively trumped politics (The Management Bureau of the Ministry of Finance 1947, 9:46). Of course, the officials of the

Government-General of Joseon faced harsh criticism from their counterparts within the imperial government, who labeled them as ‘destroyers of the established order’ and ‘officials of the Joseon dynasty rather than the emperor’ (The Management Bureau of the Ministry of Finance 1947, 10:15-18). The Government-General of Joseon was able to use the passage of the Joseon Munitions Company Law as the war drew to an end to secure the legal basis for Governor-General-based politics, as well as comprehensive administration rights over munitions administration in Joseon. The implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon also served as the legal basis for the further structural consolidation of the national discrimination and inequality against the people of Joseon. The above discussions have the following implications regarding existing studies on colonial economic history.

Yamamoto Yuzo perceived the principle of unitary administration within the empire at the end of 1942 as the institutional completion of the assimilation-based ruling ideology. However, as previously discussed, the conflicts between the imperial government and the Government-General of Joseon regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon lasted for about a year. In this regard, the principle of unitary control within the empire that the imperial government had initially intended on pushing through was eventually abandoned. On the other hand, the principle of split control within the empire adhered to by the Government-General of Joseon, a principle that revolved around the desire to ensure that the administration of munitions was based on Governor-General-centered politics, was finally allowed to take root. Thus, as far as the administration of munitions was concerned, the Government-General of Joseon was not degraded to the status of a passive body as could have been expected if the unilateral supervision right of the Ministry of Munitions had been able to take root, but rather existed as an administrative body whose status was the equivalent of that of the Ministry of Munitions.

This fact supports Naoki Mizuno’s assertions (criticism of political history at the imperial government level), that viewed from the standpoint of economic and policy history at the colonial government level, the attempt at the end of 1942 to strengthen the supervision right of the imperial government vis-à-vis the Governor-General of Joseon in accordance with the principle of unitary administration within the empire was inevitably frustrated when it encountered the strong resistance of the Government-General of Joseon and

the cautious attitude of the Privy Council. Thus, it becomes difficult to evaluate the principle of unitary administration within the empire as the symbol of the institutional completion of the assimilation-based ruling ideology and to accept claims that refuse the comprehensive administrative authority of the Governor-General of Joseon, an authority that stemmed from its status as the direct implement of the Japanese emperor, such as Yamamoto Yuzo's assertion that "both the Governors-General of Joseon and Taiwan adhered to the instructions and inspection of the imperial government." Thus, the Government-General of Joseon sought to make use of the unique characteristics of the rule over Joseon and the special status of the Governor-General of Joseon to limit the extension of home rule (内地延長主義) to colonial administration, a process which was perceived as the 'localization (colonization) of colonies.'

In conclusion, Yamamoto Yuzo's arguments can be regarded as little more than a theoretical attempt to label the assimilation-based ruling ideology as an institutional characteristic of colonial rule amidst the rapid changes within the colonial economy. In other words, the Government-General of Joseon, which referred to itself as the direct implement of the Japanese emperor, intended to heighten the efficiency of colonial rule and munitions mobilization by ensuring its political autonomy from the imperial government during wartime.

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**Joung An-Ki** (joungak@naver.com) majored in Asian economic history and is currently a research professor at Korea University. He holds a PhD from the Graduate School of Economics, Kyōtō University and has a particular interest in the study of the early 20th century politics and economics of East Asia, with a focus on Japan. His major works include “A Study of Japan-India Trade Conflict and Joseon-Raw Cotton Yield Promotion Policy during the 1930s” (*Gyeongje Sahak* 42, June, 2007).



## Abstract

This study focuses on the implementation of the Munitions Company Law passed by the Imperial Diet in Japan in 1943 that not only highlighted the stateness of capital but also fostered national intervention in the management of business. Policy differences between the imperial and colonial governments regarding the implementation of this law, and their conflicts over administrative rights over munitions, are examined in this study, and the Government-General of Joseon (Chosŏn)'s opposition to the Japanese imperial government's principle of unitary control within the empire, especially regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law, is analyzed from the standpoint of the history of economic policy at the colonial government level. In March 1944, the Government-General of Joseon began administrative negotiations with the imperial government regarding the implementation of the Munitions Company Law in Joseon leading to the reorganization of organizations related to the administration of munitions in accordance with the wider reorganization of the government structure and the implementation of an independent munitions mobilization policy known as the munitions production responsibility system. Although contrary to the original wishes of the imperial government, in September 1944, months of negotiations resulted in split, not unitary, control based on comprehensive authority of the Governor-General in September 1944. In other words, the Government-General of Joseon sought throughout the wartime period to enhance its colonial rule and the effectiveness of munitions mobilization by strengthening its autonomy vis-à-vis the imperial government in terms of industrial administration. This line of reasoning inevitably clashes with the assertions of Yamamoto Yuzo, who refused to recognize the comprehensive administrative authority of the Governor-General of Joseon, and evaluated the policy of 'administrative integration within the empire' implemented by the imperial government at the end of 1942 as the epitome of the institutional perfection reached by its assimilation-based ruling ideology.

**Keywords:** Yamamoto Yuzo, administrative integration within the empire (内外地行政一元化), assimilation, Munitions Company Law (軍需會社法), munitions production responsibility system (朝鮮軍需生產責任制)

