

Briefing Memo

The Soldier's Paths toward Public Administration in Modern Japan: An Overview

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1. Civil- Military Relations in Pre-War Japan

What first comes to people's minds as the system that governed the civil-military relations under the Meiji Constitution is the independence of the supreme command, and what has been referred to as the Military Ministers to be Active-duty Officers Rule. It is perceived that the military was able to execute various policies independently by utilizing both systems, without being subject to constraints by the government or the Imperial Diet, and also gained the power to oust the administration that they did not want to approve. In contrast, it became increasingly difficult for the civilian side to interfere with the military or military policies. More specifically, political power and military power were divided within the pluralistic Meiji Constitution Regime. The philosophical leader of the Taisho Democracy, Sakuzo Yoshino criticized this situation as a "dual government". During the Taisho period, the Military Ministers to be Active-duty Officers Rule was abolished in 1913 (reinstated in 1936), and it has been unfolded that the military itself was also making counter-plans for the implementation of civilian ministers for the Army and the Navy. However from a practical perspective, as a result of the lack of collaboration and integration, it is thought that wrong policies were taken at a critical phase in the pre-war Showa era in Japan.

However, as Samuel Huntington points out about the civil-military relations in pre-war Japan, the realities were that "while civilians could exercise no authority within the military area, the military, on the other hand, by virtue of their political influence, could easily expand their power into the civil area." (*The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Harvard University Press, 1957)

In this memo, bearing in mind the previous research concerning the foray of the active-duty military officers into public administration, I would like to examine exclusively the mechanism of the system (governmental organization law) and its transition, excluding any aspects of the actual status of the political process or job appointments.

2. "The 4 types of" military bureaucrats"

Before the period of party government, particularly until mid Meiji period, at the ministerial-level it was not rare to have active military officers (generals) take up the post of non-military ministers. Nevertheless this was before the system was established, and also was influenced by the close relations of trust between the leaders of the domain cliques. While on the other hand, after the demise of the party cabinet, there were several examples of generals taking up the post of non-military ministers, but the majority were not active officers.

However, at the same time, after the period of party government, the advance of active military officers was notable in posts appointed by the emperor and posts appointed by the Prime Minister, which are below the ministerial-level. Professor Kazu Nagai classifies these

“military bureaucrats” into the following 4 types. (“Gunjin to Kanryo: 15 nen sensoki ni okeru geneki shoko no kankai shinshutsu [Military Officers and Bureaucrats: Advance of Active Officers into Official Circles during 15-year War] ,” *Nenpo Kindainihon Kenkyu* 10, Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1988)

(A) The types who devote exclusively or spend much of their time as employees
The bureaucratic position is for an official administrative organ that has the fixed number of full-time defined by the governmental organization law.

(B) The types who hold concurrent posts or additional posts
Those who devote exclusively or spend much of their time as civil service officers defined by the governmental organization law (such as the Ordinance on ranking of and salaries paid to higher government officials) while holding military positions.

(C) Councilor of state types
The same as (B) in terms of being those who devote exclusively or spend much of their time as civil service officers while holding military positions, but is different in terms of being concurrently serving supernumerary officials (i.e. councilor of state, administrative official).

(D) Committee member or manager type
Those who are appointed as committee members or managers of advisory bodies, such as deliberation council, investigation committees that do not have full-time members.

Of the above, the type that would be of an issue in relation to the civil-military system will be type (A). The reason being, it was specified in the Officers’ Status Ordinance for Army and Navy of 1888, “when an officer becomes a full time civil officer outside Army or Navy before reaching the age limit, and then they are to be transferred to the reserve.” However, in 1913 and 1914, the army and the navy respectively issued an exceptional rule stipulating “Nevertheless where there is a special stipulation it is expected to be an exception.” Hence the issue here is what type of exceptional rule was applied at what period in the administrative sphere.

3. Transition from the viewpoint of area and period

Now I would like to examine using actual examples. The areas which active-duty military officers entered into aggressively, as pointed out by Professor Nagai, can be classified into the following categories: (i) fields of technical expertise such as aviation, maritime trade, patent, etc.; (ii) National Mobilization fields such as the Resources Bureau, the Research Bureau of Cabinet, the Planning Bureau, the Information Bureau, etc.; (iii) Occupied area administration fields such as the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau, the East Asia Development Board, etc. Hereinafter, I will look at sections related to the appointment of active-duty military officers within the representative governmental organization laws among each area.

(i) Aeronautics Bureau (1920)

The Aeronautics Bureau was established as the extra-ministerial bureau of the Army Ministry with the purpose of presiding over the training, encouragement, protection and supervision of civil aviation. Upon the initiation of civil aviation business this task was relegated to the Ministry of Communications and Transportation in 1923.

In the governmental organization law concerning the Aeronautics Bureau (Imperial Ordinance No. 224 of 1920) it is stipulated that “Article 3: An active lieutenant-general or a major-general of the Army or an active lieutenant-general or a major-general of the Navy is to be appointed to the post of the Director-general, and an active major-general of the Army or of the Navy is to be appointed to the post of the Deputy Director-general. An active

army field officer, or a company officer or the equivalent or an active navy field officer, or company officer or the equivalent is eligible to be appointed to the post of the administrative official as stated in Paragraph 1 of the preceding Article. Those who are to be appointed to the posts in accordance with the provision of the preceding Paragraph are to be supernumerary officers of army or navy, and rules concerning military personnel in duty status, shall be applied."

(ii) Resources Bureau (1927)

The Resources Bureau was established with the purpose of overseeing the matters concerning the control and operation plan of physical and human resources, and a system was put in place to appoint active army or navy field officers, or company officer as an administrative officer for the general government office for the first time.

In the governmental organization law concerning the Resources Bureau (Imperial Ordinance No. 139 of 1927), it is stipulated that "Article 2: The personnel as shown in the following are to be appointed at the Resources Bureau (an omission). Aside from the administrative officer in the preceding Paragraph, two other administrative officers are to be appointed. By petitioning the Emperor performed by the Prime Minister, an army field officer, or a company officer or the equivalent or a navy field officer, or a company officer or the equivalent is eligible to be appointed to this position by the Cabinet".

(iii) The Manchukuo Affairs Bureau (1934)

The Manchukuo Affairs Bureau was set up to handle matters related to Manchukuo and the Kwantung Bureau. It was intended that the Minister of the Army would double as the Director-general (official personally appointed by the Emperor).

In the governmental organization law concerning the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau (Imperial Ordinance No. 347 of 1934) it is stipulated that "Article 3: Aside from the administrative officer in the preceding Article, four other administrative officers are to be appointed. By petitioning the Emperor performed by the Prime Minister, an army field officer, or a company officer or the equivalent or a navy field officer, or a company officer or the equivalent is eligible to be appointed to this position by the Cabinet".

In addition to this, in the "Matters on special appointment of personnel for Manchukuo Affairs Bureau and Kwantung Bureau" (Imperial Ordinance No. 378 of 1934), it was defined as "Article 1: Even if the qualification stated in the Civil Servant Appointment Ordinance is not satisfied, an active General of the army can be appointed to the position of the Deputy Director of the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau upon being selected by the Higher Civil Service Examination Committee." Moreover, in the "Matters on official status of the Army officials in active services and appointed full-time employees of Manchukuo Affairs Bureau or Kwantung Bureau" (Imperial Ordinance No. 387 of 1934) it was defined that "Active Army officials who devote exclusively or spend much of their time as employees of the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau shall be in active service. The active army officials who devote exclusively or spend much of their time as employees of the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau or Kwantung Bureau, as stipulated in the preceding Paragraph, are made supernumerary officials, and rules concerning military personnel in duty status, shall be applied."

(iv) Post -Research Bureau of Cabinet

The Research Bureau of Cabinet (1935) and the Planning Bureau (1937) were set up in succession for the purpose of conducting surveys relating to key policies, developing the national mobilization plan, and strengthening and maintaining overall national power. However since the former adopted the plenary session system as opposed to the departmental system, and did not appoint full-time military officials, here I would like to

review the governmental organization law of the Planning Bureau.

In the governmental organization law concerning the Planning Bureau (Imperial Ordinance No. 605 of 1937) it is only stipulated as “Article 2: The personnel as shown in the following is to be appointed at the Planning Bureau (an omission). Aside from the personnel in the preceding Paragraph, by petitioning the Emperor performed by the Prime Minister, higher civil servants are eligible to be appointed as the administrative officials by the Cabinet.” There are no provisions concerning active-duty military officers. Instead in the “Matters on special appointment of a research officer of the Planning Bureau” (Imperial Ordinance No. 611 of 1937) it was stipulated that “a research officer of the Planning Bureau is to be selected from those with academic backgrounds necessary for the position through screening procedures by the Higher Civil Service Examination Committee. Moreover, as is the case in the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau, the “Matters on official status of the Army and Navy officials in active services and appointed to the full-time director or research officers of the Planning Bureau” (Imperial Ordinance No. 612 of 1937) was enacted.

Furthermore, the governmental organization law concerning the East Asia Development Board, the Ministry of Munitions and the Ministry of the Greater East Asia, where a significant number of military officers entered from this point forward, also adopted same format.

4. Conclusion

Taking a look at the measures based on the governmental organization laws that enabled the advance of active-duty officers in the civil service (i.e. the exceptional measure regarding the Officers' Status Ordinance for Army and Navy), firstly with the Aeronautics Bureau and the Resources Bureau, the exceptional provisions (“administrative officers” who are supernumerary officials) of the governmental organization laws regarding these organizations were limited to the appointment rules concerning active-duty field officers, or company officers. After the establishment of the Manchukuo Affairs Bureau, an explicit Imperial Ordinance in line with the Civil Servant Appointment Ordinance was enacted. Lastly, from the Planning Bureau onwards, the format became a simple combination of governmental organization laws and Imperial Ordinances that allows the Special Appointment and includes the phrase “shall be in active service”. At least from the aspect of the text of the law, it can be said that the advance of active-duty officers into the civil service had become common and generalized.

Although in the past, the focus on the frequent reorganization of the government organizations in the pre-war Showa period has been from an angle that it was in connection with the planning of measures against the total war after World War I, and that it was to overcome the fragmented governing structure under the Meiji Constitution, it can also be concluded that the aforementioned system transition was in the same vein.

The website of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) (<http://www.jacar.go.jp>) was used for the citation of the Governmental Organization Laws and Imperial Ordinances.

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