

## **Transformation between Military Need and Civilian Demand: Establishment of Ammonium Sulfate Factory in Pre- and Post-war Taiwan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Through examining the establishment of the Taiwan Chisoo Corporation in the pre-war era under Japanese rule and the Kaohsiung Ammonium Sulfate Corporation in post-war Taiwan, this article shows how the government could promote smooth production of military or civilian goods through the control of economic policies during wartime and under resource shortage.

Ammonia as a raw material for the manufacture of ammonium sulfate can be converted into nitric acid required for making gunpowder. Pre- and post-war history in Taiwan evidenced its use and the switch of production equipment to meet civilian demand and military need. In Japanese colonial Taiwan, mobilization for war converted an ammonium sulfate factory, originally planned in 1942, into a military facility for production of gunpowder to meet wartime need. In the aftermath of WWII, the facility continued to produce gunpowder but for mining and not military purpose. In 1948, a preliminary plan had been drawn up for the establishment of an ammonium sulfate factory in Taiwan, but it remained on paper only. With the retreat of the Nationalist Government to Taiwan in 1949, the military equipment brought along was channeled to produce ammonium sulfate fertilizer for promoting food production to satisfy civilian demand; and the Kaohsiung Ammonium Sulfate Corporation was established by the Taiwan Provincial Government.

The two ammonium sulfate factories mentioned above were set up against different backgrounds with diverse market considerations. The pre-war Taiwan Chisoo Corporation was for wartime mobilization and served the Japanese military and industrialization needs. In contrast, the post-war Kaohsiung Ammonium Sulfate Corporation was mainly for enhancing domestic food supply in a time of cross-strait tension. While both factories

were established under resource shortage in the pre-war colonial era and post-war economic development period, their establishment would only be regarded as a special phenomenon during wartime or regime transition, rather than a typical economic development process.

**Keywords:** Taiwan Chisoo Corporation, Kaohsiung Ammonium Sulfate Corporation, Ammonium Sulfate, Nitric Acid, 228 Incident