

Government-funded videos marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II portrayed a “historically inaccurate” version of the transfer of Taiwanese sovereignty after the war and failed to review the history “from a Taiwan-centered perspective,” a National Chengchi University professor of Taiwanese history said yesterday.

As part of the government's year-long plan to publicize the role of the Republic of China's (ROC) armed forces and government in World War II, five videos commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were posted on the “Trending Taiwan” YouTube channel, leading to debate among people who watched them.

The university's Graduate Institute of Taiwan History chair Hsueh Hua-yuan (許華元) said that the government reviewed history “through the lens of the ROC [as opposed to that of Taiwan].”

“I have no problem with that, except some parts of the videos were not historically accurate,” Hsueh said.

“The problem is, with regard to the history of Taiwan, what was portrayed was completely wrong,” Hsueh said.

The series of five videos, each about five minutes long, begin in the first video, *Settlement, Colonialism and Modernity*, with a timeline of Taiwanese history starting in the mid-17th century — when Han Chinese moved to Taiwan and the nation was incorporated into the Qing Dynasty empire — and spanning to the present.

The other four videos portray the ROC leading China to victory over Japan, saying that the ROC is owed a debt of gratitude for its “unequal contributions” to the defeat of the Axis powers and for supporting the end of foreign empires in Asia.

The videos say that World War II would have taken a different course without the ROC's

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Written by Taipei Times
Sunday, 12 July 2015 08:55 -

contributions.

They say that “the ROC was the key force behind the Allied victory over Japan.”

Hsueh said the videos' repeated mentioning of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender being handed over to Chinese General Ho Ying-chin (何應欽) in 1945 to justify the return of Taiwan to the ROC was “historically inaccurate.”

The document clearly states that Ho, as a representative of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石), accepted the Japanese surrender on behalf of the Allied powers, not China, Hsueh said.

“If the government insists that the Japanese Instrument of Surrender effected a transfer of [Taiwanese] sovereignty, does it also claim sovereignty over northern Vietnam, as it was also listed in the document?” Hsueh said.

Neither the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, the Cairo Declaration nor the Potsdam Proclamation are recognized by international law as legal documents to transfer the nation's sovereignty to the ROC as the videos claim, Taiwan Association of University Professors secretary-general Hsu Wen-tang (許文堂) said.

Both Hsueh and Hsu criticized the omission of events depicted in the first video, including the 228 Incident in 1947, the White Terror era from 1949 to 1987 and other major events of importance to Taiwan.

As of yesterday, the third video in the series, featuring National Chengchi University assistant professor of history Joe Eaton explaining why the ROC is “owed a debt of gratitude,” was the most viewed at 3,536, with 115 comments, 110 likes and 91 dislikes since its release on Wednesday.

The third video sparked heated debate among people on social media.

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Ministry spokesperson Anna Kao (高英) said the videos' scripts were written by the ministry after consultation with experts and academics.

The videos are to be officially launched at events that are to be attended by descendants of World War II heroes during their visits to Taiwan next month and in September, Kao said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2015/07/12](#)