

Commemoration hides pro-China bias, forum says

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President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Retrocession Day yesterday betrayed a hidden China-centric and pro-unification agenda, academics said at a forum in Taipei.

The forum, hosted by the Taiwan Association of University Professors, was aimed at challenging the official "liberation" narrative of Taiwan's post-World War II history.

"'Liberation' is the shackling of the Taiwanese by a military junta led by Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石); a shackling that is still in evidence 70 years later," association secretary-general Hsu Wen-tang (許文堂) said. "It is a liberation that never was."

"The political subtext of the liberation anniversary is unification," Taiwan Thinktank deputy executive director Lai I-chung (賴宜中) said.

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have "already arrived at a consensus" over a roadmap toward political unification in negotiations carried out "in the past one to two years," Lai said, adding that then-Mainland Affairs Council minister Wang Yu-chi's (王郁琦) meeting with Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun (張志軍) last year was designed to facilitate Ma's hoped-for meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) at the APEC summit, in Beijing.

This process would have led to the "official declaration of a KMT-CCP truce" on the 70th anniversary of Taiwan's liberation this year, which would have paved the way for political unification with China had the Sunflower movement in March and April last year not "reversed the pro-China trend," Lai said.

"If not for the Mar. 18 [protests], what events would have taken place between then and now?" Lai asked.

Another panelist, Black Island National Youth Front activist Lai Pin-yu (賴品妤), said she respects

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the views of KMT military veterans, but their views should not take precedence over that of other Taiwanese ethnic groups, including “Aborigines, recent immigrants and ethnic Taiwanese who were living in Taiwan prior to the KMT’s flight from China.”

“Taiwanese should question the Ma administration’s lavish promotion of ‘Taiwan’s liberation’ as a historical narrative, and its celebration of that perspective as the official position of the government,” she said.

“This event highlights how the KMT-run education system persistently and chronically excluded other cultural values and perspectives from its historical perspectives, and employed crude militarism in an attempt to impose on Taiwanese the narrative of a ‘Liberation in the War of Resistance,’” Lai Pin-yu said.

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