Japan Seems to be “Correcting Itself” Regarding the Ukrainian Crisis

NEO has already had reasons to complain about the rapidly changing agenda on both the local and global levels as the “Great Game” unfolds. Which, by the way, is a sure sign that at the current stage of its development it is mired in crisis. In this context, it is necessary to make some remarks.

Thus, recall that at a press conference after the meeting in Hawaii of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea, the head of the State Department, Antony Blinken, devoted almost half of the time allotted to him to the topic of the Ukrainian crisis. Although this meeting itself was held on an immeasurably more important occasion, due to Washington’s long-standing headache caused by unsuccessful (twenty-year) attempts to form a trilateral military and political union in the region. The reasons for the failures of which have been discussed more than once by NEO.

The reason for the recent trilateral meeting was provided (as always) by the DPRK, which made a series of new missile launches into the Sea of Japan the day before. What would regional political tricksters do without the North Korean “Kims”? They should have a monument raised in their honor instead of being publicly cursed.

Naturally, both the ROK and Japan could not care less about the problems of the “Space of Wild Ukies” located somewhere with their children’s fairy tales about “the thousand-year history of Ukraine, during which it has
continuously repelled Russian aggression protecting the civilized world.”

During the aforementioned press conference, the Head of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs limited himself to a couple of meaningless phrases regarding the “Ukrainian” topic, while his Japanese colleague Yoshimasa Hayashi completely passed it over in silence. The latter probably caught not only NEO’s eye. And here some explanations will be needed regarding the “price of the issue” for Japan when its “big brother” has been trying (for a long time) to show it the “importance of the Ukrainian issues.”

The abovementioned “price of the issue” is determined by the word “Russia”, more precisely, the possibility and level of influence on it in competition not only with Japan’s geopolitical opponent in the person of the PRC, but also with the “big brother.” It should be stressed that this is not so much about the notorious “problem of the Northern Territories”, but, again, about the possibility of influencing the Russian Federation as a whole.

NEO at one time had to listen to the same question from Japanese experts more than once: “When will this damned Ukrainian nonsense finally end so that we could focus on important things?”. It seems, it should never be the case since Japan’s “big brother” once acquired an overly effective foreign policy tool. It is namely suitable for “bossing around” Tokyo, so that the increase of Japan’s role in the world proceeds in the “right direction.”

For almost two years since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, the government of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been “dragging its feet” with joining the anti-Russian sanctions that Washington has begun to impose. During this time, articles appeared in some serious American media outlets (also written) by (a sort of) experts who reflected whether Article V of the Japan-US “Security Treaty of 1960” applies to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. But as soon as by the spring of 2016 Shinzo Abe declared solidarity with Japan’s main ally in the Ukrainian issue, the then US President Barack Obama, who had been silent on this topic for two years “like a partisan under interrogation,” personally said approximately the following words about the applicability of the mentioned article to the situation around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands: “Well, of course, yes. Were there any doubts? It can’t be.”

And today, when “America returns,” the Ukrainian master key in the capable hands of Washington turns out to be very useful, since the discipline in the Euro-Atlantic ranks during the administration of Donald Trump has become by no means harsh. The thing is the Japanese and Europeans seem not to care that the heroic Ukrainian people has been shedding blood by the bucketful “for our and your democracy” in the fight against one of the main autocratic regimes.

The effectiveness of this master key was tested, again, on Japan. That is why the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs remained silent on the Ukrainian issue in Hawaii but his rebellion did not go any further. It is necessary to know when enough is enough, and Hayashi, of course, knows it well. He demonstrated it during his visit to Germany at the end of the second decade of February on the occasion of a number of events held there.

However, he expressed his solidarity with his allies on this issue in fairly cautious terms (“if there is an invasion, then, generally speaking, economic sanctions will be considered together with other G7 participants”). Using equally interpret-as-you-wish wording, Japanese news agencies have been transmitting the content of Hayashi’s conversation on this topic with the current NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and a number of European colleagues. Thus, the Romanian interlocutor of the Japanese minister promised to help evacuate Japanese citizens from the territory of Ukraine (“just in case”).

But, of course, all these “adjustments” regarding the Japanese stance on Ukrainian issues were not initiated by Japan’s foreign minister. At the same time, there was a half an hour long conversation between Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, during which the parties expressed their intention to “persistently continue diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict.” Fumio Kishida also promised to allocate an emergency loan to Ukraine for USD 100 million. The same problem of Japanese citizens staying on the territory of Ukraine was not forgotten.

The Japanese parliament, which adopted a special resolution demanding that the government promote “the rapid introduction of peace to the region,” did not remain idle either. However, even without parliamentary urging, the government has been working in this direction, as they say, “by the sweat of its brow.”

In particular, it decided to share parts from imported liquid gas with the Europeans in order for them not be frozen too much in the process of self-restrictions aimed at deterring “Russian aggression” in Ukraine. Although the head of the German Foreign Ministry bravely states: “We will be patient.” As a matter of curiosity, who these “we” are and what relation does a trampoline-jumping champion have with the formation of one of the world’s leading economies?
Finally, it should be noted that the “Ukrainian project” was part of a more global endeavor aimed at the collapse of the USSR as a result of which all the peoples of the once great country suffered, and the Ukrainians practically most of all.

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