75th Anniversary of the Pearl Harbor Attack Marks Interesting Developments

The otherwise tried and test allied relations between the US and Japan have a number of historical dates that make everybody feel rather uncomfortable. One can even state that politicians across both sides of the Pacific would prefer if some of these dates would just miraculously disappear from the calendar.

But as we all know, one is unable to change history even if he desperate to do so, therefore some of those "difficult" dates are to be treated with a fair amount caution not to spark controversy over what our forefathers have done a long while ago.

Earlier, we have discussed how uncomfortable Washington felt on the eve of August, the date of the first atomic bombing of a densely populated town of Hiroshima. And it seems that this date has been treated in the most dignified way possible by both sides. The position occupied by the Japanese society can be described roughly as follows: the past does will not change, there's resurrecting the dead, but at least you can and must honor them. Therefore, the message Tokyo was sending to the US President was pretty clear: "There's no need for words or apologies, just come to Hiroshima and silently honor the dead with us. We will be glad to see you."

Fulfilling this demand was no small feat for the sitting president of the US, since American society remains polarized in the way it perceives this tragedy. For instance, veteran communities across the US are convinced that before Washington takes any steps in acknowledging its wrongdoings, Japan should first apologize for the way it was treating prisoners of war. But a true politician does not think about the past, since his two main concerns are the present and the future.

By the way, Obama's visit to Hiroshima is mentioned as a positive development in the newly adopted UN General Assembly resolution on the prohibition of nuclear weapons that was brought forward by Japan. Even though this document has no binding effect, such honorable mentions are always valued by international players.

But on December 7, it was Tokyo's turn to feel uncomfortable. One can recall that on this day back in 1941 Japan launched one of the most successful, if not the most successful, carrier attacks on a US fleet, that was stationed in the Pearl Harbor bay.

This was the beginning of direct confrontation between the US and Japan in the Pacific, which has become an important part of the WWII struggle. Although the question who was responsible for this unprecedented carnage still remains open, Japan has experienced the principle that is known since the ancient times as Vie Victus - "woe to the vanquished", but still not to the same extent as Germany. Which still continues to publicly admit its crimes in the WWII (how sincerely it does it is a completely separate question).

Therefore, Japan prefers to keep away from discussing this issue all together in order not to irritate its principal ally, since in the course of more or less serious discussion with the use of archival documents there will be facts...
uncovered that Washington won't like to admit.

It's clear there was a secret deal struck between Japan and the US just after the war, so the silence we've seen so far about why Japan would ever attack the US is perfectly understandable. Japan was busy rebuilding its economy and it did it in a pretty impressive manner, while the US was busy fighting the Cold War.

Therefore, one can understand Tokyo's shock that was provoked by the revelations made by Japan's Air Self-Defense Force head Toshio Tamogami back in 2008 about the causes of the war in the Pacific. This was a clear violation of the "conspiracy of silence" that exists to this date. Tamogami's main idea was that Japan fell the victim of political games, which got it involved in the WWII.

Although the sitting Japanese elites, including Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe are cautiously heading in "historical revisionism", this was way too much for them to stomach. Tamogami was discharged immediately from the position he occupied and was forced to retire.

However, the annoying retired general did not want to keep quiet and decided to make an attempt to become a politician, trying to get himself elected back in 2014 a governor of a metropolitan area. It was then that they got him all right, ending his political career before it even started. Tamogami was accused of illegally obtaining some 30 thousand dollars and was arrested.

This should be a good lesson for other "truth seekers" in Japan are trying to uncover the reasons for the biggest catastrophe of the XX century.

Politicians are always trying to prevent any harm to international relations if it's possible, at least good politicians do so. This principle was guiding Obama, when he decided to visit Hiroshima, but not to bring any apologies at the same time.

The same principle guided Shinzo Abe still went he decided to visit Pearl Harbor, but not on December 7, as it is stated in the official note, but "at the end of December with" The same note says that in the course of this trip there will be no apologies presented, which are hardly needed, since most of today's Americans don't care about them anyway.

Apparently, Abe, following Barack Obama's example, will stand in silence in from of the memorial to several thousands American sailors who died exactly 75 years ago.

It's curious that the general trend at the international stage is that the less an official opens his mouth, the less harm he will do, including the harm he can inflict upon himself too.

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