THE MULTIPOLAR REALITIES, MIDDLE EAST AND NEWS TICKER GENOCIDE

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> "In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined."
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> *Robert Gates,*
> *US Secretary of Defense (2006-2011)*

Today hardly anyone would contest the fact that scrambling for spheres of influence on the world-scale, which started at the end of 20th century with monopole domination, now transforms into a multi-vector persistent standoff. It takes place by some new rules (sometimes no rules) of multipolar world order that have not been fully established yet and hence, are still more than vague [1]. This new order is first of all characterized by the circumstance that the United States remains the world leader, but no longer is the hegemon. Interestingly, some even predict breakdown of the superpower, among which are not only somewhat opinionated characters, such as Paul C. Roberts, former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan Administration (one of the fathers of Reaganomics) and Gerald Celente, Director of the Trends Research Institute, but also some renowned university professors (see, for example [2]). Another worrisome signal is persecution of dissidents like J. As-

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sange and E. Snowden, who made stands against total informational control. Actions against such people (due to which even a "prisoner of conscience" emerged, Private B. Manning) once again actualized the ingenious works of George Orwell.

However, if one prescinds from predictions and follows the more realistic wording of Fareed Zakaria, in the *post-American World* **strengthening of other geopolitical actors has significantly changed and continues to change the balance of powers in the world arena [3]**. Processes occurring against this backdrop have significantly reduced the level of global security, especially as far as the nuclear area is concerned. The observed trend differs from assumptions previously made by some experts that multi-polarity would lead to global stabilization, as it happened, for example, in the era of bipolar Cold War. However, it cannot be ruled out that after a "transition period" of the multicenter world evolvement something like a Peace of Westphalia would be concluded and relative stability would follow.

The logic of "new times" is most vividly reflected in developments in the "New Middle East" (NME), a sizable segment of Eurasia and Africa from Morocco to Pakistan. The USA made a decision to reduce their military presence in this region – they withdraw troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, which is related to the shortage of economic resources. At the same time military retreat is accompanied with increasing activity by European and regional partners and intensification of some traditional, and most of all, non-traditional political methods. One way or another, it has to be noted that military/political upheavals of the recent years lead to destabilization of the NME. Moreover, these developments resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, which can be well classified as genocide.

Currently there is a wide range of interpretations of the political processes in the conditions of "new times". We believe that such multitude of interpretations contributes to a more adequate comprehension of realities and therefore, we would like to share our perception of these problems as well. However, for more or less proper discussion of these complicated issues, we will first attempt to briefly present some characteristic traits of the multipolar world.

"This multipolar world"

The meanings of political terms change over time and this is the case with "multi-polarity". The content of this notion has considerably expanded, first of all because the word "multi" now encompasses not only nation-states, but also non-government structures (this new world has been quite vividly described by Parag Khanna [4]). These structures can be conditionally divided into following categories.

The role transnational corporations (TNC) has increased in the world economy, with their financial and organizational capabilities on a par with and sometimes even exceeding those of developed states. Previously the TNCs were directly or indirectly associated to one country or another, but now some of them act quite independently, based exclusively on their own interests.

According to some Swiss researchers[1] the core of TNCs consists of 147 corporations that combined with their partners and subsidiaries control 60% of the total world GDP. Characteristically, this consortium is dominated not by production companies, but by financial corporations, such as *Barclays, JP Morgan Chase, Merrill Lynch & Co Inc.,* etc.

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[1] http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21228354.500-revealed--the-capitalist-network-that-runs-the-world.html#.UfALvsCGiJd.

Under such circumstances it is no surprise that the "super TNCs" are quite capable of dictating their conditions to the governments of nation states. The developments in the system of "government – finance sector" relationships fully correspond to the concept of "post-democratic" society described by the English sociologist Colin Crouch as domination of oligarchy in the government system and erosion of democratic norms in the Western societies [5].

The second category consists of international non-government organizations (NGOs), the number of which has significantly increased over the past decade, mostly due to their replication in countries. The influence of these network-mode operating organizations has respectively increased: for example, the "color revolutions" in ex-Soviet republics and Middle East were implemented with direct contribution from some NGOs. In the past the NGOs, as well as TNCs were perceived solely as tools in the political arsenal of superpowers. Some countries (particularly Russia) attempted to legislatively constrain the influence of these NGOs in their domestic political affairs. Notice that such actions became possible only after establishment of the multipolar form, since in the past NGOs enjoyed kind of a "sacred cows" status and even criticizing them was considered an encroachment on fundamentals of democracy.

However, over the time NGOs began transforming. The mosaic of information flows leaves an impression that some strengthened NGOs (especially those with ideological orientation) have started acting a lot more independently. Currently they take contracts not only from specific government structures, but service political and financial groups (e.g. TNCs) both inside and outside their countries, as well as act autonomously at their own discretion. To a large extent this is because part of the NGOs are ideology-driven, following the concepts of M. Bet-

tati and B. Kouchner on necessity to "protect human rights despite national sovereignty", which in 2005 became an international legal norm in the form of the UN resolution "Responsibility to Protect."[1] It is well known that treating any idea as a cure-all is fraught with unpredictable outcomes, and the consequences of NGO actions in the Middle East vividly demonstrate this.

Various religious/confessional structures, both traditional and relatively recently formed (often as different types of sects) also have to be included in the category of non-government organizations. Such structures, conditionally speaking, have been using network management methods since long ago, and their role steadily increases not only in the public life, but also in international politics. In particular, the political standoff in the Middle East took the shape of a fierce confrontation between representatives of various Sunni and Shia sects, Islamists and Anti-Islamists, and in this background of intolerance the Christian communities of the region were pushed to the brink of extinction.

In the epoch of multi-stage informational revolution the large media, Internet corporations and the like have to be included in the group of influential non-government actors. The virtual social networks had gained special prominence, in particular, playing important role in the Middle East revolutions. Total "facebookization" of the entire planet has a serious influence on the societies of all countries [6]. It has to be noted that monopolization of resources takes place also in information sphere and for instance, control over the print media is concentrated in the hands of five media giants[2]. All these structures conduct global informational politics, something that rather than being a supplementary and

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[1] http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml
[2] http://analitika-forex.ru/forum/5-1200.

stimulating process to the politics, is defined by RAND Corporation experts as a political genre in its own right – *Noopolitik*[1], in full accordance with the concept of second generation informational warfare [7].

The information flows currently form the system of values and mentality of the whole world community more than ever. Unsurprisingly, big players of this sphere pursue also their own interests, to an extent ignoring the state interests and even more so, the public ones. Typically, the information space was previously dominated by western media. However, due to the "multipolar trends" today the media from other countries, first of all Russia and China, try to compete with them. As a result, even the global "newspeak" has been somewhat changing. For example, in the comments on Syria along with such cliché as "opposition" or, as a last resort, "rebels", more adequate definitions like "militants" and "mercenaries" are occasionally used.

And finally, the role of terrorist and other criminal structures has increased in international developments. These structures have always maintained ambiguous and complicated relations with intelligence services of various countries and were considered their instruments of sorts in shadow politics. However with the changed situation some of them escaped the control and play their own games, which admittedly, happened both in the past and during the recent developments in Syria.

Because of the large number of "variables", intricacies of conflicts and collaborations taking place in parallel, the world order that is being formed represents a lot more complicated system than it used to be during the era of bipolar or monopole world orders. As some commentators note, in a way the world has regressed into pre-Westphalia epoch, albeit

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[1] *Arquilla J., Rontfeldt D.,* The Emergence of Noopolitik: Toward an American Information Strategy, RAND Corporation, 1999, http:/www.washprofile.org/en/node/943.

adjusted for Internet and weapons of mass destruction. Such situation objectively makes it difficult to comprehend and conceptualize the quickly changing characteristics of the surrounding world. Naturally, this makes it harder to respond appropriately to such changes. In the current conditions likelihood of making mistakes increases, even for the USA – the most "intellectualized" power, the policies of which are formed to a certain extent in a substrate consisting of a multitude of high-class *think tanks*, universities and scientific centers. In this context it is understandable that in their studies the US military experts emphasize the importance of strengthening the government institutions[1]. However, in some specific cases collisions of a different nature may take place; for instance, strengthening of the national military-industrial complex may lead to creation of so-called "states within a state" [8, p. 196].

The combination of all these factors leads to crises felt not only in economy, but also in all areas of public and international life. Understandably, today one may often come across eschatological interpretations of the processes occurring around the world. All of this is most vividly and dramatically exhibited in the Middle East developments.

"Clear skies over the whole Middle East"

It appears that the multitude of motives and final objectives is a characteristic trait of processes in the Middle East. If all known publications on this issue are to be summarized based on the dominant attributes, then the following versions will emerge, that in no way contradict to each other, but rather are mutually supplemental.

The version of "Arab spring". The main thesis of this version is that socio-economic, demographic, ethnic and religious/confessional

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[1] http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2008/joe2008_jfcom.htm.

problems accumulated into a critical mass in the countries of the region. This resulted in mass protests with demands of reforms, modernization and democratization in accordance with the modern notions.

There is no doubt that in the Middle East problems were more than abundant. This issue has been discussed in many fundamental works[1], and yet another proof of it is the *Revolting Index*[2], where among the top 16 countries five are Arab states. Yet nothing special happened to date in many other countries, which are a lot more "advanced" in revolutionary sense according to the same rating list. Perhaps, the Arab societies would have selected the evolutionary development path if these objective domestic circumstances were not aggravated by some external factors, such as launching the known technologies of color revolutions, this time with an accentuation on "Friday prayers". Organizations like April 6 Youth Movement and the one with "Kefaya" (Enough!) moniker (remember "Kmara" in Georgia) played an important role in this. In addition, the protest movement made use of such effective tools of informational operations as social media and blogosphere[3]. For instance, already in June 2010 Wael Ghonim, Head of *Google Middle East and North Africa* opened an anti-Mubarak page in *Facebook*, where daily visits at some point reached half a million. It cannot be ruled out that in this particular case action came not so much from the USA and its allies, but from independently operating "democratizing" NGOs together with giant media, which enthusiastically

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[1] See, for example, the recently published digest «Ближний Восток, Арабское пробуждение и Россия: что дальше?». Сборник статей/Отв. редакторы: *В.В. Наумкин, В.В. Попов, В.А. Кузнецов*/ИВ РАН; Факультет мировой политики и ИСАА МГУ им. М.В. Ломоносова. - М.: ИВ РАН, 2012..

[2] http://blogs.wsj.com/source/2011/02/25/introducing-the-revolting-index/?KEYWORDS=azerbaijan.

[3] *Арутюнян Г., Гриняев С. ,* Революции оптом: достраивание нового миропорядка и сценарии глобального управления. http://noravank.am/rus/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=5617.

commented on the events and in every possible way encouraged Tahrir Square rally participants.

A conclusion can be made from all of this that it is hard to imagine a revolutionary movement without objective prerequisites, but in the modern world it is equally hard to imagine mass public movements without external resource contributions, whether from states or new entities of the multipolar order. That is not to mention direct military interventions, such as in the case with Libya. But this brings us closer to the version of geopolitical motives in these events.

The version of "Geopolitics". According to this approach the revolutionary movements were not necessarily initiated for modernization of Arab countries and their integration in the global community (as in fact, just the opposite thing happened), but for achieving certain geopolitical objectives. Such statement of issue is logical and not too original, because at least in the last decades (or by some opinions – in the last hundred years) externally instigated revolutions pursued exactly such objectives. However, previously these final goals were relatively clear and hence, needed no special deciphering. In case of the processes in the Arab world the plot is much more complicated, especially given the prior history of the issue and specifically the American intervention in Iraq in 2003.

To get better insights into all of this, we shall try to assess some intermediate results of the so-called Middle Eastern turbulence.

"The scenery after spring"

Today it can be stated that the developments initiated in the Arab world have yet a long way to go: as some well-known ideologists dreamt in the beginning of the 21st century, the revolution in Egypt becomes per-

manent, and confrontation between Islamists and their opponents has spread even into Turkey that had been considered a stable country. Syria has to be reviewed separately, as war there entered its third year, and we shall return to this issue later. Today one may summarize some preliminary outcomes. Apart from somewhat different Tunisia, where processes occur in a relatively soft manner, the overall result for the countries of the region is their "destatization"[1]. For instance, Libya used to have a certain degree of political influence and economic development, and now it has actually turned from a state into a "territory" with energy reserves and groups of population clashing with each other. Characteristically, after the final act of war, i.e. Gaddafi's murder, Libya (or rather, "former Libya", as dubbed by some commentators) all of a sudden fell into the "grey zone" of the world media, and even terrorist attacks on diplomats just slightly enliven this country's spot in the information space.

Egypt, which is considered the leader of Arab world, is now ruled by in principle illegitimate "junta", while the Muslim Brothers who won the election, along with supportive Salafis try to restore ousted Morsi to presidency. Regardless of the outcome of this standoff, the country's society has been split and degraded, perhaps irreversibly: the crime rates skyrocketed (e.g. over the last 12 months the number of robberies increased by 350%). Quite naturally, the economy plummeted, too: apart from bare figures of IMF and other international organizations, what speaks volumes is the fact that since 2011 4500 plants were closed down and 25% of population fell below the poverty line (by Egyptian standards) [9]. This combination of problems practically deprives Egypt of any development prospects, at least for the near future.

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[1] *Harutyunyan, G.,* New Middle East: Reality and Prospects.
http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6353.

Regardless of the mechanisms applied, Iraq was pushed into a status of a "territory" even earlier. After the American invasion the country is split along ethnic and confessional lines, the government system practically does not function, while inter-confessional clashes and terrorist attacks occur routinely. Thus, development prospects for Iraq are as dubious as those for Libya and Egypt.

There is another commonality in the region. In Iraq, for instance, after the reform of the state governance system the government is led by representatives of the Shia majority, who do not concur with the American policies on Syria, but rather have a largely pro-Iranian stance. Situation was almost the same in Egypt, where no full collaboration was achieved between the USA and Muslim Brothers who took the power (that is despite the American "track record" of ex-President Morsi, who at some point used to work in the USA). Judging from the suspension of military aircrafts supply, things did not work out well with the Egyptian military either, who are in charge now. If any common pattern is to be observed among the "new governments", then it is only the "re-Islamization" of the region, perhaps inspired by somewhat outdated ideas of the *RAND Corporation* on "moderate Islamism" described in the project *Building Moderate Muslim Network*[1].

So it turns out that the traditionally main goal of the externally inspired revolutions or direct interventions, i.e. forming loyal governments (as in cases with Ukraine, Georgia or Afghanistan), was not achieved. It follows that replacing the ruling regimes with "own cadres" was not the main motive of what was happening. One may not rule out previously mentioned assumption about independent actions of NGOs, mass media or "states within a state", while the US administration had

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[1] http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs /2007/RAND_MG%&$.pdf.

to face the fait accompli. But rather, the actions of these NGOs and/or "states within a state" emphasize the complicated structure of the concept of "national interest" in modern world, particularly in America.

In this context, especially given the developments around Syria and Iran, one of the main motives for transformation of the region's countries could have been ensuring the security of the "number 1" ally Israel. Obviously, no matter how warlike is the governments' rhetoric, if their countries are in condition of collapse, they could pose no threat to the Jewish state that has a successful track record of fighting terrorist groups. However, this is true only in the short term, since further evolution of the existing situation is not all that unequivocal and we shall return to this issue later.

Full implementation of this "regional scenario" is currently under a big question mark. The mechanism of triggering an inner turmoil, or if that is not enough, then staging a small military campaign to "save the opposition from physical extermination" that ultimately results in a country degrading in all senses, did not work in Syria. It is the third year that a hard-fought war rages in this country, with yet unknown outcome[1].

"The Multipolar War I"

At the initial phases the processes in the Middle East kind of followed the rules of monopole world. Even occupation of Iraq or military intervention in Libya did not encounter serious opposition, as the international community has already gotten used to disapproving comments from leaders of some countries (including those of NATO member countries) or rather devalued UN resolutions. Situation changed during developments in Syria, where:

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[1] *Harutyunyan G.,* War in Syria: Probable Scenarios
http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6769.

- Relying on multiethnic population overwhelmingly loyal to the authorities (note that Syria was not even included in the above mentioned *Revolting Index* list), the government of Bashar al-Assad exercised political will and started rigorously suppressing the armed mercenaries, the actions of which targeted not only government, but also peaceful population and religious/ confessional minorities.

- Mercenaries come to Syria (according to some estimates less than 20% of the militants are Syrians) from the countries of the region and even CIS (particularly from Azerbaijan, North Caucasus and Central Asia). These include various terrorist groups, among which Al Qaida and Jabhat al-Nusra stand out. The militants receive arms and materiel from the USA, France and UK. Support of the militants is particularly considerable from the countries of the region, first of all Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

- The events in Iran's important ally Syria had a clear anti-Iranian orientation from the very beginning and were perceived as "force supplement" to the economic sanctions against Iran. Naturally, Iranian government provided real military support to Syria (both military hardware and volunteers from elite troops). Remarkably, Syria receives support also from immediate neighbors: Iraq (Iraqi Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr's militia) and Lebanon's Hezbollah (from areas under Hezbollah control).

- Capabilities of Syria-Iran tandem enabled Russia and China to more persistently defend their national interests, and hence, their pro-Syrian stances in the international arena. And this is not only about diplomacy: Russia and Syria assist Syria both economically and with military hardware supply (especially Russian-made, as in

a recent case of agreement to supply $4-5 billion worth of aircrafts and missiles).

Thus, a rather large number of countries and religious, militant and terrorist structures related to (and sometimes not so related to) these countries were involved in the events around Syria. The current conflict possesses all attributes of Cold War era local conflicts: the countries widely use all possible diplomatic, military, informational/psychological[1], economic and terroristic leverages. The intelligence services are particularly active in Syria, implementing their specific information/diversion functions: there are numerous media reports about participation of Turkish, French, British special forces and Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the military operations.

All of this prompts that the Syrian crisis has gained a status of a "global" one. An important element of the Syrian war is that first time ever after the Cold War interests of Russia and NATO clashed in a 'hot war" outside CIS. In some aspects reminiscent of the Vietnam War, this conflict can be called the "Multipolar War I". The following has to be noted in this respect.

Although the military strength of the USA considerably exceeds that of the other countries, the political and economic capabilities of this superpower are significantly restricted. This reality is adequately recognized by the USA and the American policy making structures strive to use this already "temporary" advantage to strengthen their positions to the best possible extent. However, this is understood also by the opponents of the USA: their "disobedience" is caused not just by the

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[1] See, for example: *Акопян А.,* Приемы и способы информационно-психологического воздействия в информационном противоборстве воюющих сторон в Сирии. Центр стратегических оценок и прогнозов. – М.: 2013. http://www.csef.ru/files/csef/articles/4445/4445.pdf

philosophy of the multipolar world order, but also by specific calculations. The American project of turning the "New Middle East" into a "turbulent territory" not only is intended to deprive Russia and China of military/political and economic leverages in one of the critically important regions, but also poses a threat of "infecting" these two nations. Hence, their counteraction to such plans is likely to be based on critical necessity. At the same time, Russia-China-Iran relations have not grown yet into a large-scale military/political cooperation. In this sense, positions of the USA, Israel, their European and regional partners look much better, as over decades they have gained a rich experience of strategic partnership and a common political culture.

The list of above said factors playing important role in the Syrian conflict can be expanded. Such multitude of variables makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to predict outcomes of the war in Syria.

Apparently, the anti-Syrian bloc's assumption about a quick military victory turned out to be a delusion. In the military respect the government troops and supportive regional forces have overtaken the initiative and the mercenaries suffer significant defeats. After information became available that the terrorists have perpetrated cruel acts of violence on prisoners of war and peaceful population, the overall informational environment around Syria had changed, too.

There is no doubt that defeat in Syria will first of all disgrace the USA. With this in mind, idea-wise repeating the provocative Iraqi scenario President Obama accused the Syrian government in chemical attack and decided to carry out at least some "limited strikes" on Syria. It is rather hard to predict all repercussions of such a new development, especially given the possible involvement of Iran in military actions. Such war would definitely bring drastic changes to the regional (and

global) situation. However, regardless of various military scenarios, the main outcome of the Syrian war is that it became a catalyst in the process of shaping the multipolar world order and was kind of a wakeup call not only to Iran, Russia and China, but possibly to some other countries as well. If this wakeup call prompts Russia and China to come closer (a silhouette of such rapprochement is already observed to some extent), then it may put under a question mark the correctness of the big strategy of the USA and its allies. Yet this is not the only problem.

Some scenarios/predictions suggest[1] that the crisis phenomena in the current system of global governance may lead to fragmentation of the global space along the civilizational or other lines. The segments formed in this manner, i.e. associations of nations and peoples, strive to isolate themselves from the globalizing world with its rules. With the current realities and persistent trend of regional Islamization it is possible that development of the NME countries may take this direction. Needless to say, emergence of such a vast, ideologically radicalized Islamic world may result in creation of geopolitical ruptures and hence, higher likelihood for various conflicts in the style of the Clash of Civilizations theory. Of course, it cannot be ruled out that the final goal of the modern global political technologists was exactly the creation of such "fragment" next door to Russia and China. However, such structure with dominant anti-Western sentiments in its societies and relatively easy access to nuclear technologies would be extremely explosive and might result in dire consequence for the USA itself, not to mention its regional allies.

Meanwhile, apocalyptic scenarios happen not only in future. Today already a major humanitarian catastrophe is ongoing in the Middle East.

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[1] Global Governance 2025: At a Critical Juncture. National Intelligence Council, European Union Institute for Security Studies, September 2010,   http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/ Global_Governance_2025.pdf .

The News Ticker Genocide

Any attempt to accurately count casualties and refugees among the peaceful population of the Middle East is doomed to fail. Data provided by different sources (UN, UNICEF, statistical services of the region's countries, reputable organizations like *The Lancet, Costs of War Project, Business Survey, Associated Press, etc.)* often vary considerably. This is hardly surprising: amid the chaos reigning in the region human life is worth little and necessitates no special recordkeeping. However, having discarded some apparently exaggerated figures and sticking to near-minimal numbers, we shall try to get at least an approximate idea about the human dimension of the Middle Eastern processes for the countries where armed hostilities had taken place.

Table

Country	Refugees	Casualties
Iraq (since 2003)	2,400,000	1,000,000
Libya (since 2011)	600,000	20,000
Syria (since 2011)	2,000,000	100,000
Total	5,000,000	1,120,000

These impressive numbers are comparable to those of casualties among peaceful population of Vietnam (ca. 2 million people), though the difference is that in Indochina the war in a way was classic, with participation of regular (as well as other) troops, and also Americans used chemical weapons, carpet bombed settlements, etc. Conversely, in the Middle East extermination of people is mostly a result of actions by the natives of the region. It would not be entirely correct to describe these events as civil war, given the foreign intervention. There is some

evidence suggesting that in this case a somewhat unique form of genocide is taking place[1].

The UN convention defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."[2] This definition matches to what is happening in the Middle East. However, unlike the previous instances known from the history, such as the Genocide of Armenians in Turkey or Holocaust of Jews in Nazi Germany, it is problematic to identify the perpetrators of the committed crime. Perhaps the following paragraph of the convention should be used as basis: "Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part." If the external interference theory is taken as basis, it is possible that the designers of the current NME format initially did not intend causing mass extermination of people. However, sometimes it is useful to judge by the outcomes.

It is also characteristic that the new genocide has assumed a curious informational guise. When several innocent marathon runners and bystanders fall victim of a terrorist attack, it becomes a topic for global discussions. At the same time terrorist attacks are carried out on daily basis in Iraq and Syria, every day taking lives of hundreds, but in the informational dimension currently they appear only in news tickers.

September, 2013.

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[1] *Арутюнян Г.,* На Ближнем Востоке реализуется новая форма геноцида.
http://www.noravank.am/rus/articles/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=7121
[2] http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/260(III)

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