

## TOP THREE FLASHPOINTS

The U.S. appears vulnerable today due to the perception of uncertain leadership, an inability to effectively address the crippling national debt, and a desire for superficial diplomatic victories.

As of 2013-10-21

**By John Antal**

Greatest Danger to USA

1

Medium Danger to USA

2

Dangerous to USA

3

**FlashPoints** is a bi-monthly update on the most critical national security issues facing the United States. Author and military expert John Antal will provide you with insights and a quick synopsis of the top three flash points in the world at the time of each report. FlashPoints will list the greatest danger to the USA, and then list risks of medium and serious danger. Keep abreast of the latest impending international crisis by reviewing FlashPoints

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as of October 21, 2013



1. American Leadership

2. U.S. Debt Crisis

3. Iran and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation



## 1. American Leadership

### The Greatest National Security Threat is the lack of American Leadership

Comments on the lack of American Leadership in the past two weeks.

**"We govern either by leadership or crisis. If leadership is not there, then we govern by crisis. Clearly, this town has been governing by crisis after crisis after crisis... the greatest national security threat we face is our ability to govern."** Leon Panetta, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, October 14, 2013.

**"The U.S. has kept out of Syria, not because we suddenly became isolationist, but rather because Obama had not a clue about what he was doing..."** Victor Davis Hanson, October 15th, 2013.

**"There's not even one senior (Saudi Arabian) prince sympathizing with him (Obama) any more. They think he has lost his head."** Mustafa Alani, an Iraqi analyst at the Gulf Research Centre in Jeddah with close ties to the Saudi security establishment as reported by Reuters October 9, 2013.

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as of October 21, 2013





Jakarta Globe  
OCT 7, 2013



**'Weak, Waffling' America**

TIME Magazine puts out four different regional versions around the world - U.S.; Europe/Middle East/Africa; Asia; and the South Pacific. The cover of Putin appeared in all but the USA issues. The USA cover is to the left.



Leadership is a sacred trust and the art of influence. It is the ability to motivate, inspire and impel people to accomplish a mission.

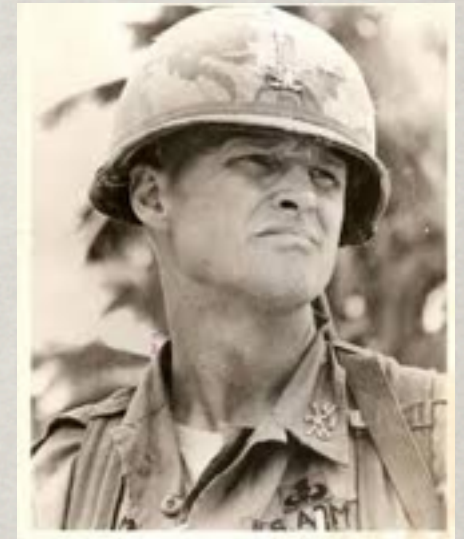






**"The price of greatness is responsibility."  
Winston Churchill**

**"Successful leaders create the future."  
General Hal Moore**



**"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one  
who does the greatest things. He is the one  
that gets the people to do the greatest things."  
President Ronald Reagan**





## 2. U.S. Debt Crisis

- **With a national debt at \$17 Trillion and climbing**, the inability of the United States Government to provide stability in a shaky world market is the 2d most dangerous threat to the U.S. It is second only to leadership. With clear-eyed leadership, the U.S. might reverse the course. Unfortunately, leadership seems lacking.
- The U.S. dollar is the anchor of the international monetary system as it is the “reserve currency” of the world. U.S. companies and individuals can purchase imports and borrow across borders more cheaply than persons in other nations because they don’t have to exchange their currency into dollars. Since our Federal Reserve Bank can print as many dollars as we want, the U.S. has powerful economic leverage over other countries. The world's need for dollars has allowed the United States government and U.S. citizens to borrow at lower costs, granting an estimated \$100 billion per year advantage. It has also allowed the U.S. to borrow beyond its means.
- The long-term stability of the dollar is being questioned by many other countries. The increasing U.S. debt raises the rhetoric around the world for a change in the reserve currency. If the U.S. continues on its current course of printing money and not addressing the debt, it risks losing the status as the world’s reserve currency.
- **China is calling for a "de-Americanized" world.** The Chinese economy grew at an annual rate of 7.8% in the third quarter, 2013. (Wall Street Journal, OCT 17, 2013). **"Politicians in Washington have done nothing substantial but postponing once again the final bankruptcy of global confidence in the U.S. financial system,"** government-run Chinese news agency Xinhua, Oct 18, 2013.

**"The relationship between military and economic strength is intimate and indivisible."**

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953.



**2. U.S. Debt Crisis (Continued)**



U.S. National Debt data As of October 19, 2013

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”  
— Ronald Reagan



### 3. Iran and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation

- The **geostrategic consequences of the U.S. Syrian Debacle (Obama's Red Line uncertainty) are reverberating across the globe.** Leadership matters. The loss of deterrence is very important, and deterrence is in the eye of the aggressor. If the aggressor believes you won't fight, that's when the aggressor attacks. A sense of deterrence is vital if you wish to avoid wars.
- With the Syrian Debacle only weeks old, the President is jumping at the chance to negotiate a deal with the new President of Iran, President Hassan Rouhani, to solve the issue of Iran's desire to achieve nuclear weapons. The Iranians have plenty of their own problems, but they sense they have the upper hand.
- The U.S. is enamored with the idea that now is the time to negotiate a deal. Compared to the outgoing president of Iran (the hawkish Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who publicly called for the destruction of Israel), the new president, Rouhani, looks like a dove we can work with. Maybe he is, but how we negotiate will make all the difference.
- Rouhani, who took office in August 3, 2013 and is considered a moderate, is second to Iran's leader and top policymaker, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the nuclear weapons program, is under the direct leadership of the Supreme Leader and some of its senior officers are opposed to Rouhani.
- The latest round of the P5+1 start nuclear talks (United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, and France, plus Germany talking with Iran) were held in Geneva last week (October 15-16, 2013). The Iranians presented a secret PowerPoint proposal that they called a potential breakthrough to the nuclear issue. The talks were reported as substantive by the press.

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as of October 21, 2013



### 3. Iran and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation (Continued)

- Senior Iranian negotiator Abbas Araqchi met with his US counterpart Wendy Sherman Tuesday evening, after a day of P5+1 negotiations in Geneva, the first direct nuclear talks between the Islamic republic and Washington since 2009. President Obama and President Rouhani had a telephone conversation on September 24, 2013, when Rouhani was in the U.S. to speak at the U.N.
- U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said that "since the technical conversations and discussions are ongoing, I don't think we'd characterize it as a breakthrough at this stage"
- **The Israelis think the Iranians are stalling for time and racing to develop a nuclear capability.** The Israelis have the most at stake, the Iranian threat is existential to Israel, and their concerns should not be disregarded. Israel called for the complete dismantling of the Iranian nuclear capability. "It would be an historic mistake not to take full advantage of the sanctions, by making concessions before ensuring the dismantling of Iran's nuclear weapons program," read a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet.
- "Well, like everyone else, I wish we could believe Rouhani's words, but we must focus on Iran's actions," Netanyahu said. "And it's the brazen contrast, this extraordinary contradiction, between Rouhani's words and Iran's actions that is so startling. Rouhani stood at this very podium last week and praised Iranian democracy — Iranian democracies. But the regime that he represents executes political dissidents by the hundreds and jails them by the thousands."

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as of October 21, 2013



### 3. Iran and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation (Continued)

- The U.S. must vigorously pursue a diplomatic solution, but the danger is that U.S. negotiators will deal with Rouhani in a non-substantive diplomatic dance to solve the nuclear issue, and will get a deal that looks like peace in our time (reference 1939 and Neville Chamberlain), while the IRGC races to consummate its nuclear ambitions.
- Abraham Sofaer, in his book *Taking On Iran: Strength, Diplomacy and the Iranian Threat* (Hoover Institution, 2013), recommends the following negotiating tactics that the U.S. would be wise to employ.
  1. Rhetorical restraint
  2. Treat them as a sovereign state
  3. Linkage - link talks to behavior. Stand up to them and oppose the IRGC
  4. Broad agenda. We must talk about more than nukes. Momentum was created by small steps
  5. Be ready for any forum. Secret or otherwise.

For more information on the ways to take on Iran see video at -- <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/312354-3&buy>

And for more on Deterrence see workshop paper -- <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/Workshop-on-Deterrence-in-a-Changed-World-20120516.pdf>

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If you want to raise your leadership awareness, read:

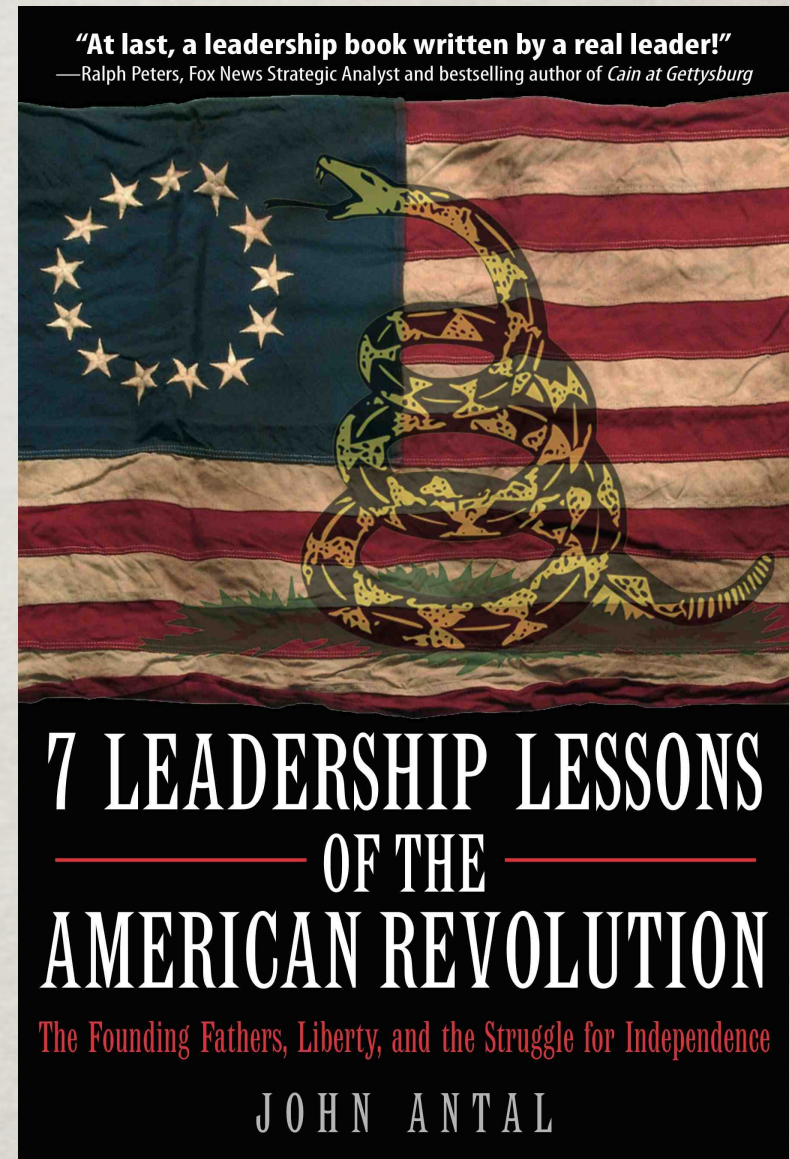
*7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution: The Founding Fathers, Liberty, and the Struggle for Independence*

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## Some Reviews of *7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution*

"At last, a leadership book written by a real leader! A fine historian, delightful writer and, vitally, a superb combat-arms officer revered by his peers in uniform, Colonel Antal has given us a book that's both a pleasure to read and eminently useful for those "in command" of organizations of any kind. A stimulating five-star work you'll keep on top of your desk!" **Ralph Peters, Fox News Strategic Analyst and author of *Cain at Gettysburg***

"If you want to learn about leadership, read this book. If you wish to learn about the leadership that forged the birth of the American Republic, read this book. If you want to be inspired, read this book. John Antal has captured seven timeless stories that will raise your leadership awareness and make you a better leader in peace or war, at home, at work or in your community." **Steven Pressfield, bestselling author of *Gates of Fire* and *The Warrior Ethos***

"John Antal's timely book, *7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution* is succinctly written and easily understood. On the surface, it demonstrates how those who risked all to create this republic used specific leadership principles to overcome tremendous challenges in that endeavor. These same techniques are just as valid in this century as in theirs. Along the way, Antal paints these revolutionaries as living, breathing human beings with high-risk tasks to accomplish. But Antal's study actually goes much farther – because behind his straightforward storytelling lies something much more important: an examination of what principles that leadership came from, and what principles it should serve. You'll come away with the feeling that the founders of this country weren't "historical figures" but living, breathing human beings with huge problems to solve, for which they used methods available to any one of us who cares to learn."

**Bradley Thompson, television writer and producer and the co-writer for the hit TV series' *Battlestar Galactica* and the second season of *Falling Skies*.**

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