

TOP THREE FLASHPOINTS

CRISIS: Crimea & Ukraine

The Limitations of “Soft Power”

As of 2014-03-16

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

as of March 16, 2014

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“Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln”

"War is a mere continuation of politics by other means."

Carl von Clausewitz, On War.

The Choice offered the citizens of Crimea:

Crimea Referendum March 16, 2014.

1. Are you in favor of Crimea becoming a constituent territory of the Russian Federation?



2. Are you in favor of restoring Crimea's 1992 constitution?



Mikhail Malyshev, the head of Crimea's referendum organizing commission, says the turnout was **82.71 per cent**. Full results could be here in the next few hours, with exit polls already showing that a **landslide 93 per cent voted for unification with Russia.**

as of March 16, 2014

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1. East Ukraine

2. Russian Crimea

3. US Strategy

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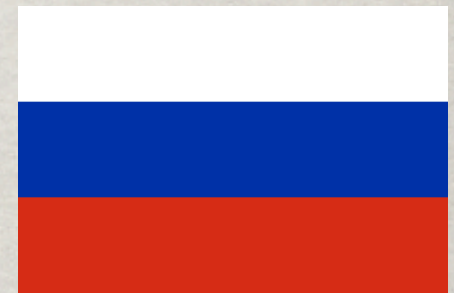
Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, has gained Crimea for Russia. This is an important step in Putin's goal of increasing the geo-political power of the Russian Federation.



Vladimir Putin

As Putin solidifies political, economic and military control of Crimea his next step will be in eastern Ukraine.

US power and leadership appears to be in decline. In particular the developments in Ukraine highlight the limitations of the US "soft power" strategy and "leading from behind."



Russian Federation Flag

Vladimir Putin

1. East Ukraine

Russia will require a land route to Crimea.

2. Russian Crimea

The world will watch how the US and Europe react.

3. US Strategy

Ukraine is a test of US Leadership and Strategy

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1. East Ukraine

Russia will require a land route to Crimea.

- a. When pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was deposed and fled on February 21, 2014, Putin was faced with a geo-political defeat.
- b. Putin was prepared and reacted, with stunning speed. He sent special troops into Crimea and positioned major combined arms forces on the Russian-Ukraine border.
- c. Putin also executed an internal information campaign to rally Russian public support. The Russian message is that Fascists are taking over in Ukraine and endangering Russians and Jews. Currently, Putin is experiencing his highest national approval rating in years.
- d. To annex Crimea, only 21 days after Yanukovych's ouster, Putin orchestrated a popular referendum to determine Crimea's future. The citizens of Crimea voted on March 15 to join Russia. Putin can annex Crimea if he wishes to do so.
- e. As Russia solidifies control over Crimea, the need for a land route from Russia to Crimea becomes vital. Eventually, Russia must secure a portion of eastern Ukraine that extends from the Russian border to the Crimean peninsula.
- f. The next few weeks will be dangerous. As tensions rise in east Ukraine, the possibilities of a shooting war increase.
- g. Ukraine's military cannot match the Russian Federation military deployed on their borders. (See: FlashPoints March 3, 2014)



"You just don't in the 21st Century behave in 19th century fashion by invading another country on completely trumped up pre-text," US Secretary of State, John Kerry told the CBS program "Face the Nation." March 2, 2014.

Analysis: Russia has gained control of Crimea. To maintain Crimea, Russia must have a land route to the Crimean peninsula. In the weeks ahead, the most likely Russian strategy will be to ferment issues in eastern Ukraine, creating the pretext for the further annexation of Ukrainian territory. Russian media will report that Russians living in east Ukraine, primarily in the cities of Kharkiv and Donetsk, are in danger from Ukrainian ultra-nationalist/ Fascist groups. Putin will then act to protect the lives of Russians in Ukraine.

2. Russian Crimea

The world will watch how the US and Europe react.



- a. The Russian “annexation” of Crimea challenges the US. The US signed the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 (see: http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Ukraine_Memorandum_on_Security_Assurances) guaranteeing the territorial integrity of Ukraine.
- b. The US and European response to Putin’s Crimea grab is to promise Ukraine economic and political support and the US has pledged to provide food to the Ukrainian Army.
- c. The US and the EU are threatening to freeze Russian bank accounts and implement economic sanctions against Russia. What sanctions and when have yet to be decided.

- d. A direct military response by the West to the Russian moves is neither prudent nor likely. The US and EU have ruled out military options to check the Russian military intervention.
- e. Opponents of the US are watching how we handle the situation in Crimea and if we will meet our treaty obligations. China has territorial ambitions for the Spratly Islands (contested by Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines), Tibet and Taiwan. If you want to see a new Cold War, create the situation where China believes it can take Taiwan with military force without significant counter-action from the USA.
- f. In addition, 1994 Budapest Memorandum was designed to insure Ukraine’s territorial integrity if it gave up the Soviet-era nuclear weapons that were on its soil after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Now that Russia has invaded Ukraine, this sends a message to other nuclear-possible nations that they should never surrender their nuclear weapons. **The future of nuclear non-proliferation**, a vital linch-pin in US foreign policy, could be in jeopardy.

Analysis: Russia views Crimea and Ukraine as a vital interest. A weak or divided US and Europe response to a Russian annexation of Crimea could embolden Putin’s ambitions and result in the further annexation of eastern Ukraine.

3. US Strategy

Ukraine is a test of US Leadership and Strategy.



A Statement of American Resolve:
"We hope that President Putin will recognize that none of what we are saying is meant as a threat... not meant in a personal way..." Secretary of State John Kerry.

- a. The Ukraine crisis is the most serious yet of the 21st Century and will set the tone in international relations for years to come.
- b. The US must avoid war over the Ukraine, but must also show leadership and solidarity with our EU allies and NATO.
- c. The US has threatened to respond to Putin's annexation of Crimea with sanctions and the freezing of Russian financial assets. This will have a limited effect on Russia.
- d. It will be difficult for Europe to sacrifice without strong US leadership. Russia is the EU's third largest trading partner and the EU buys a third of its natural gas from Russia. In addition, Russian trade with China is booming at \$89BN and 31 million tons of oil annually.
- e. The US position is weaker still in that the US Iran and Syrian strategy are largely in the hands of the Russians. We asked Putin for help with Iran and Syria and now he will leverage this to his advantage.
- f. The US must send a clear message to Putin. The argument is not a binary choice of peace verses war, but the application of the full spectrum of US national power and leadership to world affairs.
- g. Leadership matters. Weakness generates crisis. If the US fails to lead, important alliances will weaken further -- in particular NATO.
- h. **US leadership will be severely tested in the weeks ahead.**

"But there are serious limitations to the worth of the concept of soft power, especially as it might be thought of as an instrument of policy... Soft power cannot sensibly be regarded as a substantial alternative to hard military power. Familiarity with the concept alone encourages the fallacy that hard and soft power have roughly equivalent weight and utility. An illusion of broad policy choice is thus fostered, when in fact effective choices are severely constrained."

Collin S. Gray in "HARD POWER AND SOFT POWER: THE UTILITY OF MILITARY FORCE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY," Colin S. Gray, April 2011

Will Ukraine and Russia go to war over Crimea in the next seven days?

Ukraine vows to oppose the Russian annexation of Crimea. In Kiev, Ukraine's parliament, the Rada, declared the referendum on Crimea illegal and called for the mobilization of Ukraine's military.

"The situation is very dangerous. I'm not exaggerating. There is a real danger from threats of invasion of Ukrainian territory. We will reconvene on Monday at 10am." Oleksandr Turchinov, the Chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament and the acting President of Ukraine's three week old government.

On March 15, 2014, Russian troops were transported by helicopter beyond Kremlin-occupied Crimea to the village of Strilkove, in Kherson province, Ukraine. The Russian force eventually withdrew back to Crimea. This may be a test to see how Ukraine, the US and Europe will react. The Kherson region supplies Crimea with water and electricity and will be vital to Russian Crimea. See: <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/19559-zajava-mzs-ukrajini-u-zvjazku-z-visadkoju-15-bereznja-desantu-zbrojnih-sil-rf-v-khersonsykij-oblasti>

Analysis: The US and EU will not go to war over Ukraine and Putin knows this. The situation in Ukraine is evolving fast. Passions are high. Calculated acts of violence by pro-Russian or pro-Ukrainian forces could fan the flames of this already explosive situation. If violence gets out of control in eastern Ukraine, especially in Kharkiv and Donetsk, Putin may use this as a "just cause" to intervene decisively in Ukraine. Miscalculations between Ukraine and Russia could set off another European War.

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Ralph Peters, Fox News Strategic Analyst and author of
Cain at Gettysburg

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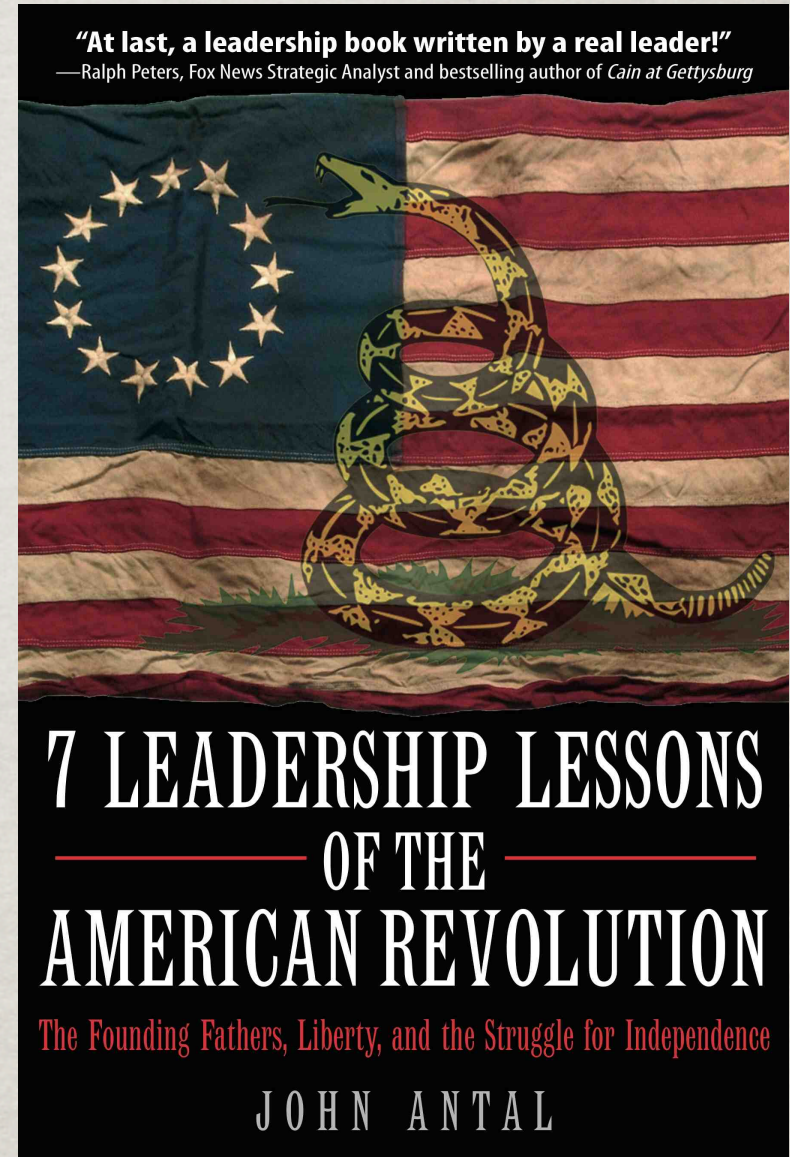
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FLASHPOINTS by John Antal, Colonel US Army (Retired)

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

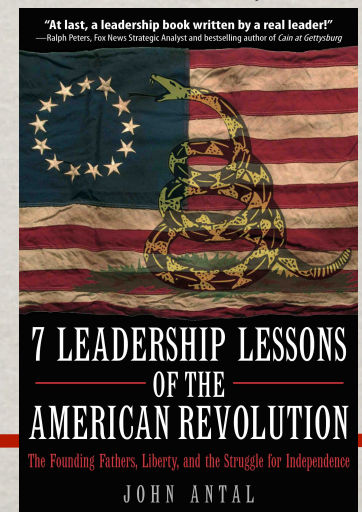
“If you want to learn about leadership, read this book. If you wish to learn about the leadership that forged the birth of the American Republic, read this book. If you want to be inspired, read this book. John Antal has captured seven timeless stories that will raise your leadership awareness and make 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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