

UKRAINE, GAZA and IRAQ

Second and Third Order Effects...

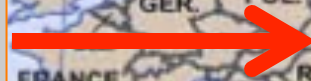
As of 2014-07-18

By John Antal

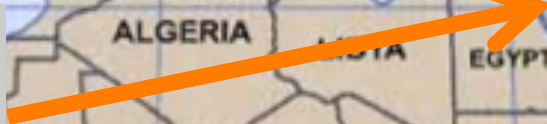


FlashPoints is a monthly update on the most critical national security issues facing the United States. Author and military expert John Antal will provide you with insights and a quick synopsis of the top three flash points in the world at the time of each report. FlashPoints will list the greatest danger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

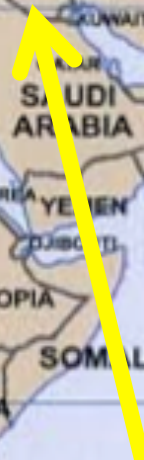
1. Ukraine



2. Gaza



3. Iraq



1. UKRAINE

A Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777, similar to the one shown in this photo, was shot down over Ukraine on July 17, 2014.



Image by Laurent ERRERA from L'Union, France [CC-BY-SA-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

1. UKRAINE

1. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, a Boeing 777-200ER, flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down at cruising altitude.
2. The plane crashed near the village of Grabovo, near Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine.
3. There are at least 298 people killed in the crash of Flight 17. There were possibly 10 British and 23 Americans killed, but as of this writing the number is still unknown.
4. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called the downing of the airliner an act of terrorism and called for an international investigation.
5. The Boeing 777 is capable of cruising at altitudes up to 43,100 feet. Anton Gerashenko, Ukrainian interior minister advisor, said the plane was flying over Ukrainian airspace at 33,000 feet (10,000 meters). This is well beyond the range of shoulder fired surface to air missiles. Only long range, sophisticated Air Defense weapons can shoot that high. The greatest probability is that the aircraft was shot down by a Buk SA-11 or SA-17 Surface to Air Missile System.
6. The Buk system is a complex mobile system that requires a radar tracking vehicle and a missile launch vehicle. Journalists from the Associated Press report they saw a launcher similar to the Buk missile system near the eastern Ukrainian town of Snizhne earlier Thursday.

1. UKRAINE

7. In recent weeks, the Ukrainians have lost several aircraft to Russian made surface to air missiles.

- An Ilyushin Il-76MD of the Ukrainian Air Force, a large 4 engine jet transport aircraft. was destroyed on June 14, 2014 combat in the pro-Russian rebel area near Lugansk International Airport and 49 Ukrainian soldiers and crew members were killed. The aircraft was brought down by a shoulder fired Igla Surface to Air Missile. The Ukrainians found 2 empty launch tubes near the Lugansk airport.
- On Monday, July 14, pro-Russian separatists downed a Ukrainian Anatov AN-26, and Ukraine reported that the aircraft was so high, 21,300 feet, that they believe the missile was fired from inside Russia.
- On Wednesday, July 16, pro-Russian separatists shot down a Ukrainian Sukhoi-25 jets near Grabovo in eastern Ukraine.

8. Moscow denies it is supporting the rebels, but the Russian GRU, the foreign military intelligence main directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, is heavily involved in the fighting in eastern Ukraine and has been supplying heavy equipment and reinforcements to the pro-Russian separatists. Films of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, Grad Rocket Launchers and military trucks crossing into Ukraine from Russia are available on the internet.

9. Most likely, but yet unconfirmed, pro-Russian separatists or Russian GRU mercenaries, crewing a Buk SA-11 missile battery, mistook Flight 17 for a Ukrainian IL-76 and shot it down with one missile.

2. GAZA

White House photo

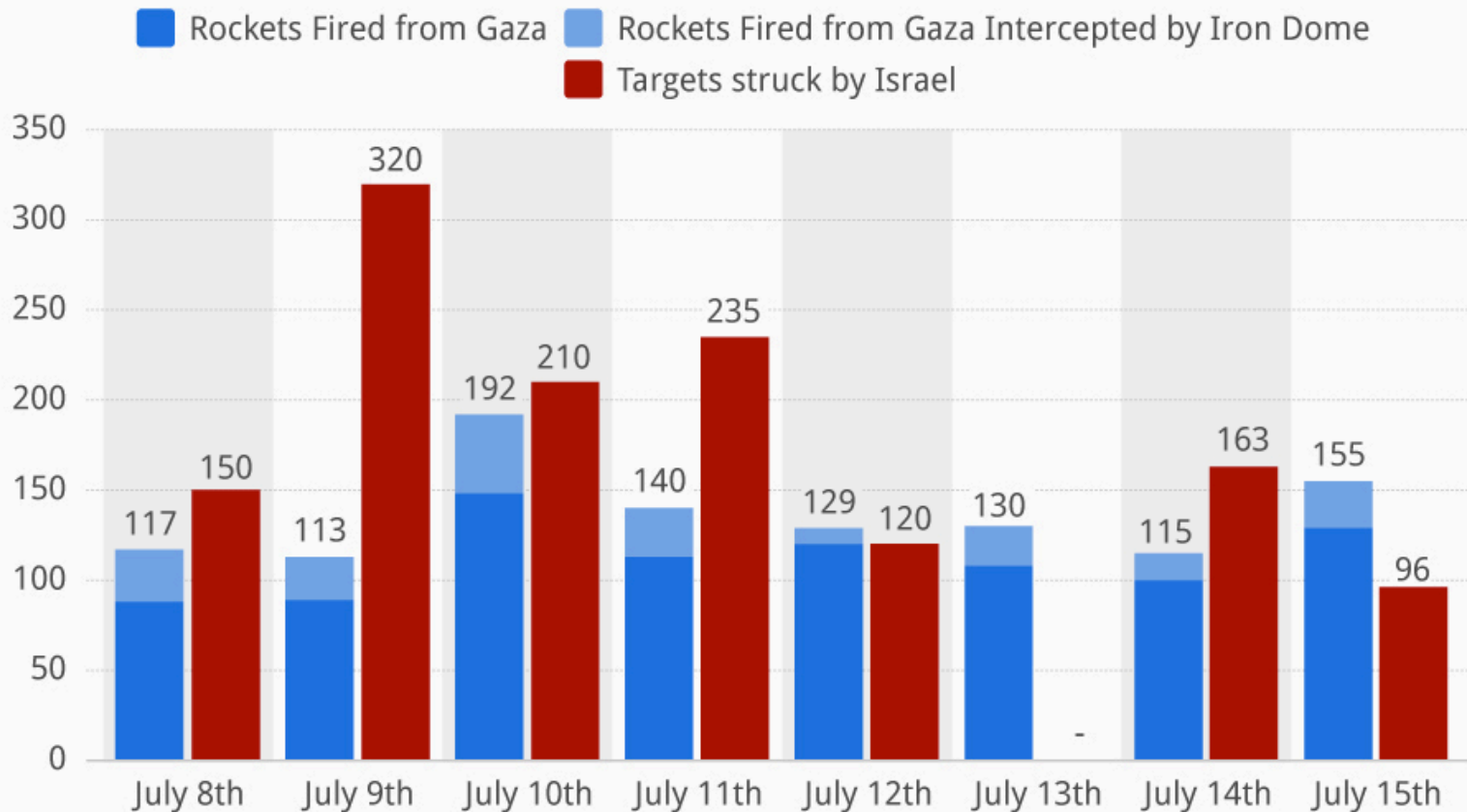
1. Gaza is a small strip of land in northwest Israel on the border of Egypt. Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It is also desperately poor.
2. Palestinian militants in Gaza have been launching mortar and rocket attacks against Israel for years. Nearly every month there is a rocket attack and often the attacks consist of multiple rockets. Rocket attacks picked up in volume in June 2014 and intensified in July 2014 when Palestinian militants launched hundreds of rockets each day against Israel.
3. In response to the rocket attacks, the Israeli's launched **Operation Protective Edge** on July 8, striking back with air, missile and artillery at Palestinian rocket launchers, crews and leadership.
4. On July 14, Egypt offered a ceasefire and Israel accepted the proposal, but Hamas refused to agree. The Palestinian militants responded on Wednesday, July 17, by launching 132 rockets against Israel.
5. After 10 days of rocket attacks by Palestinian militants and counterstrikes by Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu **ordered ground troops into Gaza** the night of July 17 and called up 18,000 more reservists.
6. Israelis and Palestinians are now fighting a desperate battle in underground tunnels and in the densely populated urban areas of Gaza.

2. GAZA

This chart from Statista shows why Israel had to launch a ground invasion. White House photo

Timeline of Attacks in Israel and Gaza

Overview of military attacks since July 8th 2014



@StatistaCharts Source: Israel Defence Forces



Source: by permission from Statista. <http://www.statista.com/chart/2463/timeline-of-attacks-in-israel-and-gaza/>

3. ISIS

1. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, abbreviated as ISIL or ISIS, and led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is consolidating its gains in Iraq, preparing to launch disruption attacks on Baghdad, and shifting forces to fight in Syria.
2. ISIS is euphoric over its victories in Iraq. Its conquest of largely Sunni Moslem areas in northeastern Syria and in Iraq has been extremely brutal in handling its enemies, killing many of the Shia Moslem Iraqi soldiers they captured.
3. ISIS now controls a large land area from northern Syria to Baghdad, Iraq.
4. ISIS has captured thousands of heavy weapons, vehicles and supplies from the fleeing Iraqi Army.
5. The Kurds, who oppose ISIS, report that ISIS has captured the Iraqi Army Muthanna Chemical Weapons facility on 8 July.
6. On July 5, 2014, al-Baghdadi declared himself a "caliph" and announced the creation of an "Islamic State," or Caliphate, in an open ceremony in the captured city of Mosul.
7. In a separate address, al-Baghdadi called on all true Moslems to join him and fight the West, democracy, and Jews, claiming they have "enslaved" Muslims. "So raise your ambitions, O soldiers of the Islamic State! For your brothers all over the world are waiting for your rescue, and are anticipating your brigades." His emotional appeal will resonate with many jihadist fighters across the globe. At some point, ISIS will want to "out-do" Osama Bin Laden and may strike the USA.



ISIS Flag

Analysis

As much as we wish it otherwise, more issues in history have been solved by steel than by discourse. Today, 300 innocent people died strapped to their seats as their plane was downed by a Russian made surface to air missile. Through incompetence or design, pro-Russian separatists fired a missile that is fanning the flames of war. Ukraine and Russia are on the brink.

As I write this, it is dawn in the Middle East and Israelis and Palestinians are battling in the cities of Gaza. In Iraq, ISIS is regrouping, moving artillery and rockets closer to Baghdad and preparing sleeper cells to launch a wave of terror bombings, suicide bombers and vehicle borne improvised explosives. Al-Baghdadi's appealed to jihadist fighters around the world to join him to fight the West, democracy and Jews.

Here at home, on the southern border of the United States with Mexico, thousands are crossing our border. No one knows if any of these people are gang members or terrorists and no one seems to be checking. If it is so easy to cross our border, how difficult will it be for an ISIS inspired terrorist to cross into the USA?

Analysis continued:

Ideals are noble. History is violent. To most Americans, Ukraine, Gaza and the ISIS Caliphate in Syria-Iraq seem far away and are viewed as someone else's problems. Each of these conflicts will have second and third order effects. The lesson of history is that we are all connected and that events in far-off places reverberate around the globe and may touch us here at home.

What can you do? Stay informed. Be prepared. Do your part to make your world better. Be thankful for what you have, and if you are religious, pray for peace.

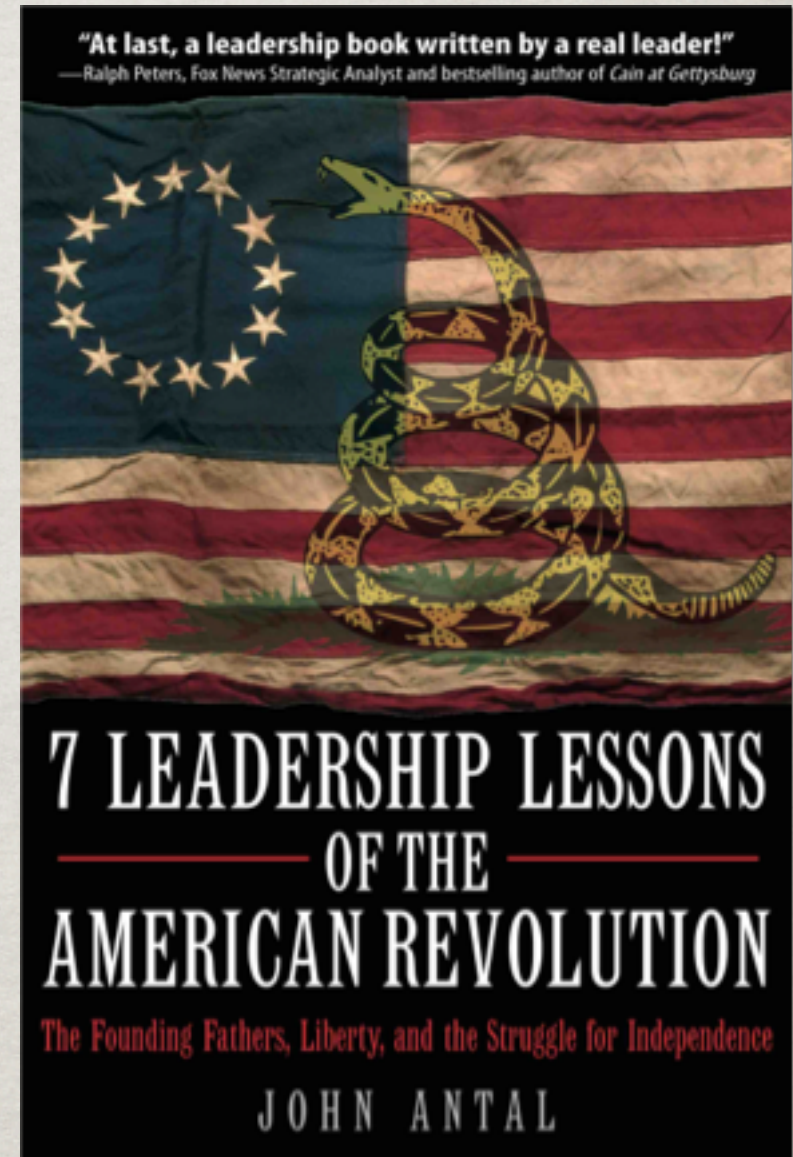
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If you want to raise your leadership awareness, read:
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Some more Reviews of 7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution

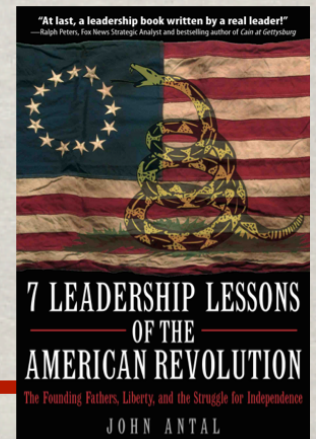
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“John Antal’s timely book, 7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution is succinctly written and easily understood. On the surface, it demonstrates how those who risked all to create this republic used specific leadership principles to overcome 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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