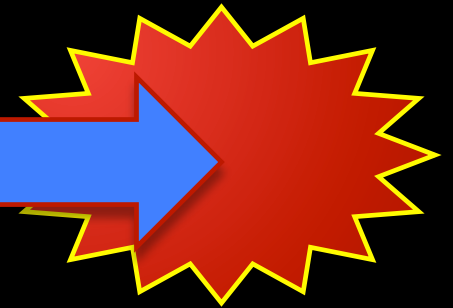


Special Edition

August 25, 2013

Flashpoints



Flashpoints

by John Antal

Intervention in Syria?

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What if?

***Will the USA intervene in
Syria in the next few
weeks?
2013***

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What are our military options in Syria?

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Ground Invasion?



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There are no clear sides with good guys and bad guys. The enemy is al Qaeda, Assad's forces and others. All of these groups wish us ill and would delight in causing heavy US casualties.

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We would have to commit our Army and Marines to a difficult urban battlefield.

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If we decide to go in with ground forces, we must go in big, or we will have little impact.



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If we deploy ground forces, then we would be fighting another prolonged conflict on another deadly Middle East battlefield..

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As we are already committed to the fight in Afghanistan, we have very few strategic ground reserves left to call upon....




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***We would have to call up large elements
of the National Guard***

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***And what
would we do
if the
opposition
launched
chemical
weapons
against our
troops?***

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The fact is that the U.S. does not have sufficient available ground forces to make a difference in Syria.



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Our only “ground option” is to send in Special Forces to enhance kinetic strikes.



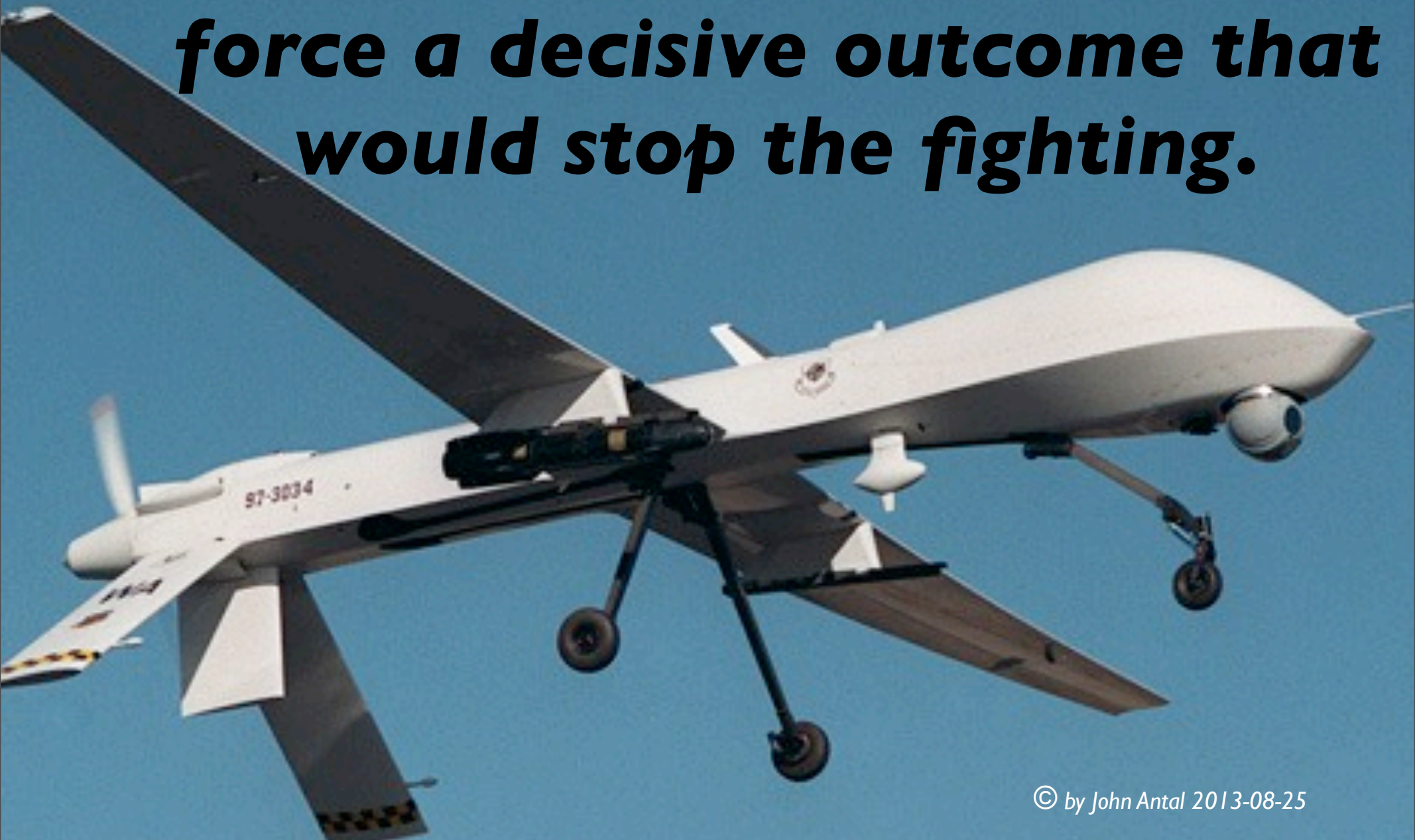
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We can make these kinetic strikes with Predator and Reaper drones (UAVs).




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***But these would only be
“symbolic” and not enough to
force a decisive outcome that
would stop the fighting.***



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A photograph capturing the launch of a cruise missile from a ship at night. The missile is seen ascending vertically, leaving a massive, billowing plume of white smoke and bright yellow-orange fire behind it. The ship's mast and radar equipment are visible in the lower right, partially obscured by the smoke. The background is a dark, clear night sky.

***Our navy can
launch a
barrage of
cruise missiles...***

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And we can launch air strikes...



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But there are few easy targets and, in targeting urban areas, we could kill many civilians with air and cruise missile attacks.



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If we attack with manned aircraft, we will lose some pilots as Syria has a robust air defense capability that was recently enhanced by Russia with the latest surface to air missiles systems.

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And what will our “frenemies” do? Will they support and encourage the Taliban and al-Aqeda to escalate the war in Afghanistan to precipitate a bloody U.S. withdrawal?



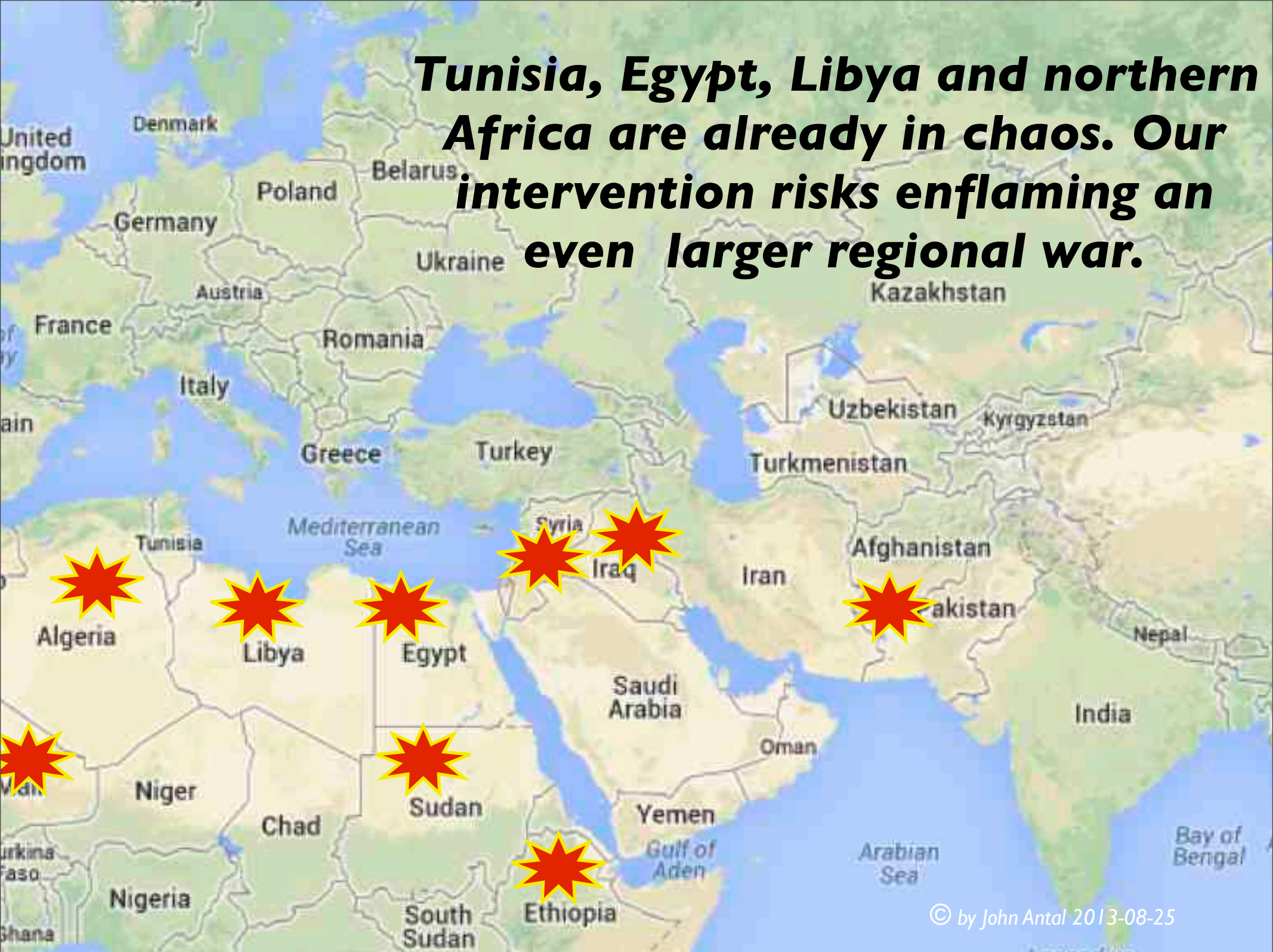
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Our enemies would like nothing more than to kill Americans and show how they beat the USA and drove us out of Afghanistan.



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Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and northern Africa are already in chaos. Our intervention risks enflaming an even larger regional war.



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Israel might be forced into the conflict.

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...and Jordan

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How will the Chinese and the Russians react to our intervention?


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Many things are hard, and few things are impossible...but Syria is not Libya.


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War in Syria would be very hard indeed. If we commit, we must fully commit. Half measures will fail. But full commitment is irresponsible and politically impossible.

A silhouette of a pilot wearing a helmet and goggles, looking out of a cockpit window. The background is a bright sunset or sunrise sky with wispy clouds. The silhouette of the aircraft's wing and tail is visible on the right side.

The only viable military response to the situation in Syria is a symbolic air, missile and “drone” attack OR a “decapitation” attack to kill Assad.

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***A symbolic
missile attack
will not end the
war and might
not change
anything....***

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**The
“decapitation”
attack puts
leaders on notice
that we will not
tolerate the use
of chemical-bio-
nuclear weapons
in modern war.**

Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad

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**...but a “clean”
decapitation attack is
very, very hard to do.
U.S. leaders disdain
assassinations and there
are difficult legal issues
to wrestle with.**



Muammar al-Gaddafi

*It took us 9 months to find Saddam Hussein... We
searched for Osama Bin Laden for a decade... Muammar
al-Gaddafi was killed by factions on the ground 8 months
after the UN intervention.*

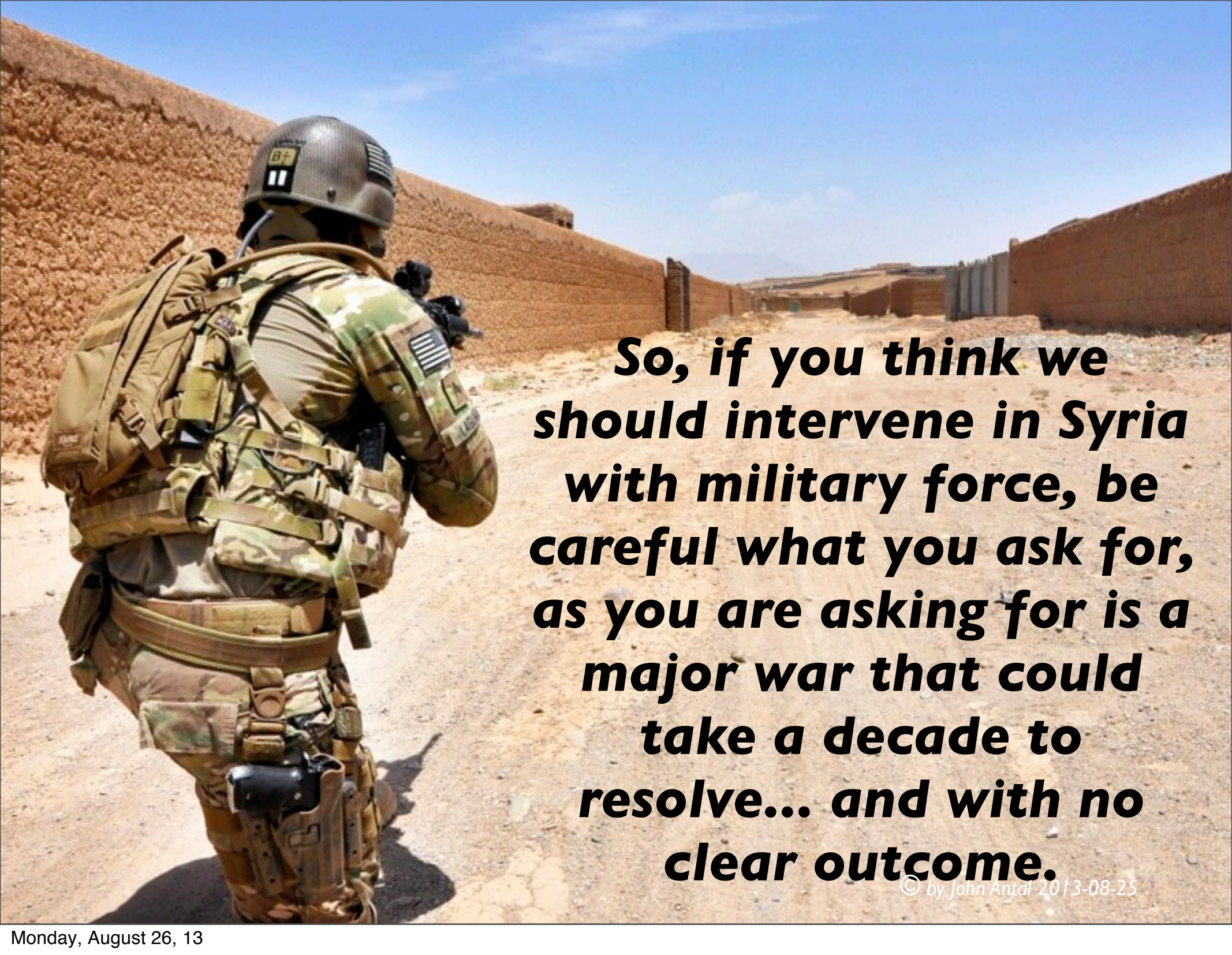
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There are limitations to power... even for the United States.

The Decapitation Dilemma

Which is more humane?
Targeting one man to
establish a deterrent or
killing hundreds or
thousands and with no
effect?

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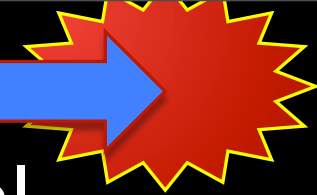


So, if you think we should intervene in Syria with military force, be careful what you ask for, as you are asking for is a major war that could take a decade to resolve... and with no clear outcome.

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What is the most likely scenario for a US attack on Syria?

1. We will attack with stand-off weapons (Cruise missiles launched from ships and JDAM bombs dropped from high altitude).
2. We will target Assad's military forces -- primarily his rocket launchers, aircraft and air defense.
3. What we hit in these "Clintonesque" attacks, we will destroy.
4. The result will be **indecisive**. It will be a **"FEEL GOOD"** attack with no effect to the fighting. It is a strategy with no objective.
4. An indecisive "Feel Good" attack will embolden Iran and the jihadis against the U.S. We will not be feared and RED LINES mean nothing.
5. It fuels support for Assad and will spark a larger, more bloody regional war, now with the U.S. supporting one side -- the one led by al-Qaeda.
6. The chances of greater U.S. involvement and loss raise dramatically.



Check out the New Book by John Antal

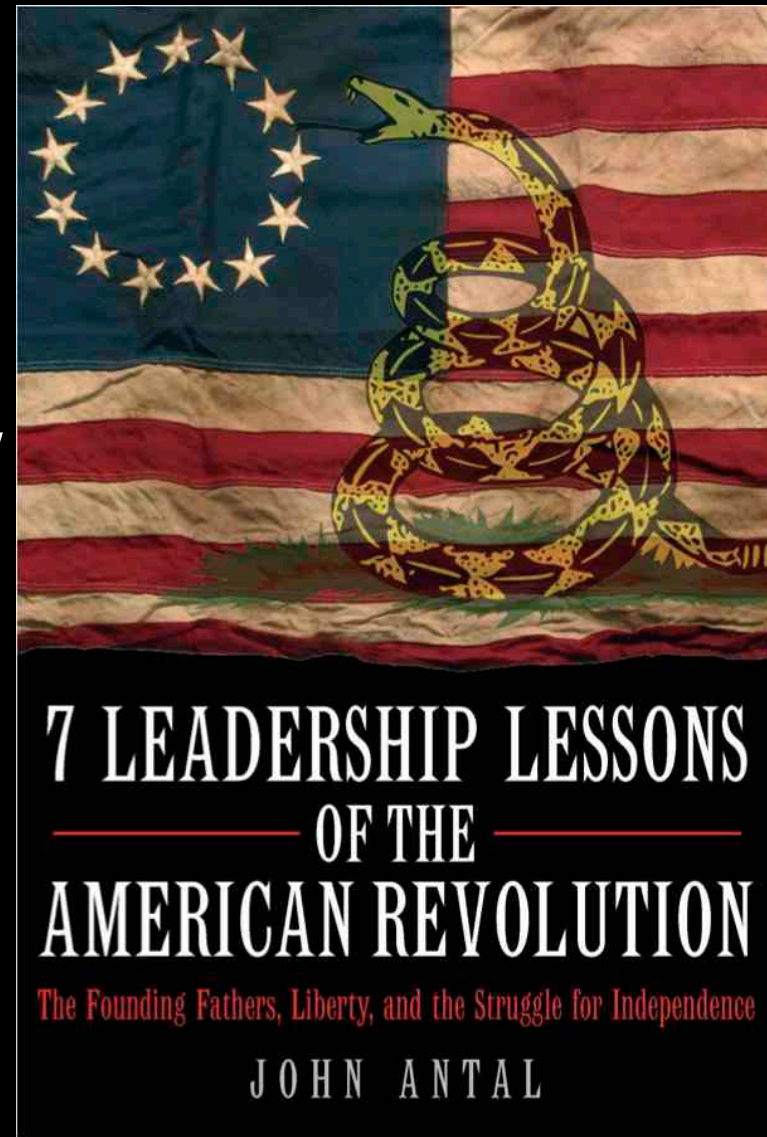
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