

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 flashpoints 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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Portents of things to come:

"I bring you good news. We are starting a new phase in our struggle with a plan we named `Breaking the walls,' and we remind you of your priority to free the Muslim prisoners." The leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ... [posted online summer of 2012]

al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) started with a prison break in 2006.

Top 3 Flashpoints



1 – al-Qaeda Rising

U.S. Closes 22 embassies across the middle east from Algeria to Bangladesh...

- Intelligence intercepts imply an imminent terrorist threat by al-Qaeda.
- The intelligence information is reported to be specific, but with mass closings across the Middle East it appears that we don't know exactly where or when an attack might occur.
- Based on these reports the U.S. State Department issued a worldwide travel alert for U.S. citizens and suspended operations in 21 Muslim countries.
- The "press reports" that al-Qaeda is "decimated and on the run" seem to be premature.
 - When the U.S. took no action during and after the September 2012 Benghazi attack, this sent a powerful message to al-Qaeda and its subgroups.
 - The attack on the U.S. Embassy facility on September 11, 2012 in Benghazi, Libya. killed US Ambassador Ambassador Stevens, Information Officer Sean Smith, and two embassy security personnel, former Navy Seals Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods.
 - No terrorists have been killed or captured for the Benghazi attack, in spite of Hillary Clinton's assertion on January 23, 2013: "We continue to hunt the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and are determined to bring them to justice."

What Are the Implications for the US?

- Not good.
- al-Qaeda appears to be resurgent, growing stronger in many areas of the Middle East and Africa, and is on the offensive.
- Intelligence intercepts point to a major al-Qaeda operation sometime soon, somewhere in the Middle East. If our reaction is like our "non-action" in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, this will embolden more attacks. Al-Qaeda seems determined not to be ignored.
- If al-Qaeda can create another Benghazi, possibly in Yemen where our "drone" attacks have been the most frequent, thousands may rally to al-Qaeda's cause.
- Even if al-Qaeda does not attack within the month, they can claim to have successfully disrupted diplomatic and intra-state operations and forced America to fear. Whether they strike or not, they have won by closing US embassies down. This will only embolden al-Qaeda and increase recruitment to the Jihadi cause.
- The U.S. is on the defensive. Other than drone strikes, we seem to have no strategy to deal with the turmoil in the Middle East. We have abandoned Iraq and are hastily pulling out of Afghanistan. We appear to be on the run.
- From the Jihadist's perspective, they smell blood in the water. Our enemies no longer fear us. Today it looks as if **"when al-Qaeda growls, American cowers."**

Flashpoints 2013-08-04

What Should the U.S. Do?

• ANTAL's OPINION:

- Fear is a reaction, courage is a decision. We are not taking the decision to act with courage. Leadership matters.
- We are not on the hunt. It takes more than drone attacks to win a war -- in fact, we do not even want to think we are at war as this an "inconvenient truth." As a result, we are ignoring the threat. Our military is still fighting every day in Afghanistan and elsewhere, but our politicians and the average citizen do not pay attention and many do not care. This is a lack of leadership.
- Our leaders should take a page from Texas history, harden our embassies, reinforce our security forces, work closely with our allies and declare "Come and take them!" If they did this, Americans would rally to such leadership. Today, we are desperately short of real leaders.
- If we don't show leadership and get back on the offensive, **THEY** will come for us.

Flashpoints 2013-08-04



Interpol reported on August 4, 2013, that al-Qaeda was suspected to be involved in some of the **jailbreaks in nine countries**, including Pakistan, to free captured terrorists.

South Atlantic Ocean



2 – The Great Escape – Thousands of veteran terrorists are freed in coordinated attacks:

- April 12, 2012 Taliban fighters stormed a prison in Bannu, northwestern Pakistan, freeing 384 terrorists.
- July 23, 2013 al-Qaeda teams conducted a sophisticated combined arms attack on two Iraqi prisons (Abu Ghraib and Taji Prisons) and freed 500 terrorists including some senior terrorist leaders.
- July 26, 2013 about 1,200 inmates are freed in a prison break in Benghazi, Libya.
- July 30, 2013 Taliban gunmen wearing police uniforms attacked the largest jail, Dera Ismail Khanin, located in a northwestern Pakistan, freeing 250 terrorists from the prison in.

Interpol Report AUG 4, 2013: "With suspected al-Qaeda involvement in several of the breakouts, which led to the escape of hundreds of terrorists and other criminals, INTERPOL requests the Organization's 190 member countries' assistance in order to determine whether any of these recent events are coordinated or linked."

QUESTIONs:

Is this an indication of al-Qaeda on the run, or rather, that al-Qaeda is back and getting stronger?

How quickly can al-Qaeda use these veteran terrorists to attack US interests?



Flashpoints

3 – Syrian Civil War

The war continues to rage and al-Qaeda influence grows

- When the US pulled out of Iraq in 2011, al-Qaeda in Iraq sent its top leaders to form the Al-Nusra Front in Syria.
- The al-Qaeda presence in Syria is growing and estimated at at least 6,000 fighters. Most are from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Libya, and Tunisia. At least 1,000 are reported to be from Chechnya.
- The war rages on. "Syria has ceased to exist...Syria no longer functions as a single all-encompassing unitarily-governed state." Charles Lister, an analyst at IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center.
- Syria has broken up into three areas:
 - **Assad Regime** controls a strip from the southern Jordanian border, to the capital Damascus and up to the Mediterranean coast.
 - Sunni Muslim rebels, mostly al-Qaeda, control parts of Idlib and Aleppo provinces in the north and stretches along the Euphrates river to the porous Iraqi border in the east.
 - Kurdish rebels control the far northeastern corner.

QUESTION: Is Syria already a safe-haven for al-Qaeda?

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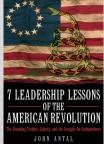
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JOHN ANTAL

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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.



7 Leadership Lessons of the American Revolution by John Antal

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