

TOP THREE FLASHPOINTS

Peace in our time...

As of 2013-12-01

By John Antal

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|------------------------|---|
| 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 December 1, 2013

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1. Iran Legitimized

2. North Korea Encouraged



3. China Flexing

as of December 1, 2013

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1. Iran Legitimized

- a. On November 23, 2013 The P5+1 negotiators (U.S., U.K., France, Russia, China, plus Germany) in Geneva, Switzerland reached a **conditional agreement with Iran to make an agreement** in 6 months. In this interim agreement, Iran agreed to halt enrichment above 5 percent, neutralize its stockpile that is near-20 percent and to allow international inspections of its nuclear program. The U.S. and its partners agreed to drop some sanctions, amounting to about \$6B to \$7B in relief to Iran -- the Iranians say it is more like \$15B.
- b. "Today, the United States -- together with our close allies and partners -- took an **important first step toward a comprehensive solution** that addresses our concerns with the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear program...Today, that diplomacy opened up a new path toward a world that is more secure — a future in which we can verify that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful and that it cannot build a nuclear weapon," President Obama, November 24, 2013.
- c. "**What was achieved last night in Geneva is not a historic agreement. It was a historic mistake.** Today the world become a much more dangerous place, because the most dangerous regime in the world took a significant step towards getting the most dangerous weapon in the world." ..."It's not made the world a safer place. Like the agreement with North Korea in 2005, this agreement has made the world a much more dangerous place." Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu, November 24, 2013.
- d. "**Iran will decide** the level of enrichment according to its needs for different purposes. Only details of the enrichment activities are negotiable... We have always said we will not allow anyone to determine our needs. But we are prepared to negotiate about it." Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif, November 29, 2013, IRNA news agency.

1. Iran Legitimized (continued)

e. Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, “warmly welcomes the interim agreement that has been reached in Geneva this night regarding the nuclear program of Iran.” SG/SM/15491 DC/3468, Nov. 23, 2013.

f. “As long as Iran maintains an enrichment facility, it will have the ability to throw out the inspectors and make material for weapons. The goal is to increase the amount of time it would take Iran to do so.” NOV 26,2013, Lisbeth Gronlund, Union of Concerned Scientists

g. **"It's kind of like Jimmy Carter all over again,"** said former Iranian hostage Clair Cortland Barnes, who was held by Iran for 444 days during the 1979-80 Hostage Crisis. He sees the negotiations now as no more effective than they were in 1979 and 1980, when he and others languished, facing mock executions and other torments. The hostage crisis began in November of 1979 when militants stormed the US Embassy in Tehran and seized its occupants. <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/hostages-react-iran-nuclear-deal-article-1.1529451>



Iranians burn US Flags in Teheran on the 2013 anniversary of the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran. Photos from 1979 are shown to the right.



“We should never negotiate out of fear, but we should never fear to negotiate”
John F. Kennedy, January 20, 1961.

“You cannot negotiate with people who say what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable.” John F. Kennedy, The Berlin Crisis July 25, 1961

“We have lost the courage to see things as they are.” F. L. Lucas, of King's College, Cambridge, October 4, 1938, in a letter responding to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s “peace in our time” Munich Agreement.

1. Iran Legitimized -- Analysis by John Antal

a. **There are several problems with the interim deal with Iran:**

- It legitimizes Iran's path to nuclear weapons by rewarding their non-compliance with UN sanctions.
- It lifts economic pressure on Iran just when economic pressures were having an impact.
- It shifts US strategy in the region without the concurrence of our Allies (specifically Israel and Saudi Arabia), weakening the bonds between existing strategic partners.
- It does nothing to curb Iranian involvement in Syria, Lebanon or Afghanistan.
- It does not address US citizens in prison in Iran. No Americans were released by the deal. In the past several years of secret talks, the US has released 4 Iranians to Iran. An Iranian, Mojtaba Atarodi, who was arrested in California for attempting to acquire equipment for Iran's military-nuclear programs, was released by the US in April as part of these secret back channel talks.

b. **If the deal is false, if this is a Munich moment, then Iran will renege on its agreement in 6 months.** With sanctions already loosened, sanctions will be extremely difficult for the US to reinstate. Iran will then have nuclear weapons whenever they wish to develop the capacity. Some experts put this at weeks-to-months, most say less than a year. Once the Iranians have an operational nuclear capability, they will announce their power, or keep it unannounced but implied, depending on the leverage they require. The Iranians understand that no one in the West will stop them.

c. Israel knows this. Israel will most likely wait and watch until the 6 month window of the "agreement to agree" is past, then Israel must decide to act or not. For Israel, this is not a political decision: it is an existential one. **The next 6 months will be one of intense preparation and planning for Israel.**

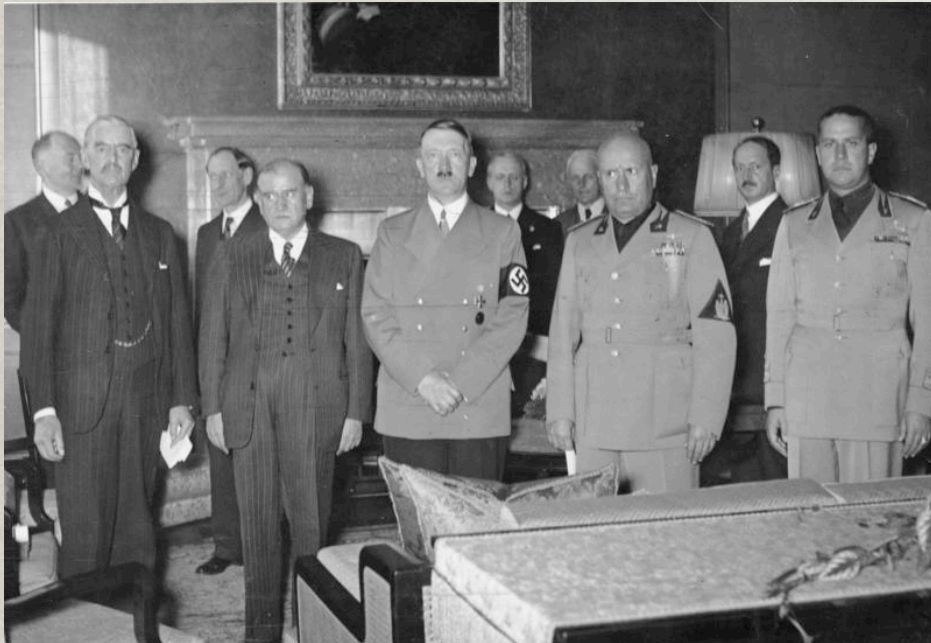
d. As Iran becomes nuclear capable, the US will change its strategy towards Iran to **containment**. As trust in the United States is squandered, US allies will act in their own interests and seek their own means of deterrence.

e. **Saudi Arabia will secure nuclear weapons**, probably from Pakistan, to counter the Iranian (Shia) threat. Proliferation of conventional and nuclear weapons will flourish in the Middle East. There will be a significant arms race (above current levels).

f. In the next 5-10 years the **possibilities of a nuclear exchange between nuclear armed powers in the Middle East** and the **possibility of a nuclear threat to the US mainland (primarily from terrorists)** will dramatically increase once Iran has an operational nuclear capability.

1. Iran Legitimized (continued) - What was the Munich agreement?

Historical Analysis: On September 29, and at about 1:30am on September 30, 1938, Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, Benito Mussolini and Édouard Daladier signed the Munich Agreement. The agreement decided the fate of large areas of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government was not part of these talks. Realizing the hopelessness of fighting the Nazis alone, Czechoslovakia reluctantly capitulated (September 30) and agreed to abide by the agreement. On September 30, Chamberlain returned to London and delivered his infamous "peace for our time" speech. The key leaders of the German army did not want invade Czechoslovakia, believing it would start a larger war that Germany could not win. When Chamberlain and Daladier gave Hitler Czechoslovakia, the German generals were unable to press their case against Hitler's ambitions and the Munich Agreement preserved Hitler in power. **Are we watching history repeating itself? Is this the path that leads to Iran operationalizing nuclear weapons?**



In the September 7, 2013, at the height of the Syrian crisis, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said "this is our Munich moment" in which the West should not remain "silent spectators to slaughter," an invocation to other countries to support a U.S. led strike against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Was Kerry Wrong? Was our Munich moment actually on November 23, 2013 when the P5+1 negotiators signed the deal with Iran?

1. Iran Legitimized (continued) -- If Churchill were here...



If Churchill were alive today he might say....

"We have suffered a total and unmitigated defeat ... you will find that in a period of time which may be measured by years, but may be measured by months, *Iran will produce nuclear weapons*. We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude ... we have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel far with us along our road ... we have passed an awful milestone in our history, when the whole equilibrium of the *Middle East* has been deranged, and that the terrible words have for the time being been pronounced against the Western democracies: "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting". And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigor, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time." Winston Churchill, if he were alive today (adapted from Churchill's denouncement of the Munich Agreement October 2, 1938, with only two edits that are shown in italics)

2. North Korea (NK) Encouraged

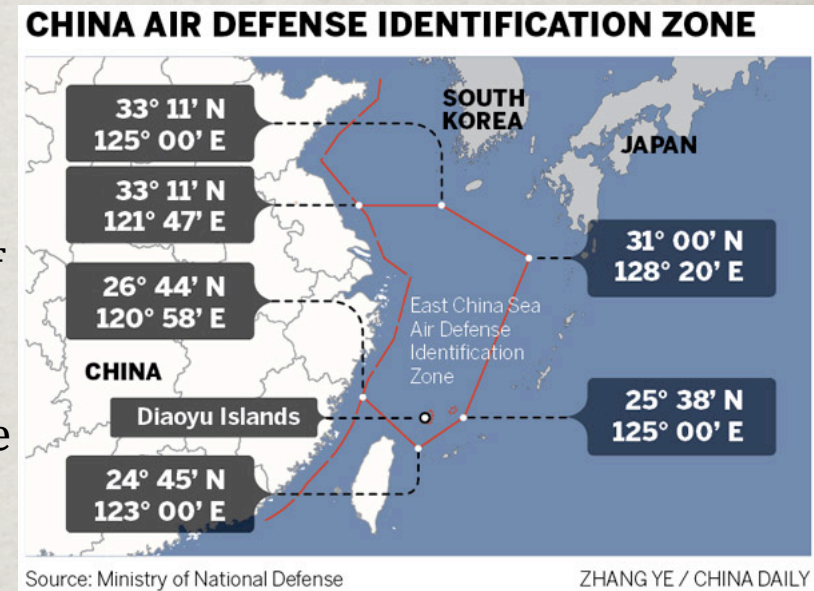
- a. The NKs are watching the Iranian deal very carefully.
- b. Iran and NK are working together on nuclear development and rocket technology. see: <http://www.voanews.com/content/ties-among-north-korea-syria-iran-a-major-security-threat/1639769.html>
- c. The NK Chairman of the Presidium (Kim Yong-Nam) visited Iranian President Rouhani in August 2013 in Tehran. This was his second trip to Tehran within a year and he signed a deal of cooperation on missile and “energy” development. Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei praised the deal and told Kim that Iran and North Korea have “common enemies.”
- d. **On November 28, 2013, the UN atomic agency reported that activities observed at NK's Yongbyon site indicate testing ahead of a possible restart to a reactor that could provide NK with weapons-grade plutonium.**
- e. The NKs smell blood in the water. They have seen the US waver twice in recent months: in September 2013 in Syria and in November 2013 with Iran. They last detonated a 6-7 kiloton nuclear device -- as an underground test -- on February 12, 2013.

2. North Korea(NK) Encouraged -- Analysis by John Antal

NK is an economic basket-case but a fledgling nuclear power. It will use its nuclear reactor to produce weapons-grade plutonium and will continue to develop nuclear weapons. NK is also building and testing ICMB missiles. NK intends to use this capability to threaten the US, South Korea and Japan. As the NK regime is in dire economic straits, they will sell this technology to Iran and others if they can. NK will cause trouble in the months ahead and will support the Iranians to develop nuclear weapons. The next NK nuclear test -- its 4th test -- will most likely occur in the spring of 2014. The US reaction to the next nuclear test by NK will be telling.

3. China Flexing

- a. On November 23, 2013, The People's Republic of China established an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) above the disputed Senkaka/Diaoyu chain of islands in the East China Sea. China, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea all have claims there. The island group consists of five uninhabited islets and three barren rocks. The US, Vietnam and the Philippines also declare rights to move thru this area. All non-Chinese aircraft traveling thru the zone must identify themselves and report flight plans.
- b. This unilateral announcement stunned the world. The US, Australia, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines protested the new ADIZ.
- c. Two unarmed US B-52s bombers flew into the ADIZ on November 25, 2013, without complying with Beijing's rules, to challenge the Chinese claim. China took no action.
- d. "The Chinese military monitored the entire process, carried out identification in a timely manner, and ascertained the type of US aircraft." Chinese defense ministry spokesman Geng Yansheng.
- e. On Nov. 29, 2013, China dispatched its own warplanes, including a KJ-2000 airborne early warning aircraft, into the zone as a "defensive measure" in response to challenges by both Japanese and South Korean military aircraft. China also dispatched its sole and newly-commissioned aircraft carrier, Liaoning, two missile destroyers and two missile frigates to the South China Sea., according to China's Xinhua news agency.



3. China Flexing (continued) -- Analysis by John Antal

Analysis: The Chinese antipathy toward the Japanese should not be underestimated. The Japanese savagely killed millions of Chinese in WWII and the Chinese have not forgotten this. Now that China is ascending, the Chinese want Tokyo to know that Beijing will determine events in Asia. The Chinese declaration of the ADIZ is in retaliation for the extension of a Japanese ADIZ that overlaps the same area, above islands recently purchased and nationalized by the Japanese. The newly declared Chinese ADIZ covers areas of potentially rich natural gas fields that surround the Japanese-claimed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. China, Japan and other nations hope to develop these gas fields. As a result, the Chinese are flexing their newly developed military muscle to expand their maritime influence. The Chinese are also testing US and Japanese resolve when American leadership appears weak after the debacle over Syria and the “any deal is better than no deal” negotiations with Iran. That said, the Chinese do not appear to want an open confrontation with the US right now, as they made no response to our B-52s, but this situation is ripe with potential problems and is a flashpoint. Stay tuned as this develops.

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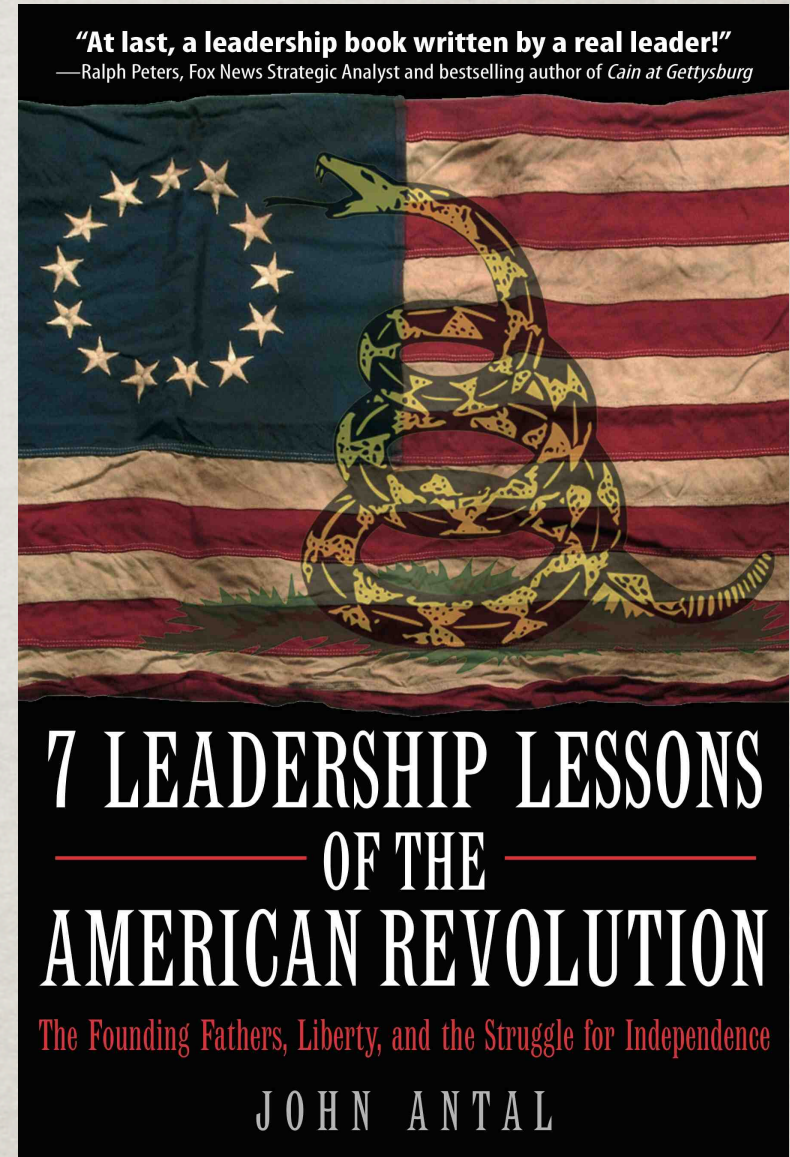
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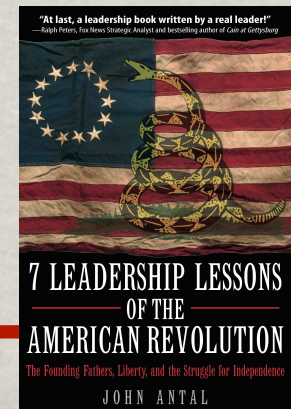
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Bradley Thompson, television writer and producer and the co-writer for the hit TV series' *Battlestar Galactica* and the second season of *Falling Skies*.

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