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DRAGON'S FURY

VOLUME III

HIGH TIDE

JEFF

HEAD

www.dragonsfuryseries.com

Coming Soon

BY JEFF HEAD

DRAGON'S FURY - THE LONG MARCH (Vol. IV) - Late 2003

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BY JEFF HEAD

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Publisher Page

Alpha Connections

Emmett, Idaho

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Dedication

This book, and the entire series, is dedicated to lovers of liberty everywhere, and to the principles upon which true liberty rests: faith, morality, virtue, honor, free will, commitment, valor and eternal vigilance. Most especially, it is dedicated to all of those Americans and their families who have served in defense of liberty and sacrificed their time, their efforts, their very lives and the lives of their loved ones for that cause, whether at home or abroad.

In particular the entire Dragon's Fury series is dedicated to those victims of terror whose lives were so brutally cut short on September 11, 2001, and to those selfless emergency personnel, firefighters, police, National Guard and volunteers who worked to help the trapped and injured, and to recover the victims.

It is also dedicated with great respect and humility to the passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93. On that ultimate day of infamy, those heroes resisted their enemies and fought back, resulting in the crash of their aircraft and the death of all involved before it could reach its target, thus saving hundreds if not thousands of more innocent lives. Their struggle and the defeat of terror and tyranny on that day foreshadows on a small scale the ultimate defeat of tyranny and terror by free people everywhere, who when called upon, rise to whatever heights necessary to maintain liberty and virtue, irrespective of

sacrifice or cost. God rest the souls of those brave passengers on Flight 93.

Finally, this work is dedicated to those committed and professional service men and women who have been, and will be, called upon to bring about a just and lasting retribution for the attacks of 9-11 that killed and injured so many. May we honor all of these sacrifices, and may we be prepared to make our own sacrifices for liberty and for our Republic wherever and whenever necessary.

Acknowledgments

As with all of the volumes in the series, special thanks go to my family for their faith in me. In particular, thanks to my dear wife of 25 years for her love, patience and help with this work and to my sons, Jeff and Jared for their reviews, input and suggestions. In addition, thanks to my father, A. L. Head Jr., a combat veteran of World War II, for all of his feed back and support, and to my mother, whose Christ-like love and faith have always been an example and inspiration to me.

Once again, I cannot have a section on acknowledgements without personally thanking those who have collaborated with me.

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Thanks to Arthur Hines of North Carolina for his input on the overall scenario as someone who served so ably on the point of the sword in the U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam.

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To each of these and all others, who have encouraged me and put up with my ramblings, I say again, heartfelt thanks.

Author's Note

Every effort has been made to make Volume III of the Dragon's Fury series, "High Tide", a standalone novel that can be purchased and read individually. In order to do this, in the introduction of characters and the story line, short paraphrasing of past activities have been included in an effort to bridge the volumes together. Hopefully this will allow first-time readers enough flavor and background to enable them to enjoy Volume III without having to first read the other two volumes. At the same time, I have

attempted to do this in such a way as to also allow those who have already read Volumes I and II to pick up the tale with as much continuity and as little redundancy as possible.

Obviously, such an effort is an attempt to satisfy two conflicting interests. I believe I have struck a good balance. I suppose that time, the experience of readers and their comments will tell whether my attempts have been successful or not. In either case, whether you are a new reader of the series, or whether you are returning for Volume III after having read the others, I hope that the read is an enjoyable, compelling and thought provoking one for you

I say all of this with one final comment and observation. The books are written as a series. Even though I am making every effort to allow the various volumes to be read as standalone novels, they really were meant to be read as a series and I sincerely hope everyone who picks up one volume of the series and reads it, will be inspired by that reading to read them all.

Prologue

August 23, 2007, 7:15 AM, CDT

Convalescent Care Unit, Private Room **1012A**

U.S. Military Medical Facilities

San Antonio, Texas

Almost imperceptibly, the all-enveloping light slightly faded. To anyone not accustomed to that bright and penetrating light, the fading would have gone unnoticed. But to Leon, who had been totally consumed by the light for what seemed to be many, many hours, the fading was noticeable and dramatic. The surrounding landscape, which until this time he had only perceived as gently rolling and too wondrous to adequately describe, came into better focus. The face of the figure that had been sitting with and speaking to him since he had realized he was in this place also came into view. Funny, although he was aware the man had been gently and calmly speaking to him and comforting him, he couldn't remember exactly what had been said. Now, out of the glare of that comforting, penetrating light, the face became recognizable. It was the face of his deceased father.

“Dad! Is that really you? Where are we...how can...am I?”

His father's understanding smile seemed to penetrate his heart and soul. It was a smile that he had not seen in many, many years...at the same time, it had a quality about it that he had never seen.

“Yes, son, it is really me...and if you are asking me whether or not you are dead, I can tell you that you are as close as one can come without it actually being so. But it is not your time to remain here in this realm—there is much more for you to accomplish before that time comes. The time has come for you to go back, and when you do, you will forget most of this experience. One thing you will not forget, though, is something I am grateful for—that you have seen me. Tell your mother and your brother that I am fine, and that I love them.”

Leon, despite the training and the hardness drilled into him by Marine NCOs, could not hold his tears back. They streamed down his face as he felt the warmth...the comfort...the love that this place exuded, and that was conveyed in his father’s voice which penetrated his very soul.

“But where is this place? Why do I have to go back? ...Dad, I have so much to ask you and so much to tell you!”

His father’s eyes bored into Leon’s as he spoke. “It’s okay, son...I already know. One day you will, too...but not now. Remember, I am so proud of you!”

As his father said this, the light dimmed further, and the very elements in the atmosphere surrounding him seemed to coalesce and envelope him. Then, those elements appeared to circle around him like some kind of swirling gray cloud, blocking off the view of the realm he had just been in. A feeling came over him as if he were falling, and involuntarily his eyes closed and his mind drifted. As it did, he flashed back and heard the voice of his commanding officer back on the island of Diego Garcia.

“Leon, get the hell out of there!”

Those shouted words again came to him as if from a dream or from another world—a world outside of the one he had just known and *lived* so thoroughly. It was almost as if he had never known a world other than the one he had just visited. But the voice of the officer had cut through all of that. He found himself slowly turning his head, and looking down the slope that was visible there, to where his commanding officer was standing at its base. There, with its blades slowly rotating, was an SH-60 helicopter standing behind his CO where five Marines were providing security. It was the only helicopter in view.

Somehow that voice, and the view of his CO and the helicopter, had reawakened in Leon the knowledge of what he had to do. Turning quickly, he emptied his last magazine into a group of approaching Indian soldiers who appeared about fifty yards away. Throwing the empty rifle down, he reached down with one hand and grabbed his wounded NCO’s pants at the waist. With his other hand, he grabbed the wounded Private Jacobs, and then dragged *both* men towards the helicopter.

He had gone no more than ten yards when he felt again that tremendous yank on his right calf, and he collapsed to one knee on that side. Summoning all his strength and ignoring the pain, he stood erect and kept going. After a few more yards, another tremendous jolt hit his back and he stumbled forward, almost falling but somehow retaining his footing. As he continued forward, he watched the Marines below him, now only thirty yards away, firing past him at figures appearing on the ridgeline behind him. As he trudged on, he looked down and noticed the crimson on his chest, the ragged hole in the front of his fatigues, and the ragged flesh—his flesh—surrounding the wound.

Inexplicably he remained standing and kept moving down that small hill, both the NCO and Private Jacobs still in tow. Three of the five Marines were down now and being loaded into the helicopter. His CO and the other two Marines kept up a steady covering fire, joined now by a door gunner on the helicopter using an M-60 machine gun to stitch rows back and forth along the ridge. As he approached within five yards of the CO, Leon somehow gathered the strength and with an almost superhuman surge,

he hurled both the NCO and Private Jacobs forward to the waiting arms of two medics who had come forward from the helicopter. Just as they took the men from him, there was an incredibly bright flash immediately behind him and Leon's eyes opened wide as he was violently thrown forward.

August 23, 2007, 7:18 AM, CDT

Convalescent Care Unit, Private Room 1012A

U.S. Military Medical Facilities

San Antonio, Texas

She had been there all night, like every other night for the last several months, keeping her vigil. Alan would help out in his off-hours during the afternoon and evening, then she would come and sit with Leon through the night until Alan could return. It was a cycle that she and her youngest son were intent on maintaining until Leon's condition resolved itself.

Late last year, when Leon had finally been transferred back to the United States and the hospital near Washington, D.C., Geneva and Alan had both taken time off to be with him. After the severe injuries he had sustained on Diego Garcia last August when the U.S. Marines retreated and were evacuated from the island, the prognosis had not been good. From the time he lost complete consciousness on the flight deck of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, Leon had remained unconscious and in a comatose state. His injuries had been severe, with a bullet wound to his leg and back, his head and back torn by shrapnel from a mortar round, the trauma of a severe concussion and significant trauma to his medulla.

But, over time, most of those injuries had healed, though Leon was still unable to breathe on his own, due to a continued loss of function from the injury to the medulla portion of his brain. The unconsciousness and comatose state resulting from those head injuries showed no signs of improvement. He had been in that state for over a year now. Many experts had tried to gently warn Geneva that he might never regain consciousness...that perhaps she should consider having the life support equipment turned off. It was something that Geneva would never consider, and Alan supported her 100 percent. They would stand vigil until Leon either regained consciousness, or until he passed from this world.

And they had the support of the public and the President in this decision. The President had been briefed on Leon's heroics soon after the fall of Diego Garcia. In an environment where America desperately needed every bit of good news it could find, and where the people needed to know of every inspirational and heroic event, the President had responded positively and quickly to the recommendation that Leon be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Moving swiftly, Congress had approved the award. In a nationally televised event in the middle of May—almost nine months after the action—the President had presented Leon the Medal of Honor here at his bedside, with a promise to have another event in the Oval Office as soon as Leon recovered sufficiently to make the journey.

Geneva would never forget the pride she felt as the news media focused on Leon's life, and how he had improved himself and lifted himself out of the gangland environment of Chicago to make something of himself. Leon's story of study at night in the city library, passing his proficiency and GED tests on his

own, his acceptance to Boise State University, his study there, and finally his enlistment in the United States Marine Corps and subsequent actions were an inspiration to all Americans. They were particularly an inspiration to those still involved with the gangs Leon had forsaken. The talk on the street from the young men now was a desire to become like, or be compared to, "L.C.", and many were taking the initiative to do just that.

The feelings that filled Geneva's heart when the President had referred to all of this during his presentation, and when he had turned to her and thanked her and her deceased husband for instilling in Leon the values that made all of it possible, were something she could never put into words. Her respect for the President for recognizing Leon's upbringing, and making note of it to the nation, was something that magnified her respect for her President tenfold over the already immense respect she had held for him. As she thought about all of this, a flicker of movement in her peripheral vision drew her attention to Leon's face.

"Did his eyelid just move?" she asked herself as she intently stared at her son's face.

He seemed to be peacefully lying there in his comatose state, when she witnessed his left eye move under his eyelid, and then both of his eyelashes began to flutter. She put her hand to her mouth and stifled a gasp as both of Leon's eyelids raised and he suddenly opened his eyes in an intelligent and surprised stare.

"Captain!... Captain?" he muttered through his breathing apparatus as his eyes focused and he became aware of his immediate surroundings.

"Leon! Son, it's okay. Don't try to talk. I'll get a nurse," Geneva said to him as she leaned over him, held him by the shoulders, and looked into his clearing and more comprehending eyes.

She pressed the call button for the nurse, who arrived within a few seconds and began examining Leon, checking his pulse and looking into his eyes, checking the irises that now showed the abrupt and pronounced change of her patient's condition. The first nurse immediately called other nurses, who made calls to the staff physicians on duty. In the meantime, Geneva, according to long-held agreements between herself and Alan, called him on her cell phone and announced the good news, never taking her eyes off her son, who stared back at her just as intently.

"Alan! Oh, Alan! He's awake. Praise the good Lord, he is awake! Come quickly!"

August 23, 2007, 12:30 PM, CDT

Convalescent Care Unit

U.S. Military Medical Facilities

San Antonio, Texas

"Leon appears to be remarkably alert, Mrs. Campbell. We were able to take him off the assisted

breathing almost immediately, and he is anxious for you and Alan to come back into the room so he can share some things with you. His ability to converse is nothing short of astounding, and while I want to stress that my current impressions are nothing more than preliminary, he's a tough young man and I'm hopeful about the possibilities for his improvement.

"Now, there is no reason for me to keep you from going back in there and picking up where you left off. We performed a thorough exam and disconnected some of the life support and assistance equipment he had required up until this point. Don't be put off by the fact that the equipment is still in the room. We will keep it there for a while, purely as a precautionary measure in case there is a relapse. I personally believe that the chances for such a relapse at this point are remote, but we want to be safe."

As the doctor finished speaking, both Geneva and Alan thanked him, and entered Leon's room. As they did so, Geneva turned to the doctor. "Doctor, could you work with the folks here and the military, and make sure the reporters are held off for at least the rest of the day? I know they'll be wanting to get the story out, and I know it will be important and positive news for so many folks around the country who have taken a liking to Leon...but I would like him to not have to put up with all of that for a little while yet."

The doctor smiled knowingly and nodded. "Mrs. Campbell, don't you worry. The Colonel has already taken care of it. The news will be announced late tonight, and there will be no press allowed in Leon's presence for at least another forty-eight hours. Doctor's orders. The military public relations people will handle things during that period, although you and your son will most certainly be asked for interviews by the networks. How you respond to that is entirely up to you."

Geneva again thanked the doctor and entered Leon's room.

August 23, 2007, 12:32 PM, CDT

**Convalescent Care Unit, Private Room
1012A**

U.S. Military Medical Facilities

San Antonio, Texas

Upon entering the room, she found Alan already sitting on the side of Leon's bed. Leon was propped up on the bed with pillows, and the two of them were just completing a brotherly embrace. Both had tears streaming down their faces. As she walked over to the chair next to the bed where she had spent so many nights, her cheeks glistened as well.

When she sat down, she was surprised to see Leon reach out his own hand, which had laid still for so many months, and weakly seek the touch of hers. Looking at her, with tears running down his face, he said, "Mom...I...I saw Dad! I don't know how...I can't explain it...but I saw him. He talked to me for the longest time, but I can't remember much of it...but he wanted you and Alan to know how much he

loved you and how proud he was...how proud ...”

At this point Leon broke down and sobbed openly. His memory of that experience and the feelings it stirred were simply overwhelming. Both his mother and his brother embraced him as they cried too. Geneva was amazed at Leon’s declaration and wanted to ask him about it. But she knew that such questions could wait.

After a few minutes, Leon regained his composure and continued in his hoarse and tentative voice. “It seemed like only a few hours since I blacked out. The last thing I remember from the battle was landing on that aircraft carrier, and being taken off the helicopter...then nothing...except for the warm light and then Dad. It only seemed like hours...but it’s been over a year? Where is everyone? How are the guys from my unit? What’s happening with the war?”

So began a five-hour conversation where Geneva Campbell and her son Alan brought Leon up to date as best they could on events that had transpired in the world over the past year since he had been wounded.

They informed him of all they knew of his unit. The senior NCO who had been with Leon on that hillock, and who was one of the two wounded men Leon had carried down the hill, had not made it, dying the very afternoon that they landed on the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln. Although Leon was disheartened and saddened by that news, he was elated to hear that Private (now Corporal) Jacobs, his security man, had survived, and had visited him often until he completely recovered from his own wounds and was shipped back to their unit. He had earned a Silver Star as a result of the action.

The CO whose voice had pulled Leon away from the combat had been wounded by the same explosion that had thrown Leon forward. It was the CO, wounded as he was, who had ultimately carried Leon to the helicopter as they made good their escape. The CO had recovered quickly, and was himself back with their unit in the field. He, too, had earned a Silver Star for his efforts that day on Diego Garcia. Both the CO and Corporal Jacobs wrote often and called on occasion to check up on Leon. They would be elated to hear of his regaining consciousness. They were both stationed somewhere in the Mediterranean, but their exact location or disposition was of course a matter to which neither Geneva nor Alan were privy.

With respect to the overall war effort, there had not been much good news in the last several months. The GIR had gathered a massive and still-growing army of over five million men around Israel. The United States, the United Kingdom, and the Canadians had valiantly kept the Mediterranean sea lanes open to assist Israel. Together they had all built up significant defenses in depth, even expanding the Israeli perimeter to include the southern valleys and coast of Lebanon and half of Jordan. Those two lines of defense were anchored in the center by the Golan Heights facing Syria. To the south, the Sinai Peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea provided sound defenses that were anchored to the west along the Suez Canal. The canal itself was long since closed to all shipping due to the intense fighting that flared up around it very regularly.

In all, the Allies had 2.5 million regular troops and two million more citizens organized into citizen defense forces arrayed against the growing GIR force. Geneva and Alan were convinced that ultimately, a pivotal battle of gargantuan proportions was going to take place in that confined area. Leon knew they were right and that the GIR would carefully choose the time and place for it to begin...though he hoped Allied forces could build up enough men and materiel to pre-empt the GIR attack and counter their aims.

All of Northern Africa from Morocco to the Nile was under the control of the GIR. Italy and Spain had made valiant, combined force efforts to establish footholds along the coast in order to open up a second

front and threaten the rear of the GIR force massing in Egypt, but they had failed and the GIR was consolidating its position. Until the crisis around Israel was resolved, it appeared that little progress would be made in Africa.

This was because the rest of Europe was focused on another GIR threat that had made itself evident in Europe proper. The GIR had amassed an army of almost two million men in Georgia and had marched north along the coast of the Black Sea. After a surprising new expansion of the Siberian Economic Treaty to include the GIR, in exchange for tremendous access rights to Mid East oil and deep port anchorages along the Indian Ocean, the Russian Federation had ultimately agreed to transit rights for the GIR forces around the Black Sea.

In addition to severe protests to this move in Russia, particularly amongst the Orthodox Church, the outrage in Europe was extreme, and it had led to severe strains on diplomatic relations between all of the Allies and the Russian Federation. There had been talk of war, but in the end, the desire to avoid adding the strength and numbers of the Russians to that of the GIR and the CAS had wisely led to cooler heads prevailing. Instead of war and military conflict, diplomatic and economic sanctions were threatened and negotiations had begun... while the GIR approached Europe from the East.

The European Union had come together to meet this threat. Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the low countries had all marshaled their forces and created a Unified European Defense Force (UEDF) which immediately dispatched a large army to interdict the approaching GIR forces. Geneva and Alan explained that news reports indicated that the two forces would come together in conflict some time in the next few weeks northeast of the Black Sea.

At about the same time, another threat to Europe became evident as the GIR pulled off a surprise airborne and amphibious crossing of the Dardanelles in late July. This occurred coincident with a shocking announcement by the government of Greece that would be forever remembered as the "Greek treachery," where it abandoned its neutrality and proclaimed solidarity with the GIR and CAS. This announcement was accompanied by vicious surprise attacks by the Greeks on Allied forces on the western side of the Dardanelles, the forces which were stationed there in order to defend the last remnants of free Turkey. In addition, large Greek attacks occurred on Cyprus, which to that point had maintained itself clear of GIR forces. The GIR had cemented the treacherous deal with the Greek government by promising a wholly controlled Greek Island of Cyprus and a promise to cede over of all Turkish lands on the Western side of the Dardanelles to Greece once Turkey was defeated. It was a deal the Greek regime was completely corrupted by, despite the shock and protest of a large minority of its population. These protests were ruthlessly put down and written off to the world as a part of the fighting.

Those Allied forces were now on the verge of defeat as the Greek and GIR forces continued their relentless attacks from both sides, and as they consolidated their new front line well to the west of Istanbul, along the Greek border with Bulgaria. The newly organized UEDF was scrambling to respond to this new threat as local Bulgarian, Yugoslav, Romanian and Hungarian forces mobilized. Faced with thrusts from two directions, there was an almost panicked sense of urgency to fully mobilize European continental forces that had tried to avoid the menace of war for over a year.

In Asia, the picture was no more positive. Chinese, Indian, and Indonesian forces were consolidating and fortifying their gains in Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan, New Guinea, the Indian Ocean, and several major island chains in the western and southwestern Pacific. The Chinese had announced that all resistance in their newly "re-liberated" Province of Formosa had ceased, though through clandestine communications the Allies knew that there were still Republic of China resistance forces holding out in the mountains of Taiwan.

In addition, and of utmost concern to the Allies, large Chinese, Indian, and Indonesian forces were making steady gains in Australia where the entire western coast and the highly populated southwest coastal areas had fallen. From these positions, three large CAS and GIR thrusts were now proceeding well into the interior to the east. It was clear that the CAS and GIR intended to conquer and occupy the entire continent. The Allied forces that had gathered around Alice Springs, as a planned large counterattack force, were now digging in as the main defense line against literally millions of CAS and GIR forces being funneled into the western side of the country. Reserves were attempting to stage along the eastern coast, but the numbers would have to grow substantially before any counterattack would be feasible.

The warfare in Australia was brutal and bloody. It was a literal war of survival as there was little doubt regarding the aims of Indian, Chinese, and Indonesian forces to ultimately repopulate the whole of the nation with their own bulging masses. In fact, according to western news sources, they were already doing just that in the western portions of the country. There the former inhabitants had the stark option of life as little more than second class serfs, or death as their lands and possessions were simply confiscated and used as the new owners saw fit.

Leon was shocked at the extent of their enemy's gains. He knew his good friend Billy Simmons, a Marine helicopter gunship pilot, was serving in the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO) somewhere, and he was concerned for him.

"Have either of you heard anything about Billy?" he asked as the thought crossed his mind.

Alan answered, "Back in June he was here in the States on leave. He spent a week with his Mom at their home near Fort Worth, and then they both came over here for several days to visit you, bro. He looked fine to me and said he had seen some combat...but he shipped out at the end of June somewhere in the Pacific, and we ain't got no idea where that is. We get a letter or email from him, addressed to you, every couple of weeks. I got 'em all back at the apartment and'll bring them over this ev'nen, Leon. That's one good honky friend you got there, I got to say."

After a few more comments regarding Billy and some questions regarding his Mom and Dad, and after finding that nobody knew very much about Billy's father, Jess, due to his prolonged deployment somewhere in or around Israel, they continued to bring Leon up to date on events.

In South and Central America, bitter fighting raged in Columbia, northern and southern Brazil, and Argentina. From the reports, it was difficult to ascertain what progress, if any, was being made. In fact, it appeared that the fighting ebbed and flowed with little overall progress on either side. It was bloody, intense jungle warfare in many areas. American forces had massed with Allies for an invasion of Panama, but they had not been able to pull it off. The priority for resources in the Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as defense of the U.S. itself, delayed the force from "jumping off," although it had come close several times.

The supercavitating weapons continued to pose considerable threat. Despite many innovations and procedures that had been developed to counter and mitigate their effect, the Chinese and Indian engineers continued to produce their own innovations for the weapons. Paralleling the war effort itself, the struggle over the use and effect of this technology was a raging conflict in itself, and it was one the Allies had not successfully contained. This meant that large Allied task forces were committed to the sea in only the most extreme cases, and such a limitation was a severe handicap for the Allied cause as the CAS and GIR continued to expand.

In the United States itself, production levels were steadily climbing and more ships, aircraft, weapons,

and materiel were pouring out of newly built or refurbished U.S. factories and shipyards. But the effort was not building quickly enough for the Allied war planners, and so their enemies continued to gain ground. Part of this was attributable to the rampant outsourcing efforts that had occurred throughout U.S. industry throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Firms had been tempted by the cheap labor and favorable economic conditions offered by the very countries now fighting the United States and her Allies, and by the short-sighted plans and philosophies of those who saw the increased profit and reduced tax liabilities as ends unto themselves.

As a result, large international U.S. firms, and all too often the U.S. government itself, spearheaded the headlong plunge to move more and more operations off shore. By 2005 a large percentage of U.S. manufacturing and engineering capability had been moved to, and was now owned by, the very nations who would soon thereafter be seeking to defeat America and her allies. Overcoming this lack of production capability was taking longer than anticipated, but progress was being made as the nation approached that task with a determination to survive, and a will to prevail.

But that progress itself was also being hampered by the continuing terror attacks on U.S. soil. Literally tens of thousands of American citizens had been killed. Billions of dollars of capital equipment, infrastructure, and property had been destroyed. Although the nation was now on a full wartime footing, overcoming these attacks took their toll on the efforts to ramp up. The President's initiatives on the Second Amendment and arming all willing, able-bodied citizens, while pushing and passing legislation at the national and state levels that eradicated most gun laws, had helped immensely. Citizens became the front line of defense and interdicted terror attacks as they developed. Coupled with this citizen activism, the state-coordinated and nationally-supported Homeland Security measures, particularly the local sheriff-operated Home Guard units, were proving very effective.

All across the nation, infrastructure ranging from critical to low level facilities, was guarded twenty-four hours a day by these volunteer units who served four six-hour shifts per week. Armed with weapons and communications equipment procured from the government by their local sheriff's departments—equipment that became the property of the local citizens—and trained by a combination of local, state, and federal agencies, these individuals were the front line against terror attacks aimed at local infrastructure. Each individual unit was able to communicate with their sheriff's department, whose lines of communication went to the state and the national level to call in more resource from those levels as necessary. It was an effective use of resources, and many of the older citizens disqualified for service in the regular forces gladly volunteered to watch over their local areas.

Even so, attacks conducted by Hispanic, Oriental, and Muslim terrorists continued. Agents who had infiltrated the nation over many years, taking advantage of a lax immigration policy and porous borders were activated, to simply implement plans of long standing. Winning these destructive and deadly battles on the home front was critical to the hopes for victory in the overseas theaters.

In an effort to stop the flow of new terrorist combatants into the nation, and in addition to measures that Geneva and Alan explained regarding the Second Amendment and Home Guard, the Weisskopf administration implemented military-controlled borders. Several divisions of troops were deployed along both the northern and southern border of the United States, and a national buffer zone had been implemented on both sides of the southern border with Mexico, five miles deep into Mexico and one mile into the United States. In a vast operation over the last ten months, those areas on the U.S. side had been cleared of structures, businesses, and housing. The inhabitants and workers had been relocated and the Federal Government had given over vast areas of former Federal Lands to duly and richly compensate those citizens so displaced – deeding over to them lands upon which the rebuilding of their business structures and dwellings was subsidized.

In addition, due to the extreme nature of the attacks and the threat, internment camps had been established within the remote, intermountain areas of the American West. Similar in nature to those established in World War II for Japanese-Americans, these camps had one vast difference: no U.S. citizen was interred. U.S. citizens' constitutional rights were respected. Only foreign aliens found to be residing in the United States illegally were automatically interred. Legal aliens from the affected belligerent nations, where there was no proof of hostile involvement, were simply given the option of being returned to their respective nations as quickly and efficiently as possible, or they were interned for the duration of hostilities. Avoidance of compliance or dishonesty was rewarded with immediate internment. The internment policies were a direct reaction by the Weisskopf administration to rampant homeland terrorism, and they were completely supported by Congress. They were also controversial, but only to the most die-hard social and liberal proponents of "open" immigration. In the new, harsh reality, the numbers of those dissenting were few, and the vast majority of Americans approved and assisted in the effort.

Any American citizen suspected of, or found to be actively engaged in, the support of terror combatants was tried in the American court system, and sentenced accordingly when found guilty. Punishment for active involvement by U.S. citizens was similar to that meted out to the terrorist themselves...and generally required the invoking of the death penalty. Leon could see that his country had been transformed by the crisis, and he had to admit that he was pleased with the transformation. He could feel that the changes were leading to more honesty, more serious contemplation of the value of liberty, and the responsibilities associated with maintaining it. They also led to more willingness to work, and work hard, and a greater trust in moral principle and the source of those principles than ever before.

As a Marine and as an American citizen, Leon knew that these changes, despite the horrific conditions that made them necessary, were absolutely for the good. They were changes that had America returning to its roots. He also knew from personal experience that they were absolutely necessary if the people of the United States—and the rest of the free world—were going to prevail against the implacable and dedicated enemies whose goal was the eradication of such liberty—and all people who loved it.

Chapter 1

"For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."—Newton's 3rd Law of Motion

August 27, 2007, 22:37 PST

Personal Study

Pacific Heights Subdivision

Palo Alto, California

Sandra watched the data as it marched across her flat screen display. There was a lot of it, it was very technical and it was arriving over her T-1 connection from over seven thousand miles away. After arrival,

the data would be decompressed and run through the analysis programs that Sandra had written herself to search for specific information in her specific line of research. It was a line of research where any study of the physical specimens themselves were expressly forbidden by Presidential Directive and Congressional statute in the United States.

"But what I am doing is not illegal," thought Sandra, "No, not illegal in the least," she continued, quite contented with her progress and satisfied that she had found, developed and perfected a method for her continuing research in her chosen area of expertise.

Sandra Eleanor McPherson held a doctorate in biology, specializing in the area of fetal anatomy. She held a tenured professorship at Stanford University and had been a member of the faculty for over twenty years. She was well published in the field of fetal development and believed with all of her heart that fetal tissue held the key to overcoming a multitude of ailments that afflicted mankind. Unfortunately, for the last several years, ever since the Presidential elections of 2000, the pursuit of fetal tissue research had become increasingly difficult in the United States, up to the point where it was illegal to possess any such tissue for research purposes.

"Short-sighted, moralist fools," thought Sandra.

Couldn't they see that such research was going to go forward in any case in other areas of the world? Despite this damnable, nonsensical war, and despite efforts in the United States to the contrary, Sandra knew the research was continuing elsewhere and that it would ultimately produce results. She had considered moving to Europe where the inquiry was ongoing and very active, but her ties to California and her position here would not allow it. Besides, she was determined and convinced of the correctness of her position, so she had pressed forward with finding a way to continue her research in spite of increasingly difficult conditions.

And her perseverance had paid off. With her own programming and analytical capabilities and with the continuing explosion of progress in communications, processors, memory and graphic computing, Sandra had simply made use of technology to carry on her studies via modeling and simulation in a virtual laboratory of her own creation. With a high speed internet connection and with secure channels across the World Wide Web to friends and researchers in Europe, she was able to make use of their physical data, model it and analyze it as if though it were present in California. As a result, officially she was just receiving digital data from Europe to assist in her continuing fetal anatomy studies...unofficially, she was leading one of the most advanced and serious fetal research teams on the planet.

"Not bad for a fifty-two year old, fully tenured, senior researcher and professor," she thought as her program automatically continued its analysis. "With the Dean's help, and the Chancellor's support, perhaps I can achieve the breakthrough we are all hoping for."

She and her team were studying several forms of cancer and some severe genetic disorders...but her personal area of research was centered on AIDS. Sandra considered AIDS to be a disease that was already orders of magnitude worse than the others, and one that had the potential of becoming the worst scourge in the history of mankind. Sandra was personally committed to making sure it never attained that status, and she had very strong personal reasons for that commitment to go along with her professional ones.

At fifty-two, Sandra had never married and honestly felt at this point that she never would. Oh, she dated and had the occasional affair with men she was attracted to. But after Stephen, she knew she would never consider making the commitment, or suffering the distraction from her professional goals that she knew such a relationship would require.

"Oh, Stephen...how I miss you to this day," she allowed herself as she briefly contemplated those events over eighteen years ago.

That summer of 1989 Sandra had already obtained her masters degree and was working on her doctorate while teaching at Stanford. Stephen was a social sciences professor in the College of Humanities. They had met at an activist event protesting a local "Right to Life" organization's attempt to picket a local abortion clinic. They had met there on the sidewalk, shared their own philosophical feelings regarding that particular protest and then had dinner together that evening after the event. Things had proceeded rapidly between them from there.

Never had Sandra met anyone so kind, so gentle, so sharing...and with what Sandra considered the perfect complimentary intellect to go along with her own. To that point, all of her other relationships had ultimately stumbled on that point. Sandra demanded intellectual stimulus, and she could not maintain a close relationship for long with anyone who could not provide it in a way that stimulated her own. No matter the physical attraction, no matter the close friendship, Sandra knew she would never marry anyone who could not only keep up with, but who could also challenge her intellectually. Stephen did all of that and more. The next three months had her head swimming for the first time in her adult life...and had her recklessly falling in love. So close did they become, so wrapped up in their feeling for one another in the present and what she thought would be a beautiful future, that their relationship proceeded in an unguarded fashion mentally, intellectually, emotionally and physically into the fall of 1989.

Perhaps it was the serious discussions of marriage that had caused it. Sandra did not know the reasons at the time, but Stephen became more and more reflective. The unguarded turned guarded. Oh, they continued to enjoy one another's presence and continued to revel in their intellectual compatibility, but Stephen was clearly distracted. Sandra took it simply as serious contemplation over the prospect of marriage, and perhaps in part it was. She would never forget that night in early November of 1989.

"El, we have to talk," he had simply said over the phone. She had never heard him sound so serious or so guarded. After a few more words, she had immediately driven over to his place.

Stephen had sat next to her on the couch in his apartment and held her hand as he talked. He told her how much he loved her and wanted to always be with her.

"Now, I need to share with you some things about me, some things I have done, that I have kept from you. I was afraid ... I didn't know how to tell you. But now, as I examine my true feelings for you, the true depth and meaning of them, I must tell you. I hope darling, that you will understand ... that you will still have me.

"Up until the time we met I played around a lot, I mean a *lot*. Relationships were a thing to me for fun and gratification. Oh, in the back of my mind I toyed with the idea of a serious long-standing relationship some day ... but I wasn't acting like it ... and I certainly wasn't seeking it.

"Honey, what I was seeking was fun and experimentation. And I did ... to the max. And I did not exclude anything or anyone. To put it bluntly, I was bisexual in my activities. I was not serious about it ... but I did it and I reveled in the fact that I could."

As the shocked expression on Sandra's face conveyed her surprise at this revelation, Stephen hurried along.

"That all changed when I met you. I want you to know ... *Ineed* you to know that I have been

completely loyal and true to you since the day we met.”

No, leaning closer to her, Stephen continued in an even more serious note. But it was his eyes that told Sandra that the worst was yet to come.

“There’s more.

“I suppose my folks would say that there are consequences for such a life style and I suppose there are. Because some of the people I fooled around with were very at risk, I have had blood work done every three months. I wanted to be sure, I wanted to somehow prove I had not been at risk myself. But, the latest results are in ... and El ... I ... I don’t know how to say this ...”

Tears were streaming down Stephen’s cheeks as he made the awful revelation.

“It came back positive ... I am HIV positive.”

The look of shock and disbelief that Sandra had shown at Stephen’s earlier revelation were nothing compared to what she felt and displayed now. After a few seconds pause, she exclaimed.

“You *WHAT*? You have what! You ... you mean all this time you knew it could happen? My God what have you done!”

Stephen, weeping openly, wanted her to know that he loved her, that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her and that he had been true to her since their first meeting. But he had also wanted, *noneeded*, to share this past with her...and the consequences of that past in the hopes they could face it together.

But Sandra was appalled. She wanted to hear nothing of it. How could he? How could he really love her and put her at such risk with their unguarded relationship? She got up and fled, not listening to his pleas to stay. Her heart had been crushed and she drove home and locked herself in her apartment for three days. She had called in sick, had ignored his phone calls. She had longed to call her mother and father, but they had died three years earlier and they had not been on good terms when they did. Now, when she needed them, they were not there.

Shock and anger had given way to sadness and depression. In that depression, she had thought about nothing but herself. Naturally, after her three-day seclusion, she had emerged and gone and gotten a blood test herself. Until the results came in, she had kept to herself and been ultimately relieved to find that she was not HIV positive. That relief broke through the depression and she began to think about Stephen. He had put it all on the line for her, truly sorrowful and thinking of her as he had made his revelation. After realizing this, she had called his apartment, only to get the answering machine and a vague message about a vacation. She had gone to the University and found he had taken a leave of absence. She became desperate and ultimately tracked down the whereabouts of his family. Funny, up until that point she had not considered them. They lived in the mid-west and she called and found Stephen was there with them. She had traveled to the small town in Indiana to see him and found a very traditional, very conservative household that had opened their arms to their son and older brother. He had shared his plight with them and they had, despite their differences with his lifestyle, opened their hearts to him.

Sandra had witnessed the miracle of love, family love as it was poured out, as it was meant to be. They did not approve of what he had done to himself. Their own religious upbringing, and Stephen's, taught them that dire consequences followed such life styles and behavior. But despite all of that, he was their loved one, he was in need of their help and they were there for him out of that love and out of the same

religious upbringing. It had caused Sandra to long for her parents and wished she had reconciled with them and shared her own sentiments and feelings with them before they had died. In a way, she shared it now as Stephen's family bent every resource, sought every avenue to restore him to good health.

It had all been in vain. Somehow Stephen had been acutely sensitive to the disease. Very quickly it had developed into full-blown AIDS and within eight months, he had died taking his family's hopes, his keen intellect and gentle ways...and Sandra's heart and dreams with him.

She had returned to Stanford from her own leave of absence in the fall of 1990 with a new purpose and dedication, a dedication to finding the secret to the killer disease of AIDS through whatever means she could acquire. She had made good progress in the intervening years, but any type of breakthrough had eluded her, as it had all of the AIDS research. Then, in 2000, with a new administration in Washington, her progress had been more and more stymied by new laws and by new administrative rulings. Her own conviction and drive had helped her find ways around most of the obstacles, but the outbreak of war almost eighteen months ago had created new obstacles, particularly to funding. It was frustrating and she wished the whole "War" would just go away,

But now, despite all the obstacles, Dr. Sandra Eleanor McPherson began looking at the first results of the analysis being performed on the latest digital samples of fetal tissue from Europe. What she saw confirmed her theories on the study she was performing. But what she needed was a sub-molecular, an almost atomic analysis of these digital samples, and she thought she knew where she could obtain it. It would take a lot of programming and modeling, but she was certain the relatively new physical techniques she had in mind could be replicated digitally to allow for the level of analysis she desired.

"In fact, what I'm considering will be revolutionary in itself, and perhaps worth of a Nobel in its own right," she mused, "but first I must work on the algorithms and virtual tools."

August 29, 2007, 00:37 local time

Combat Information Center (CIC)

U.S.S. Kitty Hawk, CTF 77

Southwestern Pacific Ocean, Between New Zealand and Australia

Admiral Ben Ryan contemplated the sweeping revolution in naval warfare that the last 18 months had wrought as he looked at the various threat displays. The impact of that revolution was evident in the composition of the very Carrier Battle Group (CBG) that he was commanding. It was not often that CINCPAC was seen outside of the Hawaiian Islands. It was also not often that America's military was set back as it had been over the last two years. Admiral Ben Ryan believed in leading from the front whenever practicable.

The naval "front" in this case was right here with CTF 77 between New Zealand and Australia. Here this

CBG and one super carrier, the Kitty Hawk as flagship, a new "jeep" or "Sea Control" carrier in support. Four O.H. Perry class frigates sailing in the inner circle acting as "Killer Whale" shields to the capitol ships. One Aegis Cruiser and one Aegis Destroyer in the inner group providing close in and area coverage for anti-air. Two Surface Action Groups (SAGS) attached to the CBG and stationed out on the two principal threat axis that consisted of a Spruance Destroyer, an Arleigh Burke Aegis Destroyer and an Perry class Frigate. Six S-3A's on patrol at all times in the inner circle as additional "Killer Whale" defense and new programming for the ASROC launchers on all fighting ships and for all torpedoes to also assist in the destruction of attacking supercavitating "Killer Whale" weapons.

The harsh new reality meant that a sizable portion of this CBG was dedicated to defending the carriers against the continuing threat of these Chinese developed supercavitating weapons. Even then it was not always enough. Four U.S. super carriers were on the bottom of the ocean over the last year and a half of combat, leaving only eight currently operational. The U.S.S. Constellation, the U.S.S. John Stennis, the U.S.S. Enterprise and just two months ago, the U.S.S. Truman. The Truman was sunk in the Mediterranean as it operated in support of a major task force ferrying men and materiel to Israel. It had been a shocking confirmation that their enemies had been able to not only proliferate the weapons into that theater of operation, but also to enhance them with new innovations. The Truman had not been sunk by devices launched from other vessels in the area, or by devices launched from attacking aircraft. The Truman had been sunk by devices that appeared out of nowhere using attack profiles heretofore unseen by the Allies.

Those devices were apparently a modification of the stationary devices, seeded in the anticipated path of Allied task forces that had been seen in the Pacific. But their attack profile was completely different. Instead of igniting their rocket motors when sensing a targeted vessel from a standoff range and attacking horizontally at a depth of just a few meters, these devices had come up from underneath the Truman, from very deep. In so doing they had avoided all efforts to interdict and intercept them, either from escort vessels trailing reactive lines, or from ASROC launches from other ships or from torpedo launches from patrolling aircraft. The resulting three explosions on the Truman had broken her back in three places and sent her underneath the waves in a phenomenally short time. Only forty-two seconds after impact, no major portion of that mighty vessel remained above the waves. Only fifteen of her crew had been saved and plucked from the sea. Three other vessels in that task force had suffered similar fates.

The Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean and now the Mediterranean had all been the sites of successful and devastating attacks by the Chinese, Indian and now GIR supercavitating weapons against U.S. Navy aircraft carriers. Attacks in the South Atlantic had also occurred against allied shipping, but no U.S. carrier had been lost or damaged there to date.

"Only in the North Atlantic is there any demonstrated safety ... and that is probably simply because there has not been an opportunity yet," thought the Admiral.

"Well, now there is an opportunity," he thought and he prayed to God that the enemy was not aware of it. As his Task Force plowed the waves of the far Southwest Pacific there between Australia and New Zealand, in the far north Atlantic the newest and most modern American carrier was undergoing sea trials under the tightest security and heaviest defense imaginable.

"They're conducting those trials for the Shanksville up there because it's the farthest area of operations away from the enemy, because of the extremely rough seas and difficulty associated with finding her there...and because we've experienced no attacks there to date, the Admiral reflected. "Dear God, please don't let there be one now."

The U.S.S. Shanksville, CVN 93, named for the town near where Flight 93 had crashed to earth in

Pennsylvania during the terrorists attacks of September 11, 2001, had been miraculously completed ahead of schedule and hurried into trials. Three more just like her were already taking shape on the ways at U.S. shipyards constructed for those purposes over the last fourteen months.

Once termed the CVX and all but destroyed in the initial massive surprise attacks by the Chinese in March of 2006, the U.S.S. Shanksville had risen like a Phoenix in those same shipyards and had been completed six months ahead of schedule. That early completion and deployment was a monument to American know-how, ingenuity and perseverance in the most demanding and horrific times imaginable.

"And what an inspiration it's entire life has been to date," thought the Admiral of the new carrier. "Starting from the naming and the special dispensation to change the hull number to match the number of Flight 93."

As the Admiral reflected on this, his heart swelled up with pride as he tried to imagine those American citizens who attacked and defeated their hijackers on that fateful day of 9-11. In fact, many key policy makers and planners looked back and considered that day as the real starting point for the third World War. With the passage of time, it was more and more clear that the even more horrific events of March 2006 had been a natural and horrendous culmination of those events, when the world truly realized what 9-11 foreshadowed.

"I believe that the events of 9-11, up until that last struggle aboard Flight 93 will foreshadow this whole ugly and terrible affair," continued the Admiral to himself.

At least five passengers, and maybe many more, had risen up and attacked the hardened, murderous terrorists on that flight. Their struggle and victory was indicative to many of the predominance of the American spirit over the indoctrinated and radical spirit of their enemies. A stewardess, a woman traveler and three American businessmen, thrust into events more horrible than they could contemplate, had taken matters into their own hands when it became clear what the terrorists had in store.

"They fought them with scalding hot coffee water, their fists and anything they could lay their hands on. A model of the ability of liberty and freedom to win out over compulsion and tyranny," thought the Admiral.

"Truly it was the first victory in this struggle, and it ended that day with hope, after saving the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands. There isn't a more fitting name for that new vessel up there in the North Atlantic than one that honors the sacrifice and commitment of those American heroes. They were like a first band of citizen's militia who took these people on head to head...and emerged victorious, thwarting those animals in their designs and ending them in a smoking crater in the Pennsylvania countryside, instead of the Capitol Building or the White House. I just pray that their example and victory will foreshadow the life of this new carrier," the Admiral concluded, "and that the Shanksville will get that opportunity."

The new carrier would deploy with a host of new technical innovations and equipment. These included new electromagnetic catapults, a much more automated logistics system, the latest phased array radar and AEGIS battle management systems, and a more layered defensive system. The new defenses included four new Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) stations in addition to the four Sea Sparrow and four Close in Weapons Systems (CIWS) that U.S. Navy super carrier normally carried. Most importantly from Admiral Ryan's perspective, she mounted the new Submerged Threat Close in Weapons System (SUBT CIWS).

The SUBT CIWS had been designed specifically for countering the enemy's supercavitating weapons. Mounted on underwater turrets, partially recessed along the sides of the vessel, the SUBT CIWS shot

projectiles along the path of an approaching threat, just like the above deck CIWS did at approaching missiles. With an underwater range of just under 1000 yards and shooting smart, explosive munitions at hypervelocity speed, the SUBT CIWS projectile was a supercavitating weapon itself, designed to destroy other supercavitating weapons by collapsing their cavity so that they impacted a literal wall of water at very high speed. The SUBT CIWS could also destroy conventional torpedoes and mines as well. The U.S.S. Shanksville mounted four such turrets along each side, eight in all. Ultimately, they would be tied directly into the overall AEGIS battle management system, but for the time being, they had their own defensive operation station controlled by their own computer system and operators.

The big question was whether the new system would work against the Chinese "Killer Whales". Could they react quickly enough and score an intercept at an underwater object approaching at almost 600 knots. Added to that, was the question that if they did, would they be able to intercept them at a range significantly far enough away from the ship to avoid pieces of the wreckage that might reach the intended victim, in this case a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier. The designers and engineers indicated that the new system would accomplish all of this, and they based it on preliminary tests of the system when mounted on the U.S.S. Thorn, a Perry class frigate outfitted for weapons research. Now the U.S.S. Shanksville was going to final testing of the premise in the rough waters of the North Atlantic.

If even nominally successful, the U.S. Navy was already looking at the logistics of rotating current capitol ships (meaning Aircraft Carriers, the big Amphibious Assault ships and the AEGIS ships) into dry docks for retrofitting the turrets and weapons systems. All new vessels from frigate size on up were being designed to accommodate the SUBT CIWS.

Admiral Ryan already knew that the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk was fifth in the rotation and could not expect her dry dock refit until early next year. Until then, she would be out here with the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan, sixth in that same rotation, attempting to support the defense of Australia and New Zealand against the CAS juggernaut that had moved so quickly across Asia and the Pacific. The Ronald Reagan was supporting combat operations in Australia and could be augmented by the Kitty Hawk group as required. The Kitty Hawk was stationed as a blocking and interdiction force between Australia and New Zealand, where the Allies were already building up a significant contingency force and logistical base in the event conditions in Australia continued to deteriorate.

As all of these thoughts passed through his mind, he noticed his staff officer over intelligence approaching and the Admiral realized it was time for his 0100 intelligence briefing. When he was within a few feet he pulled up and saluted. Returning the salute, the Admiral spoke.

"Okay Commander, what do you have for me?"

"Admiral, G2 indicates that the enemy is keeping its capitol ships west of Australia under their own heavy air cover to protect the massive influx of troops and equipment that China, India and Indonesia are pouring into Australia. There are no less than four enemy carrier groups there covering dozens of convoys. Coast watchers behind enemy lines in Australia and New Guinea report increasing numbers of strike aircraft flying into western Australia.

"The Ronald Reagan is reporting probing air assaults, but nothing major. Our own barrier CAP has interdicted two CAS reconnaissance missions in the last fourteen hours, but no other threat has been detected to date. We are expecting a NRO Pervador flight tomorrow afternoon and the 30th Air Wing, 2nd Space Launch Squadron indicates a launch window for the latest attempt at maintaining a KH-12C satellite over the southwest Pacific out of Vandenberg. The Titan IV B is fueled and on the pad and the package is one of the ADCAP birds with the new thrusters and sensors. . . they believe they'll be able to detect and avoid any Chinese attempts to bring it down with kinetic weapons."

The Admiral contemplated this for a few seconds. He longed for the days when the US Air Force "eyes in the sky" were the trump card for U.S. Navy operations. But the last year had shown the futility in depending too heavily on such assets not directly under your own control, and lacking in multiple redundancy.

"Thank you Commander. We will proceed with operations as planned. Inform the Task Force Commander and the battle group commander to join me in my quarters. We must ensure that our own reconnaissance birds are up according to plan, particularly the UAV's. We will take whatever advantage we can gain from the Pervador over flight and the satellite...but we cannot afford to count on them. I'll brief them and then we'll cover all of this in staff meeting at 0400, update me with any new information just before that meeting."

September 3, 2007, 14:41 local time

Outside Turkish Presidential Quarters

Istanbul, Turkey

The noise was incredible, as well it should be with over one hundred thousand troops surrounding the presidential complex witnessing the ceremony. As the surrendering Turkish President, President Ahmed Sezir, approached General Talabari, Captain Abduhl Selim contemplated the many experiences that had led him to this point. The selection of Hojjatolesla Hasan al-Askari Sayeed as an Ayatollah Ol Osam for the Shia Muslim faith and a recognition of Sayeed as the overall Imam for all of Islam in the spring of 2005. The creation of the Greater Islamic Republic by the Imam soon thereafter and the inclusion of his home country of Turkmenistan into that Republic in the summer of the same year, when Abduhl was still seventeen. Abduhl's joining the great Army of the GIR and his training throughout that summer and into the fall. His deployment to the former state of Iraq to be a part of the GIR forces that were to put down the Kurdish rebellion when the people of Iraq voted overwhelmingly to become a part of the growing GIR. His introduction to combat that fall and his witnessing the might of the United States Air Force in their failed attempt to support the fledgling state of Kurdistan in its short three month history.

"Funny, the euphoria of that moment, when the Kurds were defeated and then spared humiliation by the Imam as they joined the GIR was not unlike this moment," he thought. But there was much more feeling to this moment, even though the din of the celebration was similar. Since the defeat of the Kurds and their American air support, much more had happened in the intervening two years.

The GIR and Syria had staged a classic bait and switch operation along the Turkish border and then together invaded Turkey in January of 2006. The last eighteen months of Abduhl's life had been spent fighting his way across Turkey with GIR forces and ultimately crossing the Dardanelles when the Greeks had sided with the GIR and conducted a surprise attack against the Turks from the west, aimed at their new capitol in Istanbul.

In that time Abduhl had seen much, had experienced much...had lost much as friends and his boyhood were completely swallowed up by the raging war. He had fought hard against what he considered were the corrupted Turkish armies, but which were comprised of fierce and ruthless fighters. He had faced the

might and superior technical capabilities of the Americans and had been driven from the field by the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division. He had also conducted a direct assault into their flank as he retreated which bought time for his comrades in other Companies and Divisions that day in late February of 2006. Slowly, inexorably, the GIR forces had pushed their way forward throughout Turkey until they had pushed the corrupt Turks and infidels off the main landmass of Asia, across the Dardanelles into Europe in July of 2006, over a year ago. Then the months of sporadic fighting, repelling attempted Allied counter attacks and then finally themselves crossing the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles for the final assault only a few months before.

Through the long months, Abduhl had fought well, and he had been recognized for it and promoted along with the recognition. From Private to Corporal, from Corporal to Sergeant as his own NCO's fell. From Sergeant to a battlefield officers commission to Lieutenant after the American counterattack was finally repelled outside of Cicekdag, and now to Captain. When it came to leading men in combat, when it came to understanding and inspiring his brothers in arms, no one excelled as much as Abduhl Selim... and his superiors knew it and made good use of it. His upbringing by his father as he tended the goat herds in his native land and his teachings of the principles and commitments of Islam had figured heavily into making Abduhl what he was.

"I can see that now," he thought, "although at the time back then, as a young boy before I came to truly depend on Allah, I would never have guessed or admitted to it."

But, as it does to many, combat had caused Abduhl to reflect more and more on his upbringing and on his faith, and he had come to a firm commitment to the cause of Islam. That cause as Abduhl saw it, and as the great Imam Sayeed taught it, was to unite all of Islam while purging the corrupt and unfaithful, and then to humble the infidels. At the same time, or perhaps as a result of this firm commitment, he had also come to be a natural leader of men. Now, at twenty years old, with an intense but distant look in his eyes, Captain Abduhl Selim stood with his Company of soldiers, most of them older than himself, and witnessed the final surrender of Turkey to the GIR.

September 3, 2007, that same time

Turkish Presidential Review Stand

Istanbul, Turkey

The noise was incredible as President Ahmed Sezir approached the GIR General and his staff. Looking out over the masses of soldiers gathered in the courtyard and the surrounding grassed areas. He could not help but notice the sentinel soldiers on many of the surrounding rooftops and the camera crews located strategically throughout the crowd.

"There must be well over a hundred thousand enemy soldiers here," he thought. "And they are going to make the most of the humiliation for their propaganda purposes. Well, they will get no humility and cowed spirit from me."

As the President thought this, his emotions got the best of him and he cursed himself for his failure in defending and preserving what he deemed to be the most progressive and secular Islamic nation on earth.

He cursed his allies and particularly the Americans for not being up to the task of helping him, for having themselves succumbed to so many of the weaknesses and allurements that had weakened them.

"... what I wouldn't give for a small tactical nuclear device right now," he thought as he approached the podium where his conquerors stood.

As he did so, he determined to play his role to the tee, but to show no humility and no downtrodden spirit. He may surrender his nation's colors, but he would do it with his head held high. As he reached the appointed spot, he knelt to one knee and held out his nation's flag, rolled up, to General Talabari, the overall Commander in Chief of GIR forces in the Middle East.

"On behalf of the armed forces of Turkey and on behalf of the people of Turkey, I officially surrender to the combined forces of the Greater Islamic Republic," he said. As he did, the crowd of soldiers erupted into a mind-numbing roar, and the flag was taken from him by one of General Talabari's aides. President Sezir then made his way solemnly over to a table that had been prepared for the purpose, and signed his name to the official surrender documents which had secured what he deemed to be the best conditions for his people given the circumstances. When he was finished, he stood by the table as General Talabari approached the table himself.

September 3, 2007, that same time

Turkish Presidential Review Stand

Istanbul, Turkey

"Just listen to them, the noise is incredible," thought General Talabari as he approached the signature table to officially execute the agreement and accept the Turkish surrender on behalf of the GIR.

"And they deserve it," he thought as reflected on the many long months of combat and the many, many casualties that had resulted in this moment.

He immediately signed the documents and then motioned for the now former President Sezir to join him at the podium facing the crowd. Raising his hands to request silence, the crowd quieted as the General began.

"Today marks a critical day in the history of all Islam and the world. Today, for the first time in hundreds of years, all of Islam is united!"

The crowd of soldiers and civilians behind them erupted at this in a monumental roar of approval. It took several minutes for the General to get them quieted back down before he continued.

"According to our great Imam's vision, today we have completed a task dreamed of for over a millennium. From the isles of the Pacific in Indonesia, through the former Pakistan over to Persia, across the entire Fertile Crescent down through the Arabian Peninsula and into Africa, a united Islamic nation of over one billion souls now stands forth."

Again the crowd went wild and it was all captured live as the signal was carried by local transmission to WNN affiliates outside of the actual occupied area. When things were again quiet, the General continued.

"But our work is not yet done. We yet have brothers and sisters in Europe and America living under the corrupt moral decadence of those societies. Our Imam has made our task and goals clear. Purge and punish the unfaithful, humble and vanquish the decadent infidel!

"Here before us stands a leader of the unfaithful who has just surrendered to us."

General Talabari looked into Ahmed Sezir's eyes. There was not a shred of humility, regret or fear in them. The General wondered if that would change as an aide approached and handed him an object sheathed in scarlet cloth which he proceeded to unwrap as he spoke.

"Today we show to the world what becomes of unfaithful nations and their leaders. Islamic law is clear, those who turn against Islam having once accepted it"

The General quickly raised and pointed the 9mm automatic pistol he had produced from the cloth directly at the former President's head. The pistol was loaded with a special load of sub-sonic hollow point bullets. Seeing the shock and recognition registering in Ahmed Sezir's eyes, but still no fear, the General pulled the trigger.

BANG

" must die! *DEATH TO THE UNFAITHFUL!*"

The image of the Ahmed Sezir's corpse falling to the floor of the review stand with a slight red mist hanging in the air over where he had stood flashed around the world at the speed of light. As it did so, the crowd of soldiers and attending civilians went wild with approval once more. The General was inclined to let them go on for some time.

September 4, 2007, 13:45 EST

Situation Room, The White House

Washington, DC

For the third time President Norm Weisskopf watched the replay of the death of his friend, the President of Turkey, Ahmed Sezir. A rage at the callousness of it filled his soul, it was a rage he could scarce contain. When their copy of the broadcast ended with the noise of tens of thousands of soldiers yelling their approval, the President himself turned off the display and sat in silence for a few seconds with his security council.

"We have known for many months that we were dealing with barbaric animals, but this film has confirmed it once more to our hearts and minds. Ahmed was a good ally of this nation and a close personal friend. This atrocity and the loss of his nation will be deeply mourned...and they*will* be ultimately avenged in the only way one can deal with monsters who commit such acts."

As he finished speaking the President looked around the room. He saw it in their eyes and what he saw he approved of. There was certainly the shock and revulsion of the murderous act they had just witnessed, but underlying that there was also a steely conviction, forged and hardened by months of stress, trials, many defeats and some victories. It was a conviction to win at any cost, to destroy this brutal enemy...perhaps, thought the President, the most despicable and murderous the world had ever seen.

The President turned to his Director of Central intelligence, Robert Ballard.

"Robert, we all know who Talabari is and his record of betrayal and murder. What can we do about this, how can we respond?"

Robert Ballard was seething just like the President. He did know of General Jabal Talabari. Talabari had once been the head of the Patriotic Kurdistan Front (PKF) and an American ally. Some of the best agents in the CIA had worked with him over the years to help bolster the Kurds against the regime in Iraq and against the Iranians. Later, when Hassan Sayeed came to power and created the GIR, the individual Ballard considered the Agency's best field operative and a close personal friend, Tony Davis, was sent into the Kurd area to begin working and planning directly with Jabal for the defense of the Kurd people. Operating under the assumed name of Will Peterson, the plans for the defense of the Kurdish homeland had gone active several months later after the GIR's occupation of the former Iraq following a vote by the Iraqi people to join the GIR. Those same GIR forces then invaded the Kurd autonomous region when the Kurds voted to declare their independence.

After a quick, decisive battle, where the U.S. Air Force was driven from the skies over northern Iraq by overwhelming numbers of GIR aircraft, the Kurds had surrendered. When the GIR leader, Hassan Sayeed, announced his intentions to travel to the short-lived Kurd capitol to personally negotiate the final surrender, Tony had been given National Command Authority (NCA) approval to act with discretion and extreme prejudice to interdict the leader of the GIR along the road outside of Irbil.

During that operation, according to the after action report of Riley Adams, the second in command of the CIA team who was somehow able to escape, Jabal had personally killed Tony as he prepared to carry out his duty. It was a betrayal the United States would never forget, and it had vaulted Jabal Talabari into the lime light of the GIR military command. Ultimately, he had risen to be the Commander in Chief (CINC) of all GIR forces in the Mid East and had masterminded the current offensive. It was an offensive that had defeated Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, all U.S. forces on the Arabian Peninsula and now Turkey and all allied forces defending her.

"Mr. President, we are making progress in our Electronic Intercept (ELINT) capabilities as they relate to the GIR, and specifically as they relate to the movements of the GIR CINC there in the Mid East, specifically General Talabari's command headquarters. We believe that within a few weeks, short of some type of drastic change on the enemy's part, that we will be able to predict with some degree of accuracy, his movements."

President Weisskopf respected Director Ballard's professionalism. He knew that Robert Ballard had a personal axe to grind with Talabari, but he was not letting effect his reporting, his planning or his assessments.

"Good, Robert. Please continue with that effort and report to us as progress is made. In connection with that effort, please take into consideration Operation Swift Eagle.

"Now, General Stone, we'll have your report followed by Secretary Crowler's. Let's proceed in that order."

Robert Ballard was relatively new as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Before his appointment due to the death of the former Director, Mike Rowley, during the March 2006 attacks on America by the Chinese, Robert Ballard had run operations for the Agency. Now, he could scarcely believe what he had just heard from the President. He scanned the other faces and found John Bowers, the Vice President staring right back at him, knowingly. Apparently the comment about Operation Swift Eagle had passed right over the heads of the others...no, no, now he was certain that he had caught a glance from both Secretary of Defense Crowler during a pause in his presentation and from General Stone, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

"They know," he thought. "They know what the President just told me to do."

Operation Swift Eagle was the U.S. Army Air Corp operation during World War II that had been mounted to track down and kill Admiral Yamamoto of the Imperial Japanese fleet. It had been a successful operation when the U.S. Navy, as a result of breaking the Japanese code, had determined the exact time and place the Admiral would be traveling. On April 18th, 1943, eighteen specially configured P-38 long-range interceptors from Henderson air base on Guadalcanal caught up with Admiral Yamamoto's G4M Betty bomber and its six fighter aircraft escort over Bougainvillea Island and shot it down, killing all on board. Now, here in September of 2007, the President of the United States had just conveyed to his Director of the Central Intelligence Agency a clear desire to conduct a similar operation against General Jabal Talabari of the GIR.

It was a task that Robert Ballard would be happy to plan and execute. It was also a task that would be monumentally difficult to achieve. But Robert Ballard had just the agent in mind to put together the operation and pull it off. Trouble was, that individual was currently involved in another operation of critical importance in South America and there was another one of even greater importance planned after that one. It would be late October or November before Ballard could have him prepared for what he had in mind for Talabari.

"That's okay," thought the Director. "If we're going to do this, we will just have to afford the time to do it right and to make sure we use the right team."

September 4, 2007, 18:40 PST

2 Miles East of Launch Complex 2E

30th Air Wing Operations, 2nd Squadron

Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

Johnny Chen watched the lines connecting the gantry to the massive Titan IV B booster sitting on the launch pad as they slowly fell away. Perched atop the booster was America's latest and most advanced KH-12 satellite. Johnny knew that this rocket could not be allowed to successfully launch.

He slid the missile launcher forward from behind and next to him. It was a shoulder launcher for the FIM-92B Stinger missile that he also carried. The launcher had turned up missing from the California National Guard over five years earlier. The American authorities had searched and searched for the launcher and the three FIM-92B missiles that had disappeared with it, but had been unable to find any trace of them. Like the several hundred other pieces of ordinance that turned up missing each year from America's domestic arsenal, when no trace was found, the Government Office of Accounting (GOA) ultimately wrote it off, thinking its disappearance was due to accounting or other book work error. But, like so many of the hundreds of other pieces of missing ordinance, it wasn't.

Vandenberg Air Force Base was large and it was devoted to Space. There were miles and miles of rough terrain all around its perimeter. All of it was well patrolled and kept under constant surveillance, particularly in wartime. But before the war, Johnny had literally spent years developing his access to the base. He had dug three different entry and escape routes under the perimeter fencing and carefully concealed their entrances and exits, which were all well over two hundred yards away from the perimeter itself. He had also prepared four observation positions overlooking four of the major launch sites. Each of these observation positions had been dug meticulously with an escape route extending underground for fifty yards, exiting on the opposite side of the hill that they were dug into.

It had all been arduous, painstaking work. It had also been dangerous work with the constant threat of discovery and capture. But Johnny had been trained very well before being "inserted" into America those many years ago in the early 1990's. That training had taught him patience and the art of slow steady progress towards a goal expected to be achieved many years in the future.

Johnny's route into the United States, like many others, had taken him over the southern border as what the Americans termed an "illegal alien". This was as opposed to the use of COSCO container ships delivering personnel directly to American harbors that so many others had used during those years. If he had been caught while crossing, he would have been lumped into the early statistics of what the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) called OTM's, or "Other Than Mexicans" and returned to Taiwan where his meager paperwork indicated he was from. But Johnny had not been caught, and it turned out that getting into the United States had been ridiculously easy.

In northern Mexico he had hired the best "Coyote" money could buy by laying down enough "front" dollars to ensure a guided tour across the border for him and him alone. It had been expensive, but it was critical to the overall plan. Johnny thought back to the satisfaction on the Coyote's face as he had been paid in full with hard U.S. currency. Johnny had paid the man after they were well across the border and ready to part. He remembered how the satisfaction on the Coyote's face had turned to shock and brief agony as Johnny had quickly used a concealed ice pick and expertly placed a lightning thrust between the appropriate ribs into the man's heart. That Coyote's body was long since molding in the grave where Johnny had buried it in the desert there well to the north of the border.

From that border area in eastern Arizona, Johnny had made his way to his target, Lompoc, California, and met up with his "family" there. He had been hired to work in the dry cleaning business that they operated. He had worked there ever since, patiently sorting clothes and saving his pay for his own personal needs. The "real" work he had accomplished on Vandenberg Air Base had been completed on weekends and in the evening hours during the week. He had never established any type of pattern and had been extremely careful.

As progress was made, the status was relayed back to his superiors in Beijing through a carefully established system of blind drops and completely compartmentalized personnel whom he had never met or seen. There had never been a problem, even after China and the United States had gone to war. No

suspicion, no apprehension. His cover as a Nationalist Chinese who came over from Taiwan and who was very loyal to America had never been questioned, even to this day. He helped ensure it by attending all of the patriotic events in Lompoc, waving flags and even attaching a bumper sticker to his Toyota pick-up that said, "America, Love it or Leave it!"

Now his long preparations and training were going to be put to the test. His "observation" post was about to turn into an attack position.

"Hopefully, there won't be any complications," he thought. "I'll just fire the missile, retreat through this tunnel and make it to the holding room before they can even respond to the smoke trail that will lead them to this place."

The holding room Johnny thought of was a small earthen room built into each of his escape tunnels that was stocked with enough provisions to maintain Johnny for up to two weeks. He planned to use every bit of it to wait out the intense search he knew would follow the downing of the booster. After that, he would carefully make his way off the base and then return to work after he recovered from his "illness". It was a flu-like bug that had suddenly taken him a few days ago after getting the information and orders regarding the launch. It was an illness from which he would return voicing his own anger and incense at the attack on his beloved and adopted America.

Johnny had practiced his set up, firing and egress countless times. He knew he would fire and forget the Stinger missile and make his way to the back of the tunnel that led to his current firing position in seven seconds, only a couple of seconds after the missile hit the rising booster. Then, it would take him another three minutes to get across the small meadow and into the gully that led to the opening to his escape tunnel. Once in the gully, he would have dense coverage to shield him from the view of any helicopters that might have arrived. From there, another four minutes would put him into his escape tunnel of choice where he would pull down the covering and get to his holding room in another three minutes. Less than seven and one half minutes to get to his escape tunnel, less than ten and one half minutes for him to be where he would wait out the search.

To protect him from the very well known American forensic capabilities, Johnny had special, ultra-light sneakers on, with no traction or tread pattern whatsoever. He also wore a single piece, very light synthetic jump suit that was impervious to tearing or snagging while he escaped and would therefore leave no fibers for the Americans to analyze. The suit extended to the gloves he wore. Finally, he would be carrying the launcher with him. All they would have to go on was whatever rocket and exhaust residue they could get from the cave. That residue would have to come from soil samples as Johnny had built a self-destruct cave-in mechanism into each firing position that he would manually activate on his way out. The cave-in mechanism was made entirely of natural materiel.

All of this ran through Johnny's mind as he intently watched the launch pad and the Titan booster sitting on it. His communication had indicated that the launch would come early this evening and he had been here waiting and preparing since just after midnight. As he watched he saw the first tell-tale signs of exhaust begin to rise from underneath the booster. Long before the first deep rumblings of sound reached him, the quantity of exhaust smoke rose dramatically and the booster itself began to rise off the pad. As the rocket rose on a tremendous gout of flame from the Titan IV B's three massive solid-rocket motors for stage "O", Johnny brought the Stinger launcher viewer up to his eye and targeted the slowly rising rocket. He held the acquisition dot on the rocket waiting for the tone that would indicate the seeker head on the Stinger missile had locked on.

"Come on, come on," Johnny whispered as he waited first one and then two seconds. "There!," he quietly exclaimed as a very clear tone sounded when the missile acquired the very bright, very hot

signature of the Titan IV B.

Immediately Johnny squeezed the trigger and a loud *WHOOSH* sounded in the confines of Johnny's position as the missile shot forward toward the rising rocket and as exhaust gasses shot behind him down the tunnel. Immediately, carrying the Stinger launcher with him, Johnny began scrambling back out of the tunnel, which he exited in five seconds, already ahead of schedule by two seconds.

September 4, 2007, that same time

30th Air Wing Operations, 2nd Space Squadron

Space Launch Complex 2E

Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

In the command facility for the insertion of the KH-12 satellite into orbit, the launch of the Titan IV B was being monitored and reported on by Air Force ground control personnel. As the rocket slowly rose, the range safety officer monitored the vehicle's trajectory.

"All systems are nominal. Down range tracking has telemetry. Stage "O" separation and Stage 1 ignition in forty-five seconds, on my mark. Wait...what the! Hold...where did that come from?"

Into the view of the slowly rising booster, a small missile flew at a very high rate of speed and impacted the booster, on the nearest exhaust nozzle. A small explosion occurred which quickly spread through the solid fuel of the "O" stage and ruptured both tanks of the "burn on contact" UDMH and N2O4 liquid propellants, igniting the liquid fuel of Stage 1 in a second spectacular explosion. Immediately, the Titan IV B lost momentum and the upper portion of the rocket turned over and began falling to earth.

The ground crew and a number of the security personnel watched in mesmerized shock as the remains of the space craft struck the ground less than one and a half miles to the west of the launch facility and burst into a tremendous explosion. The explosion totally destroyed the booster and its precious cargo, the latest KH-12 satellite. It also totally destroyed the prospect of overall Allied satellite coverage of the Southwest Pacific for the next several months. As the burning pieces of wreckage and burning fuel fell to earth for hundreds of yards all around the impact area, a large brush fire ignited that would hamper all initial recovery and investigative efforts at the crash site for some time.

Not all of the personnel were shocked and mesmerized into immobility by the attack. Some reacted exactly as their training proscribed and had prepared them to do. The duty officer in the security station recognized immediately what was happening and followed the smoke trail of the missile back to where it originated. Upon seeing that point, he immediately reported over the command circuit.

"This is Security One, I have the launch point for the attacking missile identified. That location is approximately two miles to the east of Complex 2E on the side of Hill 345. . I am declaring a stage three

security alert. We are under attack, I repeat, we are under attack. Dispatching Monitor-1 and Security Team-2 now."

Within ten seconds of the duty officer's report, an Air Force Bell Ranger patrol helicopter rose from behind a hill to the north of the complex and immediately sped towards the destination reported by the duty officer. A puff of smoke still hung in the air above the end of the smoke trail from the Stinger missile's path. That puff of smoke was clearly visible and made an easy target for the destination of the patrol helicopter. Just over three minutes after the launch of the attack, the Air Force patrol chopper was circling the hill and reporting back.

"Command, this is Monitor-1. I have arrived at the designated area and am circling. No joy on any tango's at this local. I will widen my radius and conduct an Able-2 search."

By the time the first helicopter arrived and began reporting, Johnny Chen had already entered the gully behind and to the North of the hill and was protected from sight by dense brush and tree coverage. In the intervening minutes, he had cut another ten seconds off his anticipated escape time. As a result, he was not observed by the Air Force helicopter, having made it across the small meadow behind the hill and into the gully eight seconds before the helicopter's arrival.

Within another two minutes, a Blackhawk helicopter arrived at the site of the Stinger missile launch. Eight Air Force Special Forces personnel attached to the security detachment for the base quickly rappelled down ropes from the helicopter onto the hilltop. Upon landing, they quickly set up a perimeter around the hill and began searching. All they could see of any consequence was the smoldering smoke coming out of the collapsed launch position and on the other side of the hill from the collapsed escape exit. The team leader immediately deduced the meaning and dispatched three of his personnel to the east on a line away from the position marked by the launch position and the smoldering exit. They were accompanied by one of the helicopters, flying low and scanning the terrain for any sign of an intruder. But they didn't find any trace of the individual who had fired the missile.

As that search was going on, the security team leader radioed in the status of the search, wondering if the attacker had perhaps been buried in a cave-in of his firing position. By that time, Johnny was already in his escape tunnel, had already pulled down the concealed covering and was approaching his "holding room". It was a place he would come to know very well over the next two weeks while the most intensive search ever conducted on Vandenberg Air Force Base was underway above him.

September 9, 2007, 17:35 Local Time

Presidential Offices

Tehran, GIR

Hassan Sayeed watched his General, the Commander in Chief of all his Mid-East forces, closely. They had been in deep conversation and planning for the last three hours and were approaching the end of the meeting. At this point, all of the aides had been dismissed, the Defense Minister had been dismissed and it was just the Imam and the General. Sayeed knew that his other General's and political appointees within the military establishment were wary of Talabari. The CINC in the Far East, who himself was

experiencing unparalleled success had mentioned it directly to him. The Imam knew that the Defense Minister was concerned and had taken what he deemed to be appropriate and confidential actions to protect his own interests. Such unilateral and self-serving action could not be permitted and later tonight, in a personal meeting with the Defense Minister this would be made clear.

Still, the great Imam, the spiritual, political and military leader of all of Islam had to admit, he was partial to Talabari. No other General had been as successful, no other military mind understood the western enemies as well, and no other General had saved his life in the manner that Talabari had. On that day in the Kurdish area of the former Iran, before their fledgling "capitol", Hassan Sayeed had sensed the danger, had seen the glinting light off of gunmetal and had known he was in the hands of Allah when the shot rang out. But that shot had come from the barrel of Talabari's pistol and it had ended the life of a very capable U.S. CIA operative. An operative who, to that point had been Talabari's ally of long standing. An operative sent there to end the Imam's life, his life, before he could begin to realize the great goals and missions that Allah had prepared and trained him for his entire life.

"Well, the American's failed," he thought, "and in failing they created an adversary in Jabal Talabari that has haunted them ever since."

Looking up from the planning documents for the next six to twelve months of operations, Sayeed gazed firmly into General Talabari's eyes and spoke.

"Jabal, these plans are extraordinary. What you propose, if successful, will not only end once and for all the Zionist occupation of Palestine and annihilate the American and British support for them, it will also cut into the heart of Eastern Europe and force a quick settlement with the European Union. After your worthy and bold display with the corrupt Turkish President of the fate awaiting the unfaithful, I am sure their leaders are considering their options much more carefully.

"I am inclined to approve your plan immediately as presented. The realization of these goals is certainly that tempting. But, before I do, I must do two things. I wish to consult with the leading Ayatollah's and Mullahs, and I must contemplate it in light of what I know of our allies' operations that are about to be implemented in Asia and in North America

"I will accomplish the latter before the former. Tonight, after my meeting with the Defense Minister and before I retire to my personal quarters, I will contemplate the overall situation and seek Allah's guidance. Then, on the 12th I will present the results to the leading clergy for their agreement. There is no doubt regarding that agreement, but Allah requires it all the same.

"Until then, please enjoy your stay here, General. All communication facilities are open to you. We will meet again and finalize short-term plans after that meeting on the 12th. I trust that every convenience and requirement you and your staff have has been met."

General Jabal Talabari returned his Imam's stare steadily and with solid conviction in his eyes. He was overjoyed at the reception he always received and the deference given him by his military and spiritual leader. He was constantly amazed that events had taken the course they had and that his own faith and confidence in the will of Allah had been reborn in the form of this man, this servant of Allah. All of his cynicism, all of his floundering in the faith and all of his connection to the infidels had been washed away in that moment on the bluff overlooking the road to Irbil. The bloodshed there had been like an ancient sacrifice, and it had washed the film from his eyes. In the same manner, he had continued the cleansing wherever necessary with respect to the unfaithful and the infidel in the many months since. The latest example of this had been the death of the President of Turkey only a few days ago, and to which the Imam had just referred.

Like the majority of well over one billion Muslims, he now considered Hassan Sayeed to be the Mahdi of Allah, the one who would unite all of Islam and prepare the world for the coming of their Messiah. Islam was united, and now the General considered himself to be on a holy quest to help Sayeed prepare the world. They would prepare the world by vanquishing all of their infidel enemies, and, as it related to their "allies" by rendering them safe and available for their Muslim faith.

"Yes, my Imam. All of our needs have been well attended to. We will enjoy a very pleasant stay here before returning to our place in the field. Thank you. Allah Akbar and may Allah always be with you."

Sayeed knew that these words were spoken with truth and conviction. The sure, unequivocal feel of that loyalty was one of the things that he liked most about Talabari. He looked forward to the day when Talabari could assume the duties of the overall defense minister and handle all internal security as well. But that time would come when Allah willed it. Right now, Talabari was far too critical in the field using his evident genius to face the enemies of Allah. Sayeed himself, along with his other most trusted personnel, could handle any lacking in his other generals and administrators. In fact, he enjoyed doing so and playing them off against one another as he advanced the will of Allah.

With that in mind, he would prepare to do just that in the upcoming meeting with his Defense Minister that evening. A good man, and a loyal man, but far too concerned with his own influence. That was something that would begin to be addressed tonight.

After that, there would be two or three hours of contemplation, meditation, prayer and review of the overall global situation before retiring to his personal quarters. Then, the hours with his newest wife before he fell asleep would be pleasurable and would allow for his mind to experience the intuition and creativity he knew would come when he wasn't focused directly on the problems at hand.

"Study, contemplate, pray to Allah for direction, and then distract the mind," he said to himself as the General left the room.

He had found over long years of experience that such a method would very often allow Allah's will to be manifest to him personally. He had also learned, that whenever he had the opportunity, the best distraction from these serious matters could be found in the tender arms of one of his young wives.

Sayeed had three wives. The wife of his youth who was a close confidant, mother to six of his children, four of them boys, and was now almost thirty years old. The 2nd wife he had taken soon after he was named the great Imam from a prominent family of faith in Tehran. She had born him two children in the intervening two years and was now sixteen years old. His 3rd wife had been carefully selected and given to him by her faithful parents from Islamabad only three weeks ago. She was thirteen and as beautiful a flower as he had ever set eyes upon. She waited for him now in his personal quarters. He found that the excitement and the enthusiasm of youth in all the activities associated with his marriages stimulated him and helped open his mind. From intellectual debate, to discussions of the arts and culture, to their intimate moments, Hassan Sayeed took great pleasure in the challenge, the adoration and the enthusiasm that his young wives gave to him.

Of course, the Imam, like so many others wholly dedicated to the traditional Islamic faith, would never allow himself to contemplate how the adoration and manners of these young wives might change if they ever discovered or dared to consider their own choice in such matters. No, should the day ever come when any individual in such circumstances throughout Islam discovered or realized that they might have a choice in such matters, the enthusiasm shown to the great Imam would almost certainly disappear in a moment. In fact, it was out of the absolute conviction to never allow such a realization on the part of

individuals like these young wives that the great Holy War was being waged throughout the world against the secular, the unfaithful and against the infidel. This was particularly true about the struggle against America, where such choice was the predominant culture, their very way of life. Allowing for such freedom and its necessary risk of vice was why much of Islam considered America to be the "Great Satan".

In the Imam Hassan Sayeed's rendition of the will of Allah, such choices could never be allowed or permitted.

September 12, 2007, 09:55 Local Time

Presidential Office, Executive Complex

New Delhi, India

The Indian Foreign Minister, Rahmish Patel, listened as the President, KP Narayannen, droned on and on to his executive council about the successes their nation was enjoying.

"And he has every reason to crow," thought the Foreign Minister, "after all, I pushed him into it. But I know he really didn't want to do it and I can sense and smell it on him now, even after the successful completion and the very positive results."

Minister Patel was referring to the successful operation that had been mounted against the American 5th Fleet in the Indian Ocean and against the American base at Diego Garcia last July. In a swift attack by GIR and Indian forces, the U.S.S. Enterprise had been destroyed along with much of its Carrier Battle Group. A large conventional attack from the north had drawn off a large part of the carrier's defensive air cover and then a second prong of Indian bombers carrying the air launched version of the LRASD supercavitating weapon had come in and devastated the carrier and its inner ring of vessels. Afterward, in a month long operation that had cost over ten thousand Indian lives, the Indian armed forces consisting of the largest Indian Navy Task Force to ever put to sea carrying over 125,000 Indian soldiers, had worn down and ultimately defeated and occupied the Island of Diego Garcia.

Now, for the last year, the tides of war had continued outward and India had been able to consolidate the trade routes between the rich Persian Gulf oil area of the GIR, India, Indonesia and China and its newly acquired territories including Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan. Trade with the new territories of western Australia was growing as that area was consolidated into the expanding sphere of the GIR and CAS. Many more hundreds of thousands of Indian troops were now there in Australia fighting ... the number had recently gone over one million in fact. And they were being successful.

The result was nothing short of an economic boom for all of India. Coupled with the continuing rich resources being developed and brought into the nation as a result of the Siberian Economic Development Pact, there had never been a more prosperous time for India in all of its long history, despite the war.

"I should have let him stub his toe," continued Patel as the President touched on just these issues. "Better to have delayed our occupation of Diego Garcia and allowed a more powerful leader to come to power, one that has the true vision of where the current alliances can take our nation. A leader like me."

As it was, the President had thoughts of his own. He was uneasy about the continued warfare against the west. He knew that America, despite the striking setbacks she had suffered, was capable of astonishing feats and he hoped a negotiated settlement could be achieved before that came about. His allies in Beijing and Tehran felt that they just might defeat the United States before that time, but KP was not so sure. Nonetheless, India had fared well to date and was prospering beyond all expectation or forecast. Nepal, Bangladesh, a large part of Burma, Sri Lanka, Diego Garcia and the island chains to Madagascar were now all a part of the great Indian Republic. Their shipyards were producing fine destroyers and new aircraft carriers. The Indian Ocean was firmly in the control of the Indian Navy and multiple layers of defense had been established. The trade routes were open and protected except for the occasional U.S. or United Kingdom submarine attack. Invariably these attacks damaged convoys and commerce, but with the supercavitating weapons, they also invariably sent the offending vessel to the bottom of the sea.

In fact all of India's major combatants were now equipped with the latest LRASD innovations, as were all of the wings of their maritime strike aircraft. They devices were now being license built in India and India's allies were license producing the air launched variety that had been engineered and developed in India last year prior to the attack on the U.S.S. Enterprise.

Still, the words of the American President, who the Indian President held a great deal of respect and esteem for, continued to haunt him.

"Mr. President, if and when you get this communiqué, know with absolute certainty that the lives of our sailors on the Enterprise and her accompanying ships, and the lives of our Marines on Diego Garcia will be avenged. We will hold the leaders of your nation, you Mr. President, personally accountable for this atrocity."

KP Narayannen knew that Norm Weisskopf meant what he said, literally. So, he hoped that either his own wishes of a negotiated settlement came about, or that his allies were successful in their direct attacks so that the threat was never carried out. Either way, Narayannen also knew of Patel's ambitions and was committed to keeping him from the absolute power he craved.

"That one would be as bad as Hitler for our people and for our cause if he ever gains the control of this government," thought the President, "I can see it in his eyes. He would commit the same types of atrocities as those barbaric Islamics are doing...just like that General of theirs, what is his name? Talabari, yes, just like Talabari."

The President had appointed his Foreign Minister out of political necessity and because he believed he could control the ambitious young politician. Now, much later, he saw his mistake. He could not be rid of him because his political power had grown, and he could not give into him because of his own concern for the welfare of his nation.

"As if though I myself have not opened us up to the possibility of the most dire circumstances," he thought. "Despite the prosperity, I have embraced the evil and it owns me."

What really worried the President the most was that most of the people, in the glow of the prosperity, were assenting to and enjoying their success. Even if that success had come at the sacrifice of almost every principle on which their republic had been established .

The recently completed invasion and occupation of Madagascar and the ongoing operations in Australia were prime examples. Both operations had the enthusiastic support, the almost wild support of the people. Many were petitioning the government for the prospect of "free" lands there. Both operations had

also been approved and vigorously supported by the President in the hopes of averting a political collision with the Foreign Minister, and to date they had been successful. The President was convinced that once those objectives were complete, that India's military offensive involvement in World War III would also be complete. He hoped he could reign in the desire for further adventure and he would do all in his power to that end. They would then simply maintain and consolidate what they had taken, bring the west to the negotiation table or see them defeated, and then let the years of peaceful immigration to those areas do the rest.

"With India's population and growth rate, in not too many years those areas recently occupied would be, in the term popularized by American science fiction . . . assimilated."

As the President explained his long-term policy in this regard to his cabinet, he could see that a majority of the Security Council agreed and was relieved to hear it. He could also see in Patel's eyes that he rejected and spurned such a notion, but that he was resigned to having to live with it at the moment.

September 17, 2007, 14:23 Local Time

Israeli Defense Force (IDF) positions

The Golan Heights, Israel

Colonel Jess Simmons couldn't believe that this day had finally arrived. After more than two years of extended duty here in Israel, with not one trip home, he was finally going to get home to Texas and his wife. It would be a one-month leave, with a duty assignment to follow. Jess figured he would be right back here in some capacity, probably dealing with one of the American units employing the very RAH-66 Comanche helicopters he had trained the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to use here on the Golan Heights.

"... and Abe has done an extraordinary job integrating these birds into their operations up here," mused Jess as he walked with his friend, Colonel Abraham Eshkol in a final review of the defensive systems and spotting equipment that had been established specifically to enhance the Comanche squadron attached to the IDF forces here.

"Well, things look about as ready as they can be," Jess said as he stopped and looked to the west and north towards Damascus and the enemy. "Any GIR forces attempting a massed attack on this position will pay a steep price in blood and equipment."

Abraham Eshkol contemplated his friend's words as he gazed out across the rolling hills and plains leading into Syria. From this vantage point they could see the dust clouds out on the horizon from GIR patrols. They were patrols in strength.

Over the last several months, as the situation in Turkey had deteriorated, Israel faced encirclement by the increasing numbers of GIR forces that had consolidated their positions and dug in all around the nation. Israeli patrols had clashed on numerous occasions with the probing elements of GIR forces. Although not in the chain of command, the American Colonel's tactical input and advice had proven invaluable. Not one Comanche helicopter had been lost and they had destroyed many of the enemies

scout vehicles. Some of the Israeli's older helicopters had not fared so well, but despite those losses, the IDF was performing very well in this sector. But the GIR was continuing to build and was becoming increasingly aggressive in their probing. Each successive thrust included greater numbers attack helicopters, fighters, mobile SAM units and personnel and Colonel Eshkol knew it was just a matter of time before they began a general offensive.

"You're right Jess, I just hope that we have enough hardware and men to weather the storm when they do come. You are going to be sorely missed my friend. You've shown us much to blunt their probes and you helped turn at least two of those battles. I hope and pray that our officers have learned well the lessons we've taken from these engagements."

Jess thought about this. He knew of which events Abe was speaking. The most recent one had occurred just less than two weeks ago right off there to the northwest, just over the horizon. What had begun as a small skirmish between two small patrols had escalated into a major confrontation. For several minutes here in the command post buried deep into the solid rock of the Golan Heights, both Colonels had thought that perhaps the general offensive was beginning. The artillery and rocket barrage had begun and then intensified, for about fifteen minutes. Then, the fighting had ebbed, the fighter aircraft and helicopters had returned to base and the patrols had disengaged. Thirty-five minutes after it started, it was over and the ground lying between them and their enemy was again quiet. In that thirty-five minutes, the IDF had lost two fighter aircraft, two attack helicopters and three scout vehicles. Fifteen personnel had been killed and another twelve injured. The enemy losses had been significantly higher. Four of their aircraft, three of their attack helicopters and six of their BDM-2 vehicles had been destroyed.

In the minutes right after the artillery barrage struck the heights, when the confusion was highest, Jess had kept his cool and calmly suggested that the observation posts on the side of the heights being hit by the barrage be re-manned despite the danger. Specifically, after reviewing the order of battle in his mind and looking at the terrain, he had requested a specific observation along a particular low ridge off to the west. A flanking maneuver by the GIR forces, supported by mobile SAM launchers and attack helicopters had been discovered there just before it could engage IDF forces in that area. By quickly informing the IDF commander on the ground and by dispatching a flight of four reserve Comanches to that position, the surprise attack had been broken up with heavy loss to the GIR force. It had been a near thing, and it had cost the lives of two Israeli spotters on the heights, but Colonel Eshkol understood that Jess's suggestion had been vital in thwarting the GIR attack.

"I believe they have Abe. I just came up with an idea - your guys did the work. Anyway it won't be too many weeks before we get the opportunity to sit back in that Italian cafe back in Tel Aviv and swap stories once I return. I have a strong feeling that I will be right back here."

Abraham Eshkol knew that his friend was being modest, and it was one of the things he appreciated most about him. Colonel Jess Simmons was there to win, and he didn't have to see his name in lights to do it either.

"I hope what you say is right Jess, and that you are back with us soon. I believe that in the near future we will need every friend and ally like yourself that we can muster. In the mean time, we will miss you and your inputs, which we both know was somewhat more critical to our success in those operations than you admit.

"Be that as it may, may the God of Israel be with you in your travels home and as you meet with your dear wife. I and my wife, Ruth, both feel like we almost know her and we look forward to the day when we can all sit down to some fine cuisine after this horrible business is concluded."

As Colonel Eshkol completed his statement, a vehicle approached and stopped right next to them. Colonel Simmons ride had arrived. The two friends shook hands, embraced briefly and then Colonel Simmons climbed in the vehicle and it departed for the Air Base and his trip home.

September 19, 2007, 18:30 CST

Hyatt Anatole Hotel Lobby

Dallas, Texas

Curt Johnson sat in the deep upholstery of the couch as he waited for the two individuals who had agreed to meet him here. He was a little apprehensive. He found it odd, that he, a long time conservative, would be meeting to discuss strategy with two individuals he had always considered to be abject liberals, whose policies were harmful to the America he wanted for his children and grandchildren.

"Well, difficult times breed strange allies," he thought as he contemplated this. "Those differences pale in comparison to the task I believe we have before us."

Curt had been, up until March of the prior year, the Director of FEMA for the Weisskopf administration. At that time, he had tendered his resignation over the President's blatant disregard for the statutes and laws passed by Congress as they pertained to the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Claiming that many of those laws violated the Constitution and endangered the public in this war which had come to their very homes, the President had simply ordered his staff, the heads of the agencies reporting to him, to disregard those laws. Curt would have nothing to do with it. He had told the President so to his face in front of his cabinet. The Director of the FBI at the time, Ross Sessions, had agreed with Curt and had also spoken out boldly and forcefully against what the President proposed. Both had resigned that very day.

Johnson was a moderate who favored basically smaller government over what the other side of the aisle promoted, the side he would be meeting with tonight. He had been very successful for two sessions in the U.S. Senate from his home state of Iowa in promoting that very agenda before his appointment by the President. Before that, he had pursued a very successful legal career, first in his personal law practice, then as a local District Attorney and finally as the State's Attorney General. He had always believed that there were several areas in which professional governmental agencies were far superior to the "private sector". In those functions he felt that the "common" citizen had absolutely no place. Defense - whether civil or personal - was one of these areas in Curt's way of thinking and therefore in his view gun rights pertained to sporting and hunting alone. The private citizen was at best a hindrance to the professionals in these matters. Curt had always supported gun laws consistent with this position and he therefore could never support what the President had recommended.

Despite Curt and Ross's resignation and their outspoken criticism afterward, what the President had recommended had been accepted. In fact, the Congress and ultimately the states had passed the policy into law in the urgency and the confusion of the events. Citizens were combating and defeating the enemy at home it was true, but Curt believed that tremendous long-term harm had been done to the balance of power between government and the people, and he intended to do something about it to reverse it. That was the purpose of tonight's meeting.

As he reflected on these things, he regretted that Ross Sessions had declined his offer to join him here. Ross was out of politics now, but was involved locally with the war effort in helping to finance and manage one of the many new factories that had been built across the nation. He felt his services were more important there and had no desire to get involved in what he termed a "political slug fest" in wartime.

"If he feels that way then he's right ... he shouldn't get involved. This effort is going to require full commitment and perseverance," thought Curt as he saw a middle-aged woman and a well-dressed black man approach. They came towards him, and then upon seeing and recognizing him, hurried over. Curt stood and shook both their hands.

"Senator...Mr. Woodson, so good to see you. I hope your flight was comfortable."

Both individuals indicated that the private flight into Love Field on Woodson's personal Lear Jet had been fine and they exchanged greetings and pleasantries. After a few minutes, Curt touched the Senator's elbow and announced,

"Look, I have reserved a meeting room in the conference facilities on the second floor. If you don't mind, why don't we go there now and get started. I have arranged for drinks and appetizers. We can eat dinner at your leisure."

The Senator, who had sparred forcefully with the Administration over the 2nd amendment issues in the Spring and Summer of 2006-and lost-looked forward to this evening's meetings. She believed that there just might be a chance to reverse the President's initiatives in this area and in many others. She honestly believed Curt could be a key to that opportunity. Turning to him and putting her arm through his, she said,

"Well, Curt, let's be about it then. I'm not too hungry now but will not presume to speak for Warren. What do you say Warren?"

Warren paused, thought about it for a second and then shook his head while replying.

"No, I'm with you, Susan. I can wait on food. Maybe later in the evening."

The Senator then continued: "Okay, perhaps later or we can order something into the conference room or visit one of the restaurants. Lets be about what we came here for ."

With that, former FEMA Director, Curt Johnson led Senator Susan Crater, the Junior Senator from California and Warren Woodson, the 2ndlargest individual contributor to the Democratic National Committee (DNC), towards the elevators and a quick ride to their second floor conference room. There, they spent the next three hours in discussion, followed by two hours over dinner, planning their strategy to have Curt Johnson and Susan Crater make a bid for the Democratic Presidential ticket in 2008. They would be attempting to unseat a popular and healthy President in wartime, something that had never been accomplished in the entire history of the United States of America. They believed that Warren could garner the political and financial backing of the DNC and that the name recognition of both the Senator and the former head of Weisskopf's own FEMA would give them a chance. They also were counting on the other Democratic candidates recognizing that they were the only viable option and then climbing on board their campaign very rapidly.

September 21, 2007, 16:39 EST

Alternate Research Laboratory

Center for Human Genome Research

Boston, Massachusetts

Dr. Joseph Trevor hung up the phone and sat reflectively for a few moments. The call was perplexing on one hand, but it carried overtones of some very exciting possibilities on the other.

Although he was aware of Dr. Sandra McPherson's research through her published works and her repute, he had never met her personally. He had also never considered her line of research for collaboration since it entailed physiology rather than genetics, and her political and moral bent was very divergent from his own. She was a well-known liberal activist, particularly in favor of abortion whereas his own personal moral and religious beliefs were diametrically opposed to that. For that reason alone, her call was surprising to him.

On the other hand, their conversation had also raised some topics for future discussion and some avenues of investigation, which might offer exciting possibilities.

"Virtual microscopy?" he mused. "If in fact she had perfected techniques to extract additional detail from traditional microscopic studies, that would be quite something. Might those same techniques be applicable to the atomic force microscopy and enhanced mass spectrometric analysis he had used in his own studies?"

"Well, if they could that would be extraordinary a real breakthrough," he thought, "Yes that would be something indeed."

Joseph Trevor was the Director of this Alternate Research Laboratory for the National Health Institute's part of the Department of Energy Human Genome Project. It was a part of a multi-national effort to research the human genome and develop cures for all varieties of human genetic ailments. Dr. Trevor had been a rising star in the Pharmaceutical industry when he was selected to head this center. He had devoted his career to genetic research and his motivation of a personal desire to understand and ultimately cure the genetic ailment that afflicted his wife, and his grown daughter.

Last year, as a result of innovative work on his part and the insightful comments of his wife regarding the same, he had used prototype atomic force microscopies and enhanced mass spectrometric analysis to isolate and research an underlying atomic level structure to DNA that later tests showed only existed in humans. After experimentation and studies conclusively proved that this structure enabled humans to think rationally and gave them their reasoning capabilities, the Dr. had presented his work to his superiors and to the scientific community. The National Health Institute and ultimately the National Academy of Sciences had verified his work and the Doctor had ultimately been recommended for and received a Nobel Prize earlier this year.

The resulting scientific uproar was continuing to this day.

"It will probably continue for decades," was his opinion as he considered the way his discovery was reverberating through the scientific community.

It had opened up a wholly new field of study that promised to one-day dwarf the Genome Project itself, Dr. Trevor believed. But sadly, it had not advanced the research of the specific genetic disorders that were eluding Dr. Trevor's efforts. Just the same, the Human Genome Project continued as one of the largest scientific undertaking ever attempted by mankind, and Dr. Trevor's place in that study was secure. He would continue his efforts. But these underlying structures were even orders of magnitude more complex than the human genome, and the resulting new field of study held almost unfathomable promise for the future.

In the process of accomplishing all of this, the Dr. Trevor had perfected the processes and procedures for the use of the prototype methodologies into main stream tools. There were already a lot of computational and computer-programming algorithms associated with the processes and procedures that Joseph had developed. But, if he understood it correctly, these virtual modeling techniques that Saundra McPherson proposed would allow someone on the other side of the country who did not have the sophisticated equipment required to acquire the physical data, to study that data and research it as if though they did. It could just as easily allow someone on the other side of the world to do the same.

"The possibilities for enhancing, multiplying and ultimately completing research are almost incomprehensible," he thought as he continued to reflect. "Why, we could set up virtual research centers where the bulk of the research was done and then use the existing equipment to feed them, focusing that equipment on simply acquiring data as rapidly as possible. And that would be an enormously good thing, despite what ever reservations I may have of Dr. McPherson's personal beliefs and ideology."

With those thoughts, Joseph Trevor determined in his mind that he would almost surely aggressively explore the proposal Dr. McPherson had made regarding their collaboration on the development of virtual modeling for his methodologies. But, before he finalized that decision, as was his custom, he would bounce the relevant portions of the thought process off of his wife, Elizabeth, for her input. Their late night discussions regarding the research that Joseph had completed through the years had been an inspiration to him that served as fuel for his creative drive. It had been especially true during the discovery of the "Human Reasoning Structures", or HRS as they came to be known, that led to his Nobel Prize early this year. He would not abandon that source of inspiration and creativity now.

He picked up the phone and dialed his wife's direct work number at Raythone Corporation in Salem, New Hampshire. She answered:

"Hello. Elizabeth Trevor speaking"

Hearing her standard response, he replied, "Hi, Liz, have you got a second?"

When she responded playfully that she had more than a second for him, he continued.

"Look, I'm going to take off a little early this afternoon and will probably beat you home. What do you say you leave dinner to me. I'll makesome Lasagna and it'll be ready when you get to the house? I'm onto something new and I want to talk it through over dinner and afterward ... what do you say?"

Elizabeth did not hesitate.

"Sure sweetie, that sounds fine to me, you bake a mean Lasagna.

“You know I’ve always got the listening ear whenever your involved How about six thirty ? Okay, ‘bye ‘til then”

Chapter 2

“The infidel will either bow to the Truth, or he shall bow to the sword.”–The Prophet

September 29, 2007, 23:02 PST

Hill overlooking A Canal Head Gates & the Dam

Klamath Lake, OR

The men watched over their two charges very carefully. The weather was cool but dry, the air crystal clear with not a cloud in the sky. Off to the west and south was the dam, a relatively small structure that held back the immense expanse of Klamath Lake and generated electricity critical to northern California. To the north were the A Canal head gates that allowed irrigation water to feed the entire Klamath basin, which stretched into northern California down past Tule Lake. The variety of crops being produced in that basin, as was the case with every major agricultural valley in the western United States and throughout the rest of country, was now critical to America’s ability to remain agriculturally independent during the war.

After two years of that war, America had re-established its agricultural prowess. From the Rio Grande to Florida, from the Central Valley of California to the Midwest and throughout the Intermountain West, vegetables, fruits, grains, feed and crops of every variety imaginable were being produced in record quantities. The American farmer was literally feeding the allied world, and had risen to that challenge after overcoming significant difficulty in getting both land and machinery back into production. As with America’s industrial and manufacturing base, throughout the 1990’s and into the 21st century much of America’s commercial agricultural production had been “outsourced” to take advantage of the lower costs available in the world market. Now the folly of the magnitude and extent to which those practices had been applied was finally being overcome . . . and the ultimate cost had been paid in lost lives and lost territory. Few people were as aware of these facts as they related to agriculture as were the men of the local Home Guard unit who were on watch this night above the A-Canal head gates and dam near Klamath Falls. They had experienced first hand the effects of being “completely idled” in the summer of 2001 and had already known what it took to get back into production in terms of money, effort and commitment long before the war ever began.

On top of the ridge, Stan, Darren, Jake and Joseph scanned the area around each structure carefully with their night vision equipment. Stan and Darren were watching the head gates, Jake and Joseph were

watching the dam. Closer to each structure, patrols consisting of two men each were roving. Darren's younger brother, John and another local man, William, were near the head gates while another two men were patrolling close to the dam. Each of the groups had radios that allowed them to communicate with one another and with the Klamath County Sheriff's department. All of these men, and the other patrols out this evening around Klamath County were a part of America's Homeland Defense, Home Guard. All were armed with M-14 rifles and all had undergone training to allow them to conduct the surveillance of the county's critical infrastructure. Those duties did not include full police powers. They were simply watching over the infrastructure and reporting suspicious activity to the local Sheriff's dispatch. They were only empowered to interdict and use their weapons in the case of imminent attack or life threatening danger. In over two years of patrolling, there had never been so much as a suspicious report out of the teams here above the Lake ... but that was about to change.

"Well Stan, another evening watching over the source of our livelihoods.

"4 AM is not going to come soon enough for me," remarked Darren as he scanned along the north edge of the lake leading to the head gates and then continued along the lake shore to the south of the gates.

Stan was also looking forward to 4 AM as he scanned along the canal itself leading away from the head gates. He thought it was strange how things had changed since the momentous events at the head gates in the summer of 2001. Back then, the government had not trusted these same men to so much as set foot on the ground around the very head gates that they were now protecting with loaded weapons. Thinking back to that water rights confrontation with Federal authorities, in which he and Darren and every other man on watch had been involved in, Stan said,

"Darren, we've been watching over these head gates our entire lives ... even when it wasn't popular with the authorities. I guess we'll get through this evening, just like all the others, now that it is popular."

Darren considered his friend's words as he scanned the area below them on the hillside. What Stan said was true. As farmers here in the basin, they had watched over, paid for and been concerned with the welfare and operation of these head gates their entire lives ... and their fathers before them, and theirs before them. The Reclamation Act creating the lake had been passed and implemented in the very early years of the twentieth century, in 1902 to be exact. The dam and head gates had been built and large scale irrigation implemented to compliment and vastly increase what was already in place at that time. Under the original terms of the Act, the farmers who were invited and enticed to come to this arid country were to pay monthly usage fees until they paid off the construction project. After that time the entire irrigation project, including the head gates, was to have been privatized. In order to get people to come to the Klamath Basin over the years, the government had allowed them to homestead the land and had written the water rights into the agreement. The water rights associated with the reservoir attached to the land as an appurtenance. It was a good deal and through the first half of the century many farming families had taken up the challenge, overcome the obstacles and established profitable working farms in the Klamath Basin. Many of them were veterans whose land and water rights were signed by the President's of the United States at the time.

Ultimately, over fifteen hundred farming families farmed in the Klamath Basin, families just like Darren's, Joseph's, Stan's and the others watching over the dam and head gates this night. The construction costs had been paid off in the forties, but the government had not lived up to its end of the bargain. For several decades, discussion and legal wrangling had held up the privatization. The farmers continued farming and producing, secure in the belief that the government would honor their rights and ultimately make good on the promise. But the farmers were mistaken.

In the nineteen seventies, another Act of congress was passed that would ultimately bring the farmers in

the Klamath Basin into headlong conflict with their own government and into the national spotlight. This was the Endangered Species Act. Originally intended to be directed at saving entire species like the Bald Eagle, and originally meant to work hand-in-hand with conservation efforts of local governments, the bureaucracy and agencies surrounding that Act became disproportional to the Act's intended purpose. By the early nineteen nineties, when the Act was supposed to sunset, the budgets, special interest groups and politics of what had been intended as a good faith effort to save endangered species, had taken on a life of its own. By that date, private citizen property rights and other civil rights were regularly being infringed in favor of the political ambitions and whims of those pushing a now radical environmental agenda. They used the hundreds of millions of dollars wrapped up in the Endangered Species Act and the agencies and organizations surrounding it, and the resulting power of the Federal government to implement that agenda. They also used the power of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) for the U.N. to accomplish the same goals. That agenda and those politics came to a head in the early spring and summer of 2001 in the Klamath Basin when they ran headlong into the farmers here. Farmers like Darren and Stan and these others. Darren remembered it well. It had very nearly destroyed him and his family and their livelihood.

An environmental group in the urban areas right along the coast filed suite in Federal Court demanding that the water levels of Klamath Lake be held artificially high throughout the summer to protect the supposedly endangered sucker fish residing in Klamath Lake. A Federal Judge, appointed by the administration that had been in power in Washington DC during most of the nineteen nineties had agreed with what were later proven to be flawed scientific findings and ordered the Department of Interior to carry out the court's ruling. Rather than refuse to carry out the Judge's order and force a constitutional crisis over a ruling that would endanger the livelihood and security of over fifteen hundred law abiding families in the basin, the new administration had ordered the Department of Reclamation to carry out the Judge's order. In April of that year, the water was turned off, all of it ... no irrigation water flowed in the Klamath Basin.

The local farmers were flabbergasted. The sucker fish were not endangered and everyone living in the intermountain west knew it. In most areas there were infestations of these bottom feeding fish, commonly refereed to as "trash fish". They had to be literally exterminated in many areas to ensure that other fish, like trout, could subsist in various watersheds. In addition, the sucker fish in the Klamath Lake itself were in no danger. The science was flawed and the common sense of the farmers in the area saw it. They knew that if the Klamath Lake were drained to mud that year ... which had never happened ... that the sucker fish who were capable of burrowing into the wet mud, would be back the following year as soon as the snow melt filled up the lake. So the farmers protested.

In May of that year, over 20,000 people flocked to the small town of Klamath Falls along with all of the politicians and administrators to hear the farmer's case. The crowd was made up of farming families, various agricultural organizations and concerned citizens from every state of the union. After the speeches, people from every state of the union filled buckets from Klamath Lake and symbolically dumped them into the irrigation canal on the down stream side of the closed head gates. After many promises from politicians and administrators, everyone went their way confidant that the politicians would now see the folly of the situation and reverse it. The protesters called themselves the Bucket Brigade, but they all underestimated the power and influence that the environmental special interests groups had on many of their elected and appointed officials. May and then June passed with no change ... no water ... no crops ... and no income.

Facing certain failure and bankruptcy, a number of the farmers finally acted in early July. Someone manually opened one of the head gates in the first days of that month. The U.S. government ordered the Bureau of Reclamation to close the gates. On July 4th, a group of people protesting that closure opened the gates again. The government then sent armed U.S. Marshals to help the Bureau of Reclamation close

the gates again, and ensure they stayed closed. On July 13th a crowd of over two hundred farmers and their supporters opened the head gates again, despite the presence of the Marshals. This time they vowed to stay there and keep them opened. As the group sang gospel hymns, the two U.S. Marshals withdrew to call in reinforcements.

Darren remembered well the events that followed. He and most of these others on watch and patrol tonight had been present. That night of July 13, 2001 most of the farmers and their supporters went home to sleep, feeling they would even have more support the following day. About a dozen farmers spent the night by the head gates and they were joined there in the middle of the night by a few others who had heard of their stand and came to support. One of those supporters was from an agricultural valley in southwestern Idaho who had been involved on behalf of the farmers on the internet and had written a petition on their behalf. He immediately warned the farmers that the federal officials would not take the event laying down and that the farmers should immediately call back the citizens who had gone home to sleep. But the farmers were convinced that it would take the Federal government longer to react and they decided to wait for the morning and the help they knew would assemble then. They were wrong.

Early the next morning of July 14th, 2001 about 6:30 AM, a force of fifty or more armed law enforcement officers, including federal law enforcement who approached the gates from the back side of the facility, took the head gates back from the farmers and closed them down at gun point. What followed those sad events had ultimately built a pride in Darren's heart that remained to this day. Proud of the people in the area and from all over the country who rallied to the farmers aid.

Later that morning hundreds of people had come, with more arriving every hour. The law enforcement officers watching as the now closed head gates were surrounded and as they were held in their "compound". For the next four weeks the farmers harassed, outsmarted and literally went around the federal officers who were under siege as they "protected" the gates. Frequent choruses of "*Let the Water Flow*" were intermingled with patriotic songs, speeches and prayer. Local people donated food and drink for all of those keeping the vigil.

Ultimately, using irrigation pipe and pumps set into the lake itself, water was pumped around the federal authorities into the canal. The entire operation of setting up the pipe and pumps was done under the cover of a diversion where several farm animals were let loose onto the grounds surrounding the head gates and the authorities guarding them. While the agents chased sheep and donkeys, the farmers laid pipe and primed pumps. When the last pipe was laid, and water started pumping into the canal, the surprise on the agents faces was obvious, and the entire crowd began the loud chant anew of "*Let the Water Flow*", "*Let the Water Flow*".

Once those pumps and pipes were in place, they came under twenty-four hour a day watch by the farmers and their hundreds of supporters. That watch was accomplished in a fashion that Darren now realized actually fore-shadowed the Home Guard activities he was now currently involved with.

The result of the pumping operation was a token amount of water, but the point made was not lost on anyone there or on other farmers throughout the west watching events unfold. Plans were discussed to dig a new canal around the head gates, or to place several 36" siphon pipes around the head gates to move the water in the necessary quantities for irrigation.

Helpers organized relief convoys of large trucks from Northwestern Montana, from Northern California and from Nevada. These convoys stopped in every major city and town as they made their way to Klamath. Salt Lake City, UT, Sacramento, CA, Boise, ID, and many other cities hosted stops. Tons of supplies and hundred of thousands of dollars were gathered to help the farmers who were standing up to an atrocious and unconstitutional action by their own government. The relief effort was a success and

enough materiel was gathered, along with the farmers own efforts, to get them through the next winter to the next growing season

Although tempers flared and harsh words were spoken, somehow violence was avoided. The Federal government looked for a way to gracefully extract themselves from the growing political crisis. When the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 occurred, the farmers who were manning their vigil offered a compromise to the government. They would stand down, remove the “siege” of the head gates and allow these federal officers to be deployed to where they were surely more desperately needed. The farming season was a loss, but the farmers had gathered and been given enough to get through the winter. They indicated to the government that some arrangement and satisfactory resolution must be in place early in the year 2002, or the farmers would take back the head gates by force if necessary and would keep them.

The Federal Government was grateful and the administration ultimately corrected the immediate problem. The National Academy of Sciences was commissioned to review the science that had led to the Judge’s ruling in the first place. They found the science flawed and the head gates were re-opened the next April ... and the farmers enjoyed normal irrigation for a normal, full planting, growing and harvest season. Darren would never forget those events, or the people involved in helping them get through them.

“Stan, what ever became of that fellow from Idaho that showed up here and helped us those weeks during the stand at the head gates?”

Stan, while continuing to monitor the area along the canal, had also been reminiscing. The events of the summer of 2001 were still fresh in his mind, even though over six years had passed.

“Well, he went back to the Payette River valley over there in Idaho and spread the good word. He wrote a book about the whole thing in 2004 called, “The Stand at Klamath Falls – How rural farmers stood up to the environmental agenda and the federal government and won” and it sold pretty well from what I gather. He’s back in Idaho doing his engineering work as far as I know now.

“I’ll tell you Darren, the farming communities all over the west, and all over the country learned from what we accomplished that summer. I do not believe the government will ever try that again, at least I hope and pray not. I sure welcomed the efforts of that fellow, both as he stood right here with us and as he spread the word on those two Internet sites, SierraLines and the Independent Republic. Without those tens of thousands of people hearing about what was going on here and contacting their own representatives and the White House like they did, I’m not sure it would have turned out like it did.”

Darren agreed ... it had been amazing to see the people come to help and then to see their influence spread to tens of thousands and then hundreds of thousands before the major media ever really picked up the story.

“Well, old JT Samson sure took off from there didn’t he?”

“I mean he came here and spoke at one of the rallies ... he was the editor of that online news source, SierraLines ... but look at him now.”

Stan knew exactly what Darren was talking about. JT had come and worked with that fellow from Idaho and spoke to the crowd. It had been an inspiring speech and he had published the things that were going on here just as they occurred.

“I suppose his honesty served him well Darren ... it always does you know, at least that’s how we were

raised.

"That report he made about President Weisskopf's campaign comments back in 2004 really got things rolling for him, and then he was right there on that ship when the Chinese attacked our relief forces headed for Korea. I will never forget, if I live to be two hundred years old, those images he captured and sent back from that battle in the Pacific. That carrier splitting in two and going down like that was the most traumatic and graphic thing I have ever seen ... including the pictures of the twin towers from 9-11.

"Anyhow it's been kind of neat knowing a guy like that and seeing him make good and be in a real position to ... wait ... I've got something here."

Darren turned and looked at his friend as he stopped talking and concentrated on something down near the canal, to the east of the head gates.

"What is it Stan?"

"About two hundred yards to the east of the head gates, moving along the canal itself, down in the ditch ... two or three guys ... they're moving carefully towards the head gates."

Darren turned his attention to the same spot and soon noticed the movement. There were three individuals, only their heads or upper bodies visible occasionally as they moved towards the head gates.

"I got 'em. Go ahead and call it in Stan, I'll keep them in view."

Stan keyed his lapel mounted mic and called in the report.

"Klamath dispatch, this is A Canal, I have movement of three suspicious individuals towards the head gate facilities."

In the Klamath county Sheriff's office the dispatch officer immediately responded.

"A Canal, what is the disposition of your roving patrol? Are the suspects armed?"

At that very moment, Darren noticed that two of the individuals were armed with rifles of some sort and that the rifles were unslung and being carried by the suspects.

"Stan, these guys are armed with some kind of rifles ... you'd better call that in too."

Stan wasted no time responding to dispatch.

"Two suspects are armed with rifles dispatch. Patrol is in a position to interdict."

"A Canal, I am patching you through direct to Sheriff Eslinger, go ahead Sheriff."

There was a brief pause and the Sheriff came on the channel.

"Who have we got there? Stan, is that you?"

Stan had met and gotten to know the Sheriff personally during the confrontation with the Federal authorities back in 2001. The Sheriff had ultimately asked the federal officers to leave and allow the local people to mediate. The Federal officers had refused and had not left until the agreement had been

reached after the September 11th terrorist attacks of that year. But, in standing with the farmers, the Sheriff had endeared himself to them and many of them had supported him strongly ever since.

“Tim, this is Stan. We have a situation developing here, how long before units can respond?”

The Sheriff responded from his own vehicle that was in transit to the area and would arrive within ten minutes. He had one vehicle closer.

“I’m in route myself but am about ten minutes out, I have another unit that will be there a couple of minutes earlier, and then another unit already in route behind me. We’ll have six deputies there inside of twelve minutes.”

Stan thought quickly, analyzing the distances and the rate at which the intruders were moving. The deputies would be too late.

“Tim, these guys are going to be real close to the head gates in five minutes. Look, we have loud speakers up here and I can get Darren’s brother and Will in position to help interdict these guys. We could try and warn them off just before you guys arrive, otherwise they are going to be right on top of those head gates.”

Tim Eslinger trusted these farmers and their instincts. He had seen them in action before, in the most distressing of circumstances and had determined at that time to stand by them. He would do the same tonight.

“Okay Stan, maybe you can get one of the guys spotting for the dam to assist and go ahead and warn these people off ... we’ll monitor and be there quickly. Eslinger out.”

September 29, 2007, 23:06 PST

Ridge two miles to the West of the Dam

Klamath Lake, OR

The increased activity on the hill overlooking the head gates and the dam had been noticed by another set of eyes that were observing through their own night vision device. Michael Lee and the individual he had providing security were watching the carefully planned drama unfold from just inside the timber line on the higher ridge to the west of the dam.

Michael was the leader of this assault. He had entered the United States in the early nineteen nineties with paperwork indicating that he was a dissident who had escaped from the Chinese occupation in Tibet that had made his way to Thailand. He had worked in a Eugene Chinese Café ever since. In reality, he was another Chinese sleeper agent, trained by the PLA and sent to America over fifteen years ago. He had scoped out the Klamath Lake Dam on several occasions and knew that the electrical production resulting from the station below the dam and from other stations along the Klamath River were critical to California energy requirements. It was for that very reason that this operation was being conducted tonight, and that ten other similar operations were being conducted from Klamath Lake south, all along

the Sierra Nevada mountain range at other electrical production and routing facilities.

Michael had seen the farmer's protests at the head gates in 2001 and taken great interest in them. He had marveled at how the farmers had stood up to their own government and at how the American Federal government had ultimately turned the issue around. He understood that there were significant political considerations in that decision, but was also aware of the many armed citizens in the United States and the raw power they represented. He knew the government could afford to push the armed citizens of America only so far and he believed that a fear of that power had kept the government from using brute force against those farmers in 2001. The vigor with which those farmers had laid siege to and defended their rights in regards to those head gates along with the development of these home guard units is what led Michael to planning tonight's mission in the manner that he had.

He had three of his team members currently approaching the head gates from the east as a diversion. Their orders were to briefly exchange fire with the patrol watching the head gate and then fall back. Michael would then plan when to activate the major assault on the dam itself as he watched things unfold from this position and as more of the county's personnel were sucked into the diversion.

"Just like the overall operations in this entire war. The Americans are so predictable ... so easy to pull into a diversion. Sun Tsu's methods are timeless"

As Michael watched, he saw one of the individuals on the hill between the dam and the head gates raise a mega-phone to his mouth and speak. He caught the words even at this distance as the wind carried them to him.

"You there, to the east of the head gates along the canal. Stop and lay down your weapons, this is the Klamath County Sheriff's department."

As the amplified voice carried to his three men, Michael swung his binoculars to their position just in time to see them take cover and open fire on the hilltop. The flashes of their weapons were clearly visible and the individuals on the hilltop immediately began to return fire. In addition, much closer to the three men, more fire was directed at them from the two man patrol closer to the head gates. One of Michael's men went down and he was helped by one of the others while the third individual provided cover fire and all three began to withdraw.

Within a few minutes a Sheriff's Office vehicle slid to a stop near the head gates and two deputies got out and began to advance on the retreating intruders, who were being slowed down by their wounded friend. Michael silently swore to himself and activated his own radio, quickly clicking the transmitter once, followed by three quick clicks ... a code that had been committed to memory by all of the operatives over several years.

As Michael watched, he saw the man helping the wounded man stop, embrace his wounded friend briefly and then pull his silenced pistol from the belt around his waste and fire two rounds into the head of the wounded man. When complete, the other two men began withdrawing more quickly, covering one another as they attempted to reach their extraction point where two other team members were waiting in a vehicle.

As Michael watched, two other Sheriff's vehicles arrived and four more deputies got out, armed with rifles. They began making flanking movements on his remaining two personnel by converging on them along the berm that followed the canal. A helicopter could be heard approaching. Michael turned his attention back to the hilltop position overlooking the dam ... only one individual was left there, and he was watching the drama to his north and east as it played out. It was time to activate the primary assault

on the dam. Michael clicked that code on the channel his entire team was monitoring.

September 29, 2007, 23:19 PST

Near the Dam

Klamath Lake, OR

Eight men, in two teams of four, who had carefully made their way to within two hundred yards of the dam to the west and then concealed themselves, now rose up and moved quickly towards the dam. Within two minutes they were noticed by the roving patrol that was operating on the eastern side of the dam. Upon seeing their approach, the patrol immediately radioed their observations to the team overlooking the dam.

Joseph, who had been monitoring the chase and encirclement of the intruders down beyond the head gates, received the frantic report from the patrol near the dam. Quickly turning around, he focused in on the area indicated by the patrol and immediately saw the eight heavily burdened intruders advancing rapidly on the dam, now only sixty yards in front of them. He immediately contacted dispatch.

“Klamath dispatch . . . Tim . . . we have eight heavily armed individuals approaching the dam from the west. The patrol is in position to the east of the dam to take them under fire, but there are too many of them. I can help out with fire from up here, but they are right on top of the dam now. We need help over here real quick.”

The Sheriff, seeing that his deputies and most of the Home Guard units had been drawn out of position, immediately recognized what was happening.

“Joseph, you warn those folks off with mega-phone immediately and open fire the minute they make any move directly toward the dam, I’m going to call in help.”

As Joseph picked up his own mega-phone and warned the new intruders, they immediately opened fire on him. As this occurred, the Sheriff contacted the state dispatcher for Homeland Defense for Southern Oregon.

“Homeland dispatch, this is Sheriff Eslinger in Klamath. We have a major situation here escalating out of control. Two teams of terrorists are assaulting the Klamath Lake dam and the A Canal head gates. The head gate assault is clearly a diversion and a much larger and more heavily armed unit is now assaulting the dam. We require immediate assistance. Home Guard unit designated Klamath Dam can assist with location and disposition of terrorist units.”

By this time, after two years of terror attacks on U.S. soil, the Homeland Security apparatus within the United States was a well-honed and well-oiled mechanism. Within thirty seconds of the Sheriff’s report, a request had been forwarded to the Oregon National Guard. Two F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft that were maintained on alert status at the National Guard Air Force base just outside of Klamath were contacted by their command within another minute. Thirty seconds later they were rocketing down the runway on afterburner in a full military thrust take-off. They would arrive over the dam in less than three minutes.

In the time since Joseph had made his request, a hot and one-sided firefight broke out near the dam. The two members of the roving patrol opened fire on the approaching intruders. But the intruders used their cover well and only two of them were hit. They responded with overwhelming automatic weapons fire at the muzzle flashes of the patrol and severally wounded one and killed the other. Joseph provided fire from the hilltop where he was joined by the other team member covering the dam, Jake and then by both Darren and Stan. Under intense fire themselves from four of the terrorists, they returned fired with their M-14 rifles. With the counter fire from the terrorists, their efforts were relatively ineffective and two of the intruders quickly began setting charges all along the bottom face of the dam.

As they were doing so, the roar of the F-15E Strike Eagle's approach came thundering towards them. Joseph provided precise information regarding the location of the terrorists, but the F-15E's were unable to engage them for fear of damaging or destroying the dam themselves. As this news was relayed across the communication network, several things happened almost simultaneously.

First, another one of the terrorists was hit by fire from the Home Guard units on the hilltop. Immediately thereafter, Joseph was wounded in the upper thigh and fell, damaging his radio. As the placement of the explosive charges was completed, all of the terrorists began to withdraw and one of them launched a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile at the loitering F-15E's.

As both F-15E's broke off to avoid the first missile, another shoulder-fired missile was launched from the higher ridge to the west where Michael's was coordinating the overall assault. One of the F-15E's was hit in one of its engines and that engine immediately caught fire. That aircraft broke completely off and began to make its way back to the airfield, having cut complete power to the damaged engine but trailing smoke as it struggled forward on the remaining engine. The other F-15E diverted far to the south before evading the missile that had targeted it and then turned back towards the action, seriously peeved and looking for immediate pay back

After Joseph was hit, Jake took charge and was monitoring the retreating terrorists and reporting on their position and disposition using Stan's radio.

"Klamath dispatch, this is Klamath Dam. Both of our patrol members are down, Joseph has been wounded up here on the hill. We need emergency medical attention.

"Shoulder fired missiles have been launched at Air Guard aircraft from the vicinity of the dam and by another group of individuals on the higher ridge to the west. One of the aircraft was hit and has broken off in the direction of the base. The other appears to be circling back.

"I am observing the terrorists as they retreat. Wait one ... they've stopped. One of them is ... oh no, he's going to blow the dam."

As Jake finished the statement, there were several very bright flashes along the entire length of the downstream portion of the dam. These were followed by the tremendous sound of explosions as debris flew high into the air. As that smoking debris fell to earth, it was clear that the dam had been breached and a wall of water filled with twisting, rolling wreckage washed down the river channel.

After briefly observing the result of their work, the terrorists turned to make their way up the hill to the timberline. Just as they did so and as they began to separate, two thunderous explosions occurred amongst them, obliterating sight of them with the fire, smoke and debris from the blasts. Before the debris had fallen to the earth the surviving F-15E screamed by to the east, having successfully launched two JDAM munitions on the terrorist location. When the dust began to clear, it was obvious from Jake's

position that all of those terrorists had been killed.

By the time the F-15E turned back to target the terrorists on the higher ridge, no indication of them could be found. Michael had retreated into the dense timber immediately after his own security man had fired the second air to air missile. The two of them would be the only terrorists to escape.

September 30, 2007, 06:17 PST

Outside the Sheriff's Office

Klamath Falls, OR

Stan and Darren climbed into their pickup truck for the half-hour drive home.

“Long night, huh?” asked Darren as he settled into the passenger seat.

Stan, who was extremely tired, responded as he turned the ignition key and revved the engine. He turned on the headlights.

“It sure was. Those federal boys were sure full of lots of questions. Seems like they’ll be debriefing all of us and asking more question for the next week. I want to get home, get a little sleep and then try and help out with Larry’s family. Man, am I ever going to miss him.

“You know another thing, I’m glad the media isn’t here in force yet. You can bet they will be later today. I’ll be glad to be out in the basin getting things ready for winter when they start digging around. Maybe we ought to get with old JT Samson and let him tell the story.”

Darren thought about the long winter ahead and the coming spring. They were going to need water for the crops.

“That sounds like a great idea, he’ll be sure to get the word out. Let’s get the old Bucket Brigade back together and in action. We can call everybody in the irrigation district and get word to all of our friends who helped back in 2001. We’re going to need to get that dam rebuilt as quickly as possible so we can have irrigation water flowing come April.

"I figure if we have enough volunteers, we can get ‘er done by then and to hell with these terrorists or anyone else who tries to shut that water off ... we have food and crops to be growin’, Darren remarked as he turned to Stan, winked his eye and finished by saying,

"We got to *Let the Water Flow* to our farms."

October 1, 2007, 10:55 Local Time

Politburo

Beijing, China

Jien Zenim read again the headlines from the western news source, a WNN affiliate.

Massive Terrorist Attacks Against Electrical Grid in the Western United States

Over Twenty-Two Million without electricity, hundreds dead.

The openness of the western press never ceased to amaze the leader of the People's Republic of China and the head of the massive coalition that was having so much success against the west in the current struggle. The western news sources, particularly those headed by his special friend and confidant, David Krenshaw, provided almost as good a Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) as any professional military team he could put on the ground over there.

Even with a team on the ground, the communication back could take days, perhaps weeks, and was fraught with danger. With access to the free press in the west, Jien and the entire Coalition of Asian States and Greater Islamic Republic leadership could have critical information within a few hours of implementing major assaults, sometimes as it happened.

Apparently the vaunted and much touted Home Guard Units were fairly effective. Only three of six dams targeted in the latest operation had been breached according to the Generals in charge of intelligence. But, with that shock to the electrical grid, and with the several other large transmission lines and sub-stations destroyed in the attacks, apparently significant portions of America's electrical grid on the west coast had failed. This had cascaded into the intermountain west where several other million residents and business were without electricity.

"Hopefully it will be weeks before they can repair the damage ... and our people will continue to "pop-up" and harass their efforts continually," Zenim thought as he finished reading the article for the third time.

The leader of the People's Republic of China had no illusions as he considered the success of the latest operation. The harassment that his sleeper cells and the various Islamic and Hispanic units within the CONUS were causing could only harass and impede America's production efforts. That is exactly what they were meant to do, as well as demoralize the American population. Without the current means to directly attack their cities and manufacturing plants, outside of the attacks being directed against the Gulf Coast from Panama, the Red Chinese and their allies had resorted to asymmetrical methods of attacking America's heartland. To a significant degree, those efforts were proving successful and yielding the desired results.

But not to the full extent the Chinese President wanted. Zenim knew that with the advent of the Home Guard units and the "Arm America Now" initiatives of the American President, that such efforts would diminish in effectiveness with time. There were simply too many common citizens armed and they were apt to be in a position to interdict and impede attacks before they reached their targets or accomplished their goals. This most recent assault had once again proven this, despite some measure of success. Zenim knew that without such efforts, those attacks would have been much more successful and much more devastating to America's production efforts.

The Chinese planners had hoped to put America much more off balance and to cause much greater disruption ... he could only hope and trust that they were causing enough disruption to allow for the accomplishment of their ultimate goals. He was positive that those asymmetrical efforts could cause enough disruption. He believed and had planned for years that such disruption, coupled with the impact of military operations like Hung-Lu-Dong, would lead America and her allies to recognize the inevitable and sue for peace. Such a peace must then inevitably recognize and accept the new order of things, an order that left the Coalition of Asian States the undisputed power in all of Asia, standing on an equal footing economically and militarily with America and the European Union in the rest of the world.

“If they will not recognize that order of things ... they will cease to exist as a viable force themselves in world affairs,” Jien thought.

Folding the paper he had been reading, he sat it on the conference table and prepared to lead the Politburo in a discussion of the final planning and implementation of Phase Two of Hung-Lu-Dung now scheduled for March of next year.

October 3, 2007, 22:48 PST

Federal Detention Center

Maximum Security Block, Solitary Confinement

Outside of Portland, OR

Manuel was a beaten man, and he knew it. He wasn't sure if his captors were entirely aware of it yet and he was continuing to try and keep it from them. But he knew it, and he hoped he would find release before they could take full advantage of it.

He longed to see his wife and children again, he hoped that Miguel had been able to escape and take Manuel's family with him. He was certain Miguel had escaped. He knew the man too well. As soon as those all-points-bulletins and pictures went out, particularly on the television like they had in New Mexico where Manuel had been captured, he was certain that Miguel had immediately left the country for his secure Hacienda in Mexico.

Manuel had held out as long as he could, carefully withholding names and relationships, despite the drugs, just as he had been trained to do so long ago. But he was much older now, and the training was like a dream, long in the past. He had ultimately given up Miguel's name and how they were tied together, along with almost every operation and every other name he held in his mind. The super fire they had set in Colorado, the attacks on power line transmission towers, substations, transformers and switches. All the planning of those missions with Miguel that he could remember. But it had all been meted out carefully, begrudgingly, as he had been trained. There was one name he had not divulged and there was one operation he had been involved with he would not detail. Hector and the attack on Foothill Mall in Colorado were going to remain safe with him until he died. At least that was what Manuel thought.

In his confined world, it had taken months to give up the information he had divulged. Months of drugging, months of food deprivation, months of solitary confinement and even some rough physical handling by his FBI, military and Homeland Security captors. Actually, he was surprised that the physical handling had not been more severe, certainly in his own country it would have been. But apparently the Americans relied on their own methods, sprinkled with a just dose of physical abuse in order to keep the prisoner off guard. Manuel was sure it was also to try and maintain some semblance of their vaunted "civil" rights.

Manuel supposed that the Americans had learned, in the pressure and urgency of these current circumstances, where the war was also being waged on their own soil, that such notions sometimes took a back seat to expediency and survival. Manuel knew for him that it always did.

"Well, if my efforts have helped these Americans to learn to be more pragmatic," he thought, "Then that is something to be regretted."

As far as Manuel was concerned, the longer they remained soft and sacrificed pragmatism and their lives for principle, even when dealing with their abject enemies, the better.

Still, he missed his wife and three children terribly. He knew he would never see them again and *that* was something he certainly did regret. He would hold out as long as he could and hopefully expire before they got those last two bits of information from him. But he was so tired, and so spent...truly defeated.

What Manuel did not know was that his captors had known of his relationship to Miguel's long before Manuel had broken and given it to them. In fact, they had gauged and fine-tuned their methods as a result of what it took to get that very information out of him, and how long it took them to do it. The psychologists working with the team had been there the entire time, profiling, analyzing and predicting. They still were. Now they indicated that Manuel was almost certainly still holding back even more critical data, 95% sure of it they indicated.

Director Andy Syke watched Manuel through the digital feed connected to the micro-camera located in the left cinder block wall of Manuel's cell. It was an oversized cell where he could be held and interrogated without the necessity of moving him. He knew that the fatigue and the haggard look on Manuel's features were not a sham, not any more. He also suspected that the psychologists were right and that was more information to be coaxed and milked out of this prisoner. To date, Manuel had been a veritable treasure chest of information, but he had not given it up easily. The details of the planning of the super fire this man's team had set last year in southern Colorado along a one hundred and fifty-mile front were staggering. Almost fifteen hundred people had been killed in the resulting firestorm amongst the towns and recreation areas that had been ravaged. More than two hundred thousand others were made homeless. Over three million acres of land had burned in southern and central Colorado, literally gutting the center of the state and some of the most scenic landscape in all of North America.

"This guy is a monster who needs to be executed as soon as possible," thought the Director, "but we have to be sure that we squeeze every single drop of information out him before we do, and that is *exactly* what we are going to do."

There were several micro-cameras on each wall and on the ceiling of Manuel's cell. Perpetual light, concrete floor, hard mattress cot built as a protrusion out of the wall with soft, curved edges and a simple bodily waste hole in the floor at the bottom of a slightly sloped tiled area were all that existed in the room. All of his water and food were delivered to the cell and had to be ingested without the use of utensils. Nothing hard, sharp or of a nature that could be used for suicidal tendencies was provided, though the

psychologists indicated that he was not the type, only an 8% chance. But Director Syke took nothing for granted and left nothing to chance. In the current environment, Manuel, an enemy combatant, could be held indefinitely, without a lawyer and only with a Federal Judge's assent to his internment per the wartime legislative acts and executive orders. In the end, Syke knew that it would take only that Judge's assent and the sign-off of several individuals like himself to terminate this non-citizen, enemy combatant after a military style tribunal when the time finally came.

Andy Syke had been in the FBI for over twenty-four years, through the good and the bad. He was the top FBI official in this region and had come right up through the ranks as a field officer. He viewed himself as a loyal American and had never conceived the day where these types of procedures were enacted in the United States of America. But, with thousands of Americans dying at the hands of aliens like this Manuel Mendoza, the rules had changed for any enemy combatant that was not a U.S. citizen. America itself was a war zone, and for the enemy, particularly those dressed as civilians, it was being treated that way. Therefore, though the job before him was distasteful, it was something that had to be done for the security and well being of the nation, and he would do it without batting an eye.

He had personally taken charge of this prisoner and his interrogation and internment when he had been transferred to this facility a few weeks after his capture. Andy had one senior detective, two case officers and three psychologists permanently assigned. Other agencies, including Homeland Security, the CIA and the Defense Department were routinely assigning people to work with him, as more information became available.

As he watched Manuel lying there now, he looked at his watch.

"Five minutes to Eleven," he thought. "Another five minutes and we'll find out just what else it is you are holding back you miserable SOB."

October 3, 2007, 23:00 PST

Federal Detention Center

Maximum Security Block, Solitary Confinement

Outside of Portland, OR

From almost out of nowhere, a door opened and several people walked into the cell. Somehow, three sides of his cell were accessible to the outside corridors or offices, and he never knew which side his captors, his enemies, would enter from. The doors were almost seamless and could not be seen to the naked eye until they literally swung or slid open.

A special team of four armed guards, looking like the epitome of U.S. Marine Gunnery Sergeants, a spectacled man and the senior detective all entered the room. Two of the guards came over and pulled Manuel over to the chair they had brought with them and secured him to it using the straps that were

attached for that purpose. The other two guards had already secured the feet of the chair to the floor, screwing large bolts into threaded holes that had been covered until these people entered.

Once he was restrained, the detective approached.

"Well Manuel, how are you today?"

Drug stupored though he was, Manuel looked as firmly as he could into Detective Rollinson's eyes and replied in his Spanish accent.

"Detective, cut this small talk, okay? We've been through too many of these "discussions" over the months for it to have any meaning. Why don't you just get to the point."

Luis Rollinson had a begrudging respect for this man. He had worked him, stressed him and broken him down for several months and he could appreciate Manuel's remaining spirit. But none of that softened him or deterred him in the least from his duty.

"The point is simple, Manuel, how are you doing?"

Manuel lowered and shook his head slowly for a moment in silence. Then, lifting it once again so he could stare at the detective, he spoke with sarcasm in his voice.

"Well, I'm hungry, I am cold, there's too much light in this room, I can't get a decent night's sleep. I have no privacy and you people don't even knock before entering. By the way, where's the Director, I thought today it would be his turn."

That Manuel made light of the situation was one thing, but that his comments about his own conditions were all negative told the detective volumes. In fact, it was something that the spectacled man and his colleagues, the other psychologists, had told the detective to watch for specifically.

"Well, Manuel, Director Syke couldn't be here today, he's enjoying an outing with his wife and three children, the two boys and one girl."

At this statement, Manuel's head jerked up and a look of unadulterated hatred filled his eyes as he looked at the detective. Manuel had three children, two boys and one girl, and he had always enjoyed taking them on outings when he was at home. He knew that this reference was not an accident, and he also knew it was getting to him.

"You miss them don't you, Manuel? Well I have a surprise for you."

Turning to one of the husky guards, the detective motioned to him while speaking.

"Bring the kids in."

As Manuel watched, astonishingly his three children were marched into the room. There was Antonio, fourteen years old, tall and slender. Next was his only daughter, Bertrice, sixteen years old with beautiful long dark hair, then there was his oldest, Victor, seventeen and very muscular. All three were dressed in prison garb, and all three looked much to thin too Manuel with very red and very haggard eyes.

"What the hell is this? Why do you have them here? Atonio, Bertrice, Victor, tell these gringos nothing. No matter what they do to me, tell them nothing!"

His daughter broke down and began crying.

"Father, what have they done to you? You are so thin and look so weak."

As she said this she tried to move towards him but the guards held her back as she continued sobbing.

"Father, tell these men to let us go. They have said such horrible things about you..."

"Shut up!" yelled Luis, cutting off Bertrice.

"This is not about doing things to you Manuel. Now I want you to listen very carefully. We must know the name of Miguel's control and we must know it today. Also, we must know the details of the attack early last year on the Foothill Mall in Denver. We know you were involved some way in that, Manuel, and we need the information.

"I'll give you one minute to start talking. Master Sergeant, line them up."

As Manuel watched, two of the large guards took his children and lined them up against the far wall. Detective Rollinson walked over to the leader of the detail and extracted the service pistol from the man's holster and jerked back the receiver, loading a bullet."

"Fifty seconds, Manuel."

Manuel couldn't believe it, no, he wouldn't believe it. The Americans would never do such a thing. They may have been hardened in the course of this war, and they may well have a few rogues in their Special Forces overseas. Manuel had heard some stories coming out of Central America years ago, and had also heard talk about events in South East Asia that caused him to wonder.

Manuel knew that if the Americans ever did allow such things to occur, that it was all under very deep cover, conducted by agencies whose names simply did not exist, far away, somewhere off-shore far from the prying eyes of their press and their citizens...but this? No, it was not possible. He actually smiled as he contemplated their bluff and how he would embarrass them by calling it. He was angered as he saw the fear in his children's eyes and the small puddle of urine that was forming under his youngest son's feet who was first in line.

"You can go straight to hell, I don't know what you are talking about and I wish to God I could spend just two minutes with you alone for the fear you are causing my children."

Detective Rollinson looked at him coldly.

"Your call."

With that, and to Manuel's utter shock and to the horror of the children, Detective Luis Rollinson walked over to Antonio, stopped three feet from him, took careful aim with the nine millimeter pistol, and shot him right in the middle of the forehead.

BLAM!

A small red hole appeared immediately in Antonio's head as his eyes rolled back and he was thrown violently against the wall, a wall now covered with blood, bone fragments and brain tissue. Then he slid slowly and lifelessly to the floor.

For just a second Manuel stared in pure disbelief... then he wretched terribly onto the floor... and then he began cursing and screaming, straining at his straps as his other two children also screamed and cried and had to be physically restrained and held in place by the guards. Detective Rollinson came up to within two feet of Manuel's face and spoke to him.

"Okay tough guy, now you have two kids left and one more minute to think about it. Who is Miguel's control and what do you know about that attack on that mall?"

Manuel bowed his head. He looked up with tears streaming down his face at the pathetic and terrorized figures of his two remaining children. He looked at the silent and still form of his youngest son, Antonio.

"It feels a little different on this side of the fence doesn't it you miserable bastard?" asked Detective Rollinson. "You've got thirty seconds."

Manuel was finished. He broke down and begged the American to spare his other two children. He then spent the next forty-five minutes revealing every detail he knew about Hector Ortiz and the intricacies of FTA Trucking, the front company Hector had set up and run for so many years, smuggling weapons and terrorists into the United States. It had been a company made possible, and in part funded through NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. He also revealed all the details of last year's attack on Foothill Mall, including his own part in it, everything he knew about the attack's funding and how the remaining team members had been evacuated by helicopters that had been painted like those belonging to the local News Channels. During the confession, Manuel's other two children were led weeping from the room, with a promise that they would not be harmed.

Director Syke watched the entire affair. The methods were distasteful, and many would claim that they were out and out illegal and as bad as the enemy's actions. But Director Syke knew that it was the enemy that had started the terror, and he also knew that these methods had produced the desired results. What had happened here in this cell tonight would probably save hundreds, even thousands, of American lives, and they would allow the United States government to execute justice against some of its worst enemies. What Andy Syke didn't know at the time was that the information he had just heard would have even more far reaching consequences than he imagined, not only at home here in the CONUS, but abroad as well.

When Manuel was done talking and when Detective Rollinson was sure he had heard enough, he instructed the leader of the guard detail to carefully unstrap Manuel from the chair and let him spend a moment with his dead son.

Manuel, a completely beaten man, knelt down and crawled over to the still form of his son. When he reached him, he carefully began to take his bloody head into his arms. As he began to do so, he saw his son's eyelid flutter briefly and for a moment he had a wild hope that somehow Antonio might still be alive.

But that hope was short lived. Oh, in fact both of his "son's" eyes opened alright, to the further astonishment of Manuel. Then to Manuel's shocked amazement, his son stood up. As he did so, he peeled off a complete head mask that extended well below his neck, turning it inside out and showing it to Manuel. From his position on his knees on the floor, Manuel looked up into the eyes of someone who was clearly not his son, someone who was much older.

"Masks Manuel... using small explosive charges filled with the right ingredients," the operative said as he pointed out the location of the squib device on the inside of the mask where the tissue pack surrounding the small charge had been situated so as to look natural, another device on the front to produce the

desired result, and a lot of practice and good timing.

"You saw what you expected to see ... thanks for all of the info."

Then, the U.S. operative, who had trained constantly for over eight weeks to fulfill the role he had just acted out with the others, stepped over Manuel and left the room. Manuel just sat there in utter bewilderment, shaking his head and trying to comprehend the enormity of the ruse.

Detective Rollinson and his team retrieved the chair and also began exiting the room, they would clean up later. Before he left, the Detective stopped for a moment and looked back over his shoulder at Manuel and said.

"Be seeing you around... Amigo."

October 12, 2007, 06:35 Local Time

Viper Flight, 5000 Feet

East of Alice Springs, Australia

Lt. Billy Simmons carefully took stock of his situation as he made his way back to the forward base from which he had taken off earlier that morning.

"Another twenty miles should do it. You copy that Roger?... Roger?" he called to his electronics and weapons officer in the back seat as he made his way to the east.

There was no response from Roger Farnsworth, there hadn't been any some time. Billy was very worried about him and could hear the air whistling through the holes in the canopy...bullet holes.

It had started like every other flight he had been making for the last three months since arriving here near the front lines in central Australia. In for planning and briefing at around 3 AM to get final intelligence. Out on the flight line for a final run down and checkout of their aircraft before 4 AM. Then, airborne by 4:30 AM for the fifteen minute flight to the lines just west of Alice Springs and support of the American and Australian troops there holding out against the almost continuous massed attacks being conducted against them.

"And they aren't just massed infantry attacks like they had been to begin with either," thought Billie as he reflected on the fighting. "There are a lot of mechanized and armor units joining in now.

"And that's not all, several times we've been driven from the sky by those older MIGS and attack helicopters when our CAP couldn't hold their numbers back."

He'd usually fly between four and six missions per day. Coming back, getting the aircraft fueled, rearmed and checked out while he and his rear-seat got the latest intelligence and any new orders from HQ before mounting up again. So, up at 2:30 AM, continuous combat sorties until well after dark, finally finishing the planning for the next day and hitting the rack after 10 PM.

"Well, time really *flies* when you're busy," he whispered to himself, "18 or 19 hours a day. But I never thought it would come to this, particularly not after those first few weeks."

To begin with the missions had been an exercise in prosecuting an extremely "target rich" environment. Billy could hardly believe how many Chinese, Indian and Indonesian troops were there day in and day out, making their way towards the Allied defensive positions to attack. The Marine attack helicopters had simply slaughtered as many as they could with whatever ammunition they carried. They had wondered at the futility of it on their enemy's part. From the front lines, when they were back at base, they had heard the stories from the Marines on the ground about how the enemy dead were stacking up in front of the American lines. They had made jokes about it.

In those first weeks the enemy did have some aircraft coverage with mobile anti-aircraft batteries and a few shoulder-fired missiles. But the aircraft were no match for the American F-15 CAP and the weapons did not have the range his own missiles had. The American helicopters could just stand off and utilize their longer-range munitions to target threatening and valuable enemy vehicles and positions before moving in with their chin mounted chain guns to clean up.

But the enemy kept coming.

On the rare occasions back then, when the enemy fielded longer-range weapons, the AH-1Z Viper's maneuverability and counter systems proved more than adequate. In those days there had also been plenty of the very accurate and very potent higher tech munitions, both Hellfire missiles and the hypervelocity Quick-shot missiles. But as time went on, and weeks turned to months, those munitions became less and less available. Two weeks ago those higher tech munitions had run out altogether. Now it was simple line-of-site rocket pods and straight ammo for their 20 mm chain gun.

And the enemy kept coming.

"Thank God there are still plenty of Sidewinders left," he thought. "Even if they aren't those AIM-9X missiles we had to begin with, they are keeping us alive...at least they were until today."

Today had been completely different. Today things had broken down from the very beginning.

Over a period of the last ten days, the entire chain of command had noticed and spoken of the increasing number of higher sophistication aircraft, vehicles and missiles being brought to bear by the enemy. The problem was that this was occurring precisely at the time when the allies were running short on their best munitions. Rarely did they conduct a mission now when there weren't several enemy fighters breaking through to harass the American attack helicopter supporting the allied positions. Rarely were they not dodging accurate and much more sophisticated shoulder or vehicle fired ground to air missiles. Rarely were they able to attack without giving wide birth to enemy ZSU-23 radar guided anti-aircraft vehicles supporting the enemy columns. With excellent low-level radar, with wide engagement angles and with a high rate of fire—800 to 1000 rounds per minute for each of its four barrels—the ZSU-23 was a very dangerous threat. Until destroyed, they were deadly against any allied attack helicopters.

"And today, there were simply too many for us, or for our JSF compadres to destroy."

Before they ever arrived at the operations area, the warning had come over the command frequency regarding enemy fighters already breaking through the CAP. Those enemy fighters today were not the vintage aircraft of the last few weeks. Oh, make no mistake, those vintage MIGS could mix it up well with the Viper's alright, but usually there were enough F-35 Joint Strike Fighters (JSF) flying support

missions to help out and only a few of the Marine helicopters had been lost to them.

But today, the command circuit had warned right up front that the fighters breaking through were SU-30 and J-10 high performance fighters. The F-15's and F-35's had not been able to hold them back and so they had ravaged the Viper's before they ever reached their area of operations. What had been an entire squadron of twelve AH-1Z Vipers had been reduced to a single flight of four aircraft.

Those four had been ordered to proceed forward and support the beleaguered US Marine, US Army and Australian forces on the front lines. There, just west of Alice Springs they were facing the largest attack yet. In the early morning light, Billy had seen the tremendous volume of fire emanating from both sides as the enemy forces advanced towards the allied lines. He did not believe the advancing forces would be held back today.

He was right.

He had emptied all of his rocket pods and the last of his chain gun ammunition when he and his wingman had strayed into the range of four ZSU-23's defending an enemy mechanized battalion on the flank of the units Billy had been attacking. Apparently all four units had waited for an order to fire in unison. When they did, Billy's wingman was targeted first and took the brunt of the attack. Billy would never forget the brief warning over their local frequency from his wingman and the urgency and anxiety he had heard in it. He would also never forget how quickly that Viper had come completely apart under the intense gunfire.

"In less than a second, they were gone," he soberly reflected.

What had been the magnificent form of the most modern, most deadly attack helicopter on earth, an AH-1Z Viper, had in less than a second taken on the form of an exploding cloud of debris. From that cloud had emerged a severed main rotor, a shattered engine, thousands of raining pieces of burning metal and plastic...and the bodies of two American pilots that were literally blown to pieces. A cloud of smoking, raining, ruined metal, plastic, wiring and flesh.

Billy had reacted immediately, instinctively responding to his training and peeling off to the side away from the firing. His quickness and superb flying had saved his aircraft, but it had not been quick enough to avoid being hit as well. One stream of 23mm shells had cut right across the top of his canopy, angling down and behind him. Amidst the sound of shattering canopy and instruments, he could not shake from his mind the rapid succession of three dull thuds he had heard behind him as he passed out of the stream of fire. He had not been able to raise Roger on their internal communication system since. He had also not been able to raise any other Viper on their squadron frequency.

Now, less than twenty miles from his base, he was returning, the sole survivor of the entire squadron. From the frantic reports and calls for support coming from the front, Billy hoped he would have time to rearm and form up with other Viper units and continue to support the allied lines.

It was a vain hope.

A few minutes later when Billy flew over the ridge eight miles from base, he was shocked to see explosions and several smoke plumes rising over it in the distance. The base command frequency frantically responded to his inquiries and requests for clearance, letting him know that a ballistic missile attack had reduced the majority of the base to burning and smoldering ruins. There were very few serviceable areas for him to land, and very few operational aircraft of any type were left. Upon landing, he learned that the allied defensive lines around Alice Springs were being over-run at that very moment and a general withdrawal had been ordered for all allied units. Billy's new orders were to immediately

take on as much fuel as possible and join the remaining flyable units in a retreat far to the East to regroup, reprovision and continue the fight.

The enemy was coming, and nobody was joking about it any more.

October 13, 2007, 22:55 Local Time

Flag Conference Room, U.S.S. Ronald Reagan

CTF 77, 300 nm off the East Coast of Australia

The Commander in Chief of all Allied forces in the Pacific, CINCPAC, listened as the full bird Colonel gave the intelligence briefing regarding the overall status on the ground in Australia. Ben Ryan listened closely and soberly to this briefing. In addition to himself as CINCPAC and his staff, all of the highest ranking allied commanders here in the Australian Theater of Operation were in attendance. The new Commander of CTF 77 (who also served as the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk carrier battle group commander) and the Commander of the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan carrier battle group were in attendance. The Commander in Chief of Allied ground forces in Australia and the Commander of all allied ground based air forces in the Theater were both in attendance. Finally, the commanders of the Australian and New Zealand air, ground and naval forces were also in attendance. All had flown out to the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan for this pivotal meeting.

"Therefore, what has occurred is a general breakthrough at Alice Springs. The defensive lines, after holding out for several months, and after inflicting untold casualties on our enemies, have broken down completely. The withdrawal is orderly, but it is complete and rushed.

"In addition. We are experiencing steady losses along the Northwestern Coast and the Southern Coast as the enemy Army Groups in those areas continue to push forward. A large contingent in each case broke off from those groups and began angling inland day before yesterday. It is clear their movement was timed in anticipation of this breakthrough and they are trying to envelop our retreating forces from Alice Springs.

"We are harassing the flanks of these forces, but we do not have sufficient forces to interdict them without seriously risking our efforts along the coastal areas themselves. The overall strategic result of these actions can be displayed as follows."

The Colonel motioned to an aide and the screen towards the front of the conference room lit up with a strategic map of the Australian continent. Two large red arrows, pointing to the Southeast emanated from the Alice Springs area. Two more large red arrows, one along the Northeast coast and another along the Southern coast pointed towards the far southeast coast of Australia. Two other smaller red arrows, diverging from the coastal lines, pointed towards the area between Alice Springs and the Southeast corner of the continent. There were small semi-circular blue positions marked on the map in front of the

red arrows along the coast. In the mountains around Sydney in the far southeast were several more blue semi-circular markings. Out in front of those two large red arrows now to the east of Alice Springs were several smaller blue arrow pointing away, back towards semi-circular positions between their current location and Sydney.

"We are at a critical juncture here. If these defensive units now retreating from Alice Springs take up their planned fall back positions, they will be pincer in place there and most probably enveloped. If they escape that trap and fall back towards the initial primary defenses well out from Sydney and Melbourne, the enemy will have the option of using those two pincer forces to flank our positions on the coast."

Admiral Ryan interjected at this point.

"Colonel, please indicate the size and composition of those enemy forces you have indicated on the map that are engaged in their offensive."

The Colonel did not hesitate, having the facts and figured already in mind.

"Admiral, we estimate something on the order of 350,000 troops in each major arrow, and 125,000 troops in the smaller pincer movements. A total of one million six hundred and fifty thousand troops supported by armor and air.

"And those numbers are growing. Let me share these pictures with you."

An aide to the Colonel handed out copies of photographs to those gathered in the conference room.

"I apologize for not having this up on the screen in digital format, but there wasn't time.

"What you are looking at are three major staging areas along the Australian coast far to the west. They are marked on the map on the screen by the three large circles along the western, southwestern and northwestern coast."

The commanders saw huge areas of massed shipping, some unloading at docks, other unloading on shore. The numbers of ships in each case were phenomenal, ranging in size from the smallest ocean going vessels, up to the newer large amphibious ships being produced by the PLAN. The Australian Naval commander was the first to respond.

"For all the world this looks like three D-day sized efforts. . . they must be bringing in literally millions of men and their materiel."

The Colonel continued.

"Before I continue, let me inform you. These photographs were purchased in blood from coast watchers still active behind enemy lines. Satellite imagery is now virtually non-existent. Newer Chinese anti-aircraft batteries are proving extremely capable and we are unable to mount even SR-77 or HR-7 reconnaissance safely. This is classified information for which you all hold the appropriate level of security, but we lost an HR-7 aircraft and its pilot last week over the Northwestern staging area. The aircraft was lost before it could transmit to one of our Global Inspector UAV's that was holding position 250 miles to the west.

"But, the point is, the enemy is bringing in staggering amounts of men and materiel. We actually estimate

it now at something on the order of an additional two million men and growing, which they have already shown they are willing to lose in horrendous numbers to gain ground. In the Alice Springs area, we estimate that over 135,000 enemy combatants were killed in a ten-week period. We lost close to 12,000 killed and 24,000 wounded...but in the end, the enemy occupied the ground.

"Finally, to close, they have set up blocking naval groups to prevent our forces from reaching their beach and dock areas. I have marked those suspected vicinities on the map in red cross hatch, here, here and here."

As he said this, the Colonel pointed to three areas with the pointer he had in hand. One was just off the Northwest coast of Australia, one was off the Southeast coast of Australia, and the last was off operating somewhere in the straits between New Guinea and Guadalcanal. After pointing out each of these areas on the map displayed on the screen, the Colonel completed his briefing.

"Each of these two northern groups consists of at least three of the Chinese Beijing class aircraft carriers and their escorts. The one to the Southeast is an Indian group consisting of at least two of their carriers and their escorts. All of them are being supported by significant ground based strike aircraft. We estimate that at least three regiments of Backfire bombers, two regiments of Blinder bombers and two regiment of Bear bombers are now located within support distance of these naval groups.

"They are operating out of airfields in Australia and New Guinea. All have the capability of launching supersonic, sea-skimming cruise missiles...or the "Killer Whale" supercavitating weapons. We estimate that these regiments are being supported by three regiments of SU-24 Fencer strike aircraft and many squadrons of SU-30, J-10 and Mig-29 fighter aircraft, which are also flying support for their ground forces.

"This concludes the strategic briefing. I have specific tactical information for each of your areas of operation based on strategic assets, local HUMINT and on your own intelligence reports."

As the Colonel took his seat, Ben Ryan stood up and walked to the podium at the front of the room next to the display screen. He had already reviewed in his mind, and with several of those commanders present, what his recommendation was going to be. He wanted consensus from the combat force commanders in the room, and particularly from the military leaders of Australia and New Zealand.

"Gentlemen, let me be blunt. Tactically, I see no alternative but to have our forces fall back to the major defenses extending 150 miles out from Sydney and Melbourne."

At this statement the Australian military leaders interrupted with pleas and arguments to the contrary. Admiral Ryan did not give them time to swell into the chorus they might otherwise have done. Slamming his hand down loudly in the conference table next to him he shouted.

"*WILL* have your attention. This is *NOT* some kind of press briefing and your gentlemen are *NOT* civilian reporters. This is a military environment and by God it will be treated as one or I will have you removed from the room! Is that understood?"

The room got deathly quiet and the Admiral continued.

"I know the situation is critical and deadly serious. I also know we must do all in our power to maintain a strong military presence here on the continent or things will get much worse for everyone involved.

"Now, I am not proposing giving up, and I am not proposing that we operate in purely a defensive

mode. To the contrary I want all commanders to look for opportunities to counterattack and draw the enemy into large ambushes. In particular I want to look for specific opportunities to have the enemy mass his large forces for more of these large breakthroughs. Here is why."

Turning to one of his aides, the Admiral motioned and then continued.

"Commander, please escort all aides and staff out of the room, then hand out the packets to the commanders. I would ask that each of you receiving these packets begin to read and then hold your comments for a few minutes. The rest of you are dismissed. Tactical intelligence will be presented to you in the officers mess which has been set up for that purpose and where you will find information regarding the overall tactical plans waiting for you. Please begin preliminary planning based on those plans and your commanders will join you in a few minutes."

An aide to Admiral Ryan escorted the staff members and aides from the room and then began handing out red folders marked TOP SECRET to each of the commanders. As they opened them and began reading there were many wide eyes and audible intakes of breath. By the time the meeting of those commanders adjourned, the Admiral had his consensus on the strategic recommendations that now had to be communicated to Washington in the form of an urgent request.

October 13, 2007, 18:23 EST

Situation Room, The White House

Washington, DC

The information packets regarding the current tactical situation in Australia had been distributed and read. The members of the National Security team were sobered by it. All of them, even those without a military background, could see where the situation was leading. Australia was on the verge of collapse and defeat. In a matter of weeks, a one hundred and fifty mile radius circular region, armed to the teeth, would be all that was left of free Australia. Very soon, Sydney and Melbourne would be subjected to brutal bombardment. How long could they hold out?.

Every member of the team sat in serious reflection. From the Vice President, to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, including the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Director of the CIA, the National Security Advisor, each and every one of them rolled the situation over and over in their minds. They each kept coming to the same awful conclusion.

After letting the team digest and contemplate the information and its implications for a few minutes, the President spoke.

"I don't need to lay out what the information in those packet means. We have in fact discussed this possibility on a number of occasions and what we would do about it if it came to pass. Those plans are well laid and well advanced and will make New Zealand an impenetrable fortress for liberty from which to mount our counter offensive if required.

"What I do want to discuss this evening is a recommendation I have received from our Commander in

Chief in the Pacific, Admiral Ben Ryan. Now if you will, please open the second folder there in front of you, also labeled TOP SECRET, the one I asked you each to wait to open until we had finished with the first. Please hold your comments and questions until after everyone has completed and until after I say a thing or two."

In a virtual repeat of events the day before in the Fag Conference room aboard the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan, as the various members of the National Security team read the recommendations from CINCPAC, there were many wide eyes, audible intakes of breath and whispered oaths from all around the room.

"As you can see, the Admiral is requesting National Command Authorization for tactical nuclear strikes against the three staging areas our enemies have established along the western coast of Australia. He is also asking for permission to conduct tactical strikes against the three major naval battle groups that the enemy has deployed around Australia and against six major airfields in Australia and New Guinea.

"He feels, and justifiably so, that such strikes will break the back of the enemy offensive in Australia and allow him to launch major counterattacks against the front line elements of the remaining invasion forces. He feels that without their logistical, naval and air support, he will be able to isolate them and crush the head of the snake in Australia whose body will have already been destroyed by these strikes."

The President stopped for a moment and briefly reflected. He knew that militarily this plan could be made to work and that the enemy could be defeated in place in Australia. But a lot depended on what the enemy had brought to Australia with them. The Chinese had tactical nuclear weapon capability. The Indians did as well. Through the former Pakistan, so did the GIR.

What and how much had they brought to Australia? While the President knew that American forces could certainly defeat them there with more numerous and more capable weapons... would it destroy Australia to do so? What type of strategic response would such a move invoke?

They would be crossing a critical line to unilaterally do this, even though they could stop the major enemy advance there. What would be the political fall out in terms of impact to the momentum they were attaining in persuading more and more nations to actively join in the fight against the new Axis of the CAS, the GIR and the CSAS?

With these thoughts fresh on his mind, he continued.

"I am inclined that believe from a pure military standpoint that this plan would work and we could in fact defeat these huge enemy forces in and around Australia".

When he said this, the Secretary of State, Fred Reissinger, a staunch defender of the President and all of his policies, and a good friend, interrupted and said,

"Mr. President, you can't be seriously considering this. Are you actually proposing unilateral first use of nuclear weapons? It would destroy our coalition and allow the enemy to paint us with a brush so black as to justify their use of those same weapons whenever, wherever. "

The President trusted his Secretary of State. He also respected him. He had expected that there would be interruptions, strong emotions and abject opposition to any contemplation of this path. But the President also could see ahead and knew that their enemies, with their overwhelming number, *must* be stopped somehow. If they weren't, he was certain that sooner or later they would be fighting those overwhelming numbers on American soil. Keeping the many foreign terror and sleeper cell attacks under

control was a continuing problem, though great progress in that regard had been made. But tens of thousands of American citizens had died in the process, and they were continuing to die as new cells popped up and went about their murderous work.

"Fred, I am serious about considering it. Deadly serious and just as serious as Harry Truman was at the end of World War II.

"I believe we are looking at a situation that could be orders of magnitude worse than World War II in terms of human life, particularly American life, if we do not end this thing as quickly as possible. If we have the means, and if we honestly believe we can get away with it victoriously, I believe in the long run it will be far better.

"But I have not said I would do so unilaterally, particularly on an ally's territory, and I have not indicated that strategically it would be best. I have simply said that there locally, tactically I believe we could use it to win. I want to explore the costs of that tactical win first, and then also explore all of other areas I just mentioned before any decision is made."

The President turned to his Secretary of Defense, George Crowler. Crowler had been, until last year, the Chief of Naval Operations. But after the death of the former Secretary of Defense, Timothy Hattering, in the surprise attacks of March 15, 2006, Crowler had been nominated and approved as the new SECDEF. Addressing him, and expanding his gaze to take in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the military, General Jeremy Stone, the President said,

"George, what do you and General Stone have to say regarding the tactical situation in Australia as it relates to the request from Admiral Ryan? What have the Chinese, the Indians and the Indonesians potentially brought to Australia that they can use to counter our attacks with in terms of tactical nuclear capability?

"After we discuss that aspect and assess the risks, I would like John to take us through the strategic situation. What do the Chinese have strategically to hit us with, either in Australia, New Zealand or here, and what have we got to protect against it. Specifically, what is the status and strength of our TMD defenses with the Aegis cruisers. How many do we have deployed and where?

"Finally, Fred, you take us through the diplomatic impact. What nations would this be likely to adversely effect and what is the impact of lessening their resolve, or losing it. Speak directly to the Australian government's response as well.

"Let's proceed. George?"

For the next two hours the discussions continued. The tactical nuclear capability of the Chinese and Indians was discussed in detail and the likelihood of their having that capability in Australia. It was determined that while their capability was much less advanced and precise than America's, they had likely brought many weapons with them to Australia for use should they be attacked. It was considered unlikely that they would use them first in an offensive capacity. The range of their weapons were considered to be anywhere from 300 to 1500 kilometers with anywhere from a 1/4 to a 2 mile center of probability impact point. Such a capability would be very effective against cities or large stationary bases but not very effective against mobile military forces in the field. But, in the numbers they would likely employ, they would create a lot of severe, long term damage to Australia and once started, the allies would have to rain down many warheads of their own on the enemy forces to ultimately defeat them. It was considered likely that the price of stopping the enemy in Australia would be the most habitable parts of Australia itself.

From a strategic standpoint, it was known that the Chinese had significantly improved their capabilities and their number of strategic warheads. They were thought to have upwards of one hundred warheads that could reach America, all of them in the far-western part of the nation. Hawaii and the west-coast cities would all be at risk. The United States had deployed five cruisers along the west coast with TMD capability. Similar to the two deployed near the nation's capitol, these warships had their magazines filled with a double load of the TMD enhanced standard missile. Twenty-four in each vertical launch cell making for 48 TMD missiles on each vessel. The range of these missiles was in excess of 150 miles to altitudes in excess of 200,000 ft. One such vessel was located each in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. There was another vessel similarly armed in Hawaii and three were in the Australian area, one each with the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan and U.S.S. Kitty Hawk groups and one off the coast near Sydney. During this portion of the discussion, Vice President John Bowers made the following ominous statement.

"Mr. President, if the Chinese went all out and targeted all of their missiles at our west-coast cities, they would launch approximately twenty at each. In such an environment, we cannot guarantee that a single Aegis vessel equipped for TMD would get them all. We could lose anywhere from one to five cities in such an attack."

Before the Vice President could continue and complete the briefing, the President responded just as ominously.

"For the which the Chinese would lose fifty of their major cities as we responded in an overwhelming fashion. The war would be over on that day...but we would be decades recovering.

"Which reminds me, John, where are we on the land-based variety of this thing. We had talked earlier this year about appropriations for developing and deploying the basic launch cells and Aegis acquisition, control and guidance in land facilities. How has that proceeded?"

The Vice President took just a moment of time to brief the President and the entire team on the project.

"We appropriated funds early this year for development and then deployment in the first ten major interior cities and our major military installations. The testing of the first operational site was completed two weeks ago and was an unqualified success. That was in Chicago where we now have three vertical launch cells deployed. We have also discreetly deployed six cells around the capitol to augment the two Aegis vessels on the Potomac. We will have similar operational deployments in and around Buffalo, Minneapolis, Dallas, Atlanta, Denver and Phoenix by the end of this year. After that we will deploy in Cincinnati, St. Louis, Salt Lake City and Memphis. We will proceed from there with another twenty cities, including all of the west coast metropolitan areas. All of that will be completed by the end of next year.

"Our major SAC and ICBM facilities will be protected this year, all of our other major strategic bases in the CONUS will be protected by the end of next year."

Clearly the President and everyone in the room was relieved to hear this news. After a moment or two of discussion regarding it, the meeting returned to its principal topic. John Bowers finished off his discussion with one of the most telling considerations. Nuclear weapons, even those that are not very accurate are very effective against massed, stationary targets. The Vice President, seconded by the Director of the CIA, felt very strongly that if the nuclear genie were let out of the bottle, that the G.I.R. would use every nuclear weapon at their disposal. They would target, and they would likely convince India and China to also target the most massed concentration of allied military personnel and civilians in

existence at the current time, Israel. At the same time, attacks on other headquarter facilities and bases overseas could be expected with similar attacks against the CONUS.

"Mr. President, depending on the number of missiles, I do not believe that our two TMD capable Aegis cruisers off the coast of Israel would be able to take them all out. If they couldn't, the losses would be monumental, despite whatever retaliation we rained down on the enemy afterward."

After the Vice President sat down, Fred Reissinger led the discussion regarding international fallout. It was felt that many of the European nations currently wavering in their involvement, mainly France, would be pushed completely out of participation. It was also felt that Germany, Italy and perhaps Brazil would be weakened in their resolve and support of the United States as a result. Finally, it was plainly believed that the government of Australia would rather go into exile with a later opportunity of liberating their country rather than see it destroyed by nuclear fire and fallout.

A candid conversation between President Weisskopf and his counterpart in Australia late that night proved this to be the exact case. After all was said and done, it was felt that the cost in terms of lives and expense of using the weapons first, would outweigh the cost of winning the war conventionally, even if it took much longer, and even if significant ground was lost in the mean time.

The policy that the administration settled on was that the United States would retaliate in kind and overwhelming if attacked in such a fashion, but it would not instigate initial use. This policy was made official and confidentially communicated to the heads of state of America's most trusted allies, which included the United Kingdom, Brazil, Germany, Australia and Canada. All of them breathed a collective sigh of relief.

It was a policy that America itself would violate within the year, but in a way that none of them could have foreseen at the time.

October 14, 2007, 23:12 Local Time

Admiral's Quarters

U.S.S. Ronald Reagan

320 nm East of Sydney, Australia

"Who is it," Admiral Ryan asked at the knock on his door.

"Admiral, sir, flash traffic from the NCA, marked your eyes only," was the reply.

The Admiral stepped out and took the flash priority message from the young officer. He retired with it back into his quarters where he opened it and quickly read its contents. After reading it a second time, he leaned back in his chair, sighed loudly and exhaled a long breath.

NCA DENIES REQUEST. OVERALL COSTS TOO HIGH. COORDINATE WITH YOUR

CHAIN OF COMMAND. YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO DEFEND YOUR FORCES AGAINST WMD ATTACK AND RESPOND IN KIND, OVERWHELMINGLY, IF SO ATTACKED.

HOLD OUT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. INFLICT MAXIMUM CASUALTIES ON THE ENEMY. IMPLEMENT OPLAN NZ-AUTUMN AS MEASURE OF LAST RESORT.

SIGNED, WEISSKOPF.

"So. He honestly believes that we will ultimately stop these bastards and throw them back conventionally...just not here. Well, I hope and pray he's right."

After a hasty conference with his leading commanders, informing them of the decision, the Admiral filed the communication in his secure, TOP SECRET cabinet and then went to bed. It had been a long 48 hours. He would share the information with his entire staff tomorrow morning at the intelligence and staff meeting and proceed according to the orders of his overall Commander in Chief. Right now he needed four hours of sleep.

October 17, 2007, 16:35 CST

Parking Lot 3D

Main Joint Strike Fighter Production Facility

Fort Worth, Texas

The whistle announcing the end of the shift had sounded almost five minutes ago and the number of people reaching their cars out in this part of the parking lot was beginning to increase rapidly. Jess watched them as they approached, scanning their faces, looking for the figure and shape of the one he knew so well. He was impatient.

Leaning against his rental car, his field of vision was directed past that old 1995, F-250 4X4 pickup truck that he knew so well towards the main manufacturing facility. He had parked his rental car in the next furthest row out from the plant and a few spaces down from where he had found the pickup. It gave him a position with a clear view of the workers as they approached from the plant. He had gained access into the parking lot through the gate with his military pass and a quick call to the guard's management, who had been told by their own superiors to expect him.

"Sometimes having friends in high places comes in handy," he thought as he continued to watch. "This was one of the more pleasant times and greasing these skids had been a pure joy."

After thinking this, and while watching the people approaching, getting into their own vehicles, he reflected on the last four weeks.

He had left Israel in the middle of September and been flown in a military C-17 transport directly to a NATO air base near Anzio, Italy. While there he had been asked to stick around a few days and brief visiting general officers and political figures on conditions in Israel. After that, he had been flown to the CONUS, landing at Andrews AFB near Washington, DC. where he had been assigned temporary duty to the Pentagon to assist and consult with the Army's planning department. That duty had lasted over two weeks and he had gotten more and more impatient as time passed, but had fulfilled his duty admirably just the same. The stakes were too high to consider anything different. His experiences while on the ground amongst the Israeli Defense Forces were invaluable to the Pentagon planners as they tried to anticipate and prepare for the major engagement that everyone knew was coming there. Ensuring that the United Kingdom troops and Israeli troops could hold up their end of the defense was one of the major concerns of the planners, in addition to ensuring that the U.S. Forces had more than enough supplies and materiel.

Jess wondered when the major fight would come. The massing of forces and the density of them there, on both sides, was simply phenomenal. It was also very troubling. When the fighting finally broke out in earnest, it was going to be a pure slaughter house all around. No way of avoiding it that he could see. Maneuver warfare in that environment would be difficult and the advantage would be with their enemies who had more room to do so. The victory would go to the side that could do it the best and slaughter the most while doing so.

But those thoughts were not foremost on his mind right now. He had anticipated getting home and being well into his sixty day leave at this point. All of that had been pushed back thirty days now by the assignments he had received between Israel and here. He was concerned that once the major engagement began, he would be immediately called back there because of his experience in the area, and that would cut short the time he had to spend with his wife, Cindy. Maximizing that time and their enjoyment of it was the foremost thought on his mind.

"But it could happen any day and my leave would be canceled," he thought as he pulled his collar up a little against the brisk north wind and hunkered down closer to the rental car. "I bet dollars to doughnuts they won't need a month to get me back over there when the time comes either."

It was a cold wind too. Here near the JSF assembly plant, which was in the same general vicinity as the Regional Joint Reserve Base that Jess was so familiar with from his long years of National Guard duty, the wind cut like a knife. It was blowing across what had once been a large prairie surrounded by low hills. That prairie was now filled with manufacturing facilities, an airfield and the military training facilities of the Joint Reserve Base. But the buildings were quite a distance away and out here in this parking lot, there was little to shield one from the wind... accept the cars themselves. While it was relatively rare for such a powerful cold front to come down through this part of Texas so early in the fall, it was not heard of.

"Temperature must be in the 40's," Jess thought. "Probably be down in the low 30's this evening."

As he thought this, his gaze over the hood of the car caught sight of a familiar form in the distance. Yes, there just coming out of the gate that led to the facility and just entering the parking lot. He would recognize that figure and that walk anywhere. She was just saying goodbye to a group of other women who were now separating and making their way to their own vehicles.

Here she came and she had not seen him yet.

He pulled the dozen roses closer to him and sank down behind his rental car. At the rate she was approaching, he should be able to jump up on a ten count...no, he'd give it fifteen just to be sure.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven," he counted to himself. He could hear her footsteps now, getting closer. He tried to imagine her as she got close to the car and began getting the set of keys from her purse.

"Eight, nine, ten," he continued as the steps clearly sounded next to the pickup.

"She should be stopping now," he thought. But the footsteps kept coming!

"What the," he thought as he considered peering around the edge of the car. Could he have been wrong? No, couldn't be, he would recognize her anywhere he told himself

"Maybe she just has to put something in the back of the truck," he thought to himself as he continued counting. "Thirteen, fourteen ..."

Then her voice sounded, and much closer than he would have had expected.

"Jess Simmons, you come out from behind that car this instant before I hit you with my purse!"

BUSTED!

He stood up. There she was, as beautiful and as attractive to his tired eyes as ever, standing not eight feet from him on the other side of his rental car.

They stared at each other for a full three seconds. Then, he dropped his flowers and she let the purse slip from her shoulder to the ground as they both rushed around the car and into each other's arms. The flowers could wait, explanations could wait, talk could wait...everything on earth could wait as far as they were concerned. For the next five minutes they were completely lost to the world, oblivious to it as they simply held one another, basking in the warmth of the embrace and their joy there in the brisk north wind in Fort Worth, Texas.

Chapter 3

"Never, never, never ... never, never give up!"—Winston Churchill

October 25, 2007, 07:35 Local Time

Jungles of Central Columbia

400 miles Northwest of Bogota, Columbia

The dripping was constant, in fact, it was not really a dripping at all, more like a steady showering here under the canopy. The heavier rain could be heard striking the canopy above in wind-swept torrents, providing a constant background roaring that eddied with the wind up above. But here under the canopy, there was very little wind, just the dense humidity, the constant roar, the very close quarters in the thick undergrowth and the constant, showering from the canopy above.

It wasn't that the Captain didn't have prior experience in jungle operations. To the contrary, he had operated in Southeast Asia on many occasions where the jungle was just as thick as this. He had also operated in African jungles where large carnivores could ruin an operation as surely as the enemy...and where those same animals could also eat you alive if you weren't careful. But somehow, those jungles were different. The humidity here seemed denser. The sounds of the jungle were somehow more muted to his keen ears. There was just a different *feeling* about the jungles here in South America. He had heard that it was worse along the Amazon, where the Brazilians were fighting Argentine and Chinese infiltrators and insurgents.

"A vast area that, the Amazon basin," he thought. "I bet a resourceful enemy could hide in there for years."

He wondered if he would be assigned to any operations over there in the future.

"Who knows? Can't be any worse than the deserts and mountains of Iraq. At least there is plenty of cover here and you don't feel so exposed, even if my Farsi and Arabic is better than my Spanish," he continued to himself. "But right now I have my hands full right here thank you very much."

snap

With the sound the Captain quickly turned his head and peered carefully out of the blind he had set up fifty feet from the trail and looked through the trees and foliage to a point sixty feet up the trail from his position. The other five members of his team who would participate in the ambush did the same along a circular portion of the trail where they had set up. All together he had eight members in the team, himself, three former U.S. Navy Seals, three members of the elite Colombian Special Forces and a local guide.

The point man had signaled to them six minutes ago that the enemy was approaching along the trail. A simple, almost inaudible *click* over the channel they were all monitoring had told them. About twenty seconds later a double *click* had informed them that the last man in the enemy group had passed and that their target was amongst them. Now those enemy personnel were approaching, entering the trap the Captain had set for them.

Each team member had carefully laid out fields of fire that overlapped one another but did not endanger other members next to them or across, on the other side of the semi-circle from them. Anyone fully entering the ambush would be subject to a deadly crossfire. On either end, to prevent anyone attempting to escape, deadly Claymore mines had been set up. Captain Riley Adams was in the center of the line, with the guide. One of his men was to the left, followed by one of the Colombians. To the right were the other two Colombians. In addition to the former SEAL who had warned them of the enemy group's approach, another one of Riley's team was further down the trail to warn of any approaching danger from that direction. The trail itself wound around a large rock outcropping here, with flat terrain off the trail and extremely dense undergrowth. There would be no place for the enemy to escape.

As the Captain contemplated this and went over the fields of fire in his mind, he caught sight of a slight movement on the trail. There, just coming around the bend, came the point man for the enemy. He was good, moving slowly and close to the earth, scanning the trail and to either side of it for the slightest thing out of place. He could see that this was a choke point and he held his hand up in a fist to tell those behind him to wait. The slight man moved forward a few steps, and then stepped off the trail and disappeared into the underbrush to Adam's right.

"He should pass right between the two Colombians," Riley thought. "Come on, come on...nothing to see

here."

A few seconds later the enemy point man returned to the trail and continued on past the Captain. Several other members of the enemy patrol now began to appear in single file along the trail. Then, perhaps thirty feet past Adams, the point man again stopped and made the fist sign and disappeared again into the underbrush out of Riley's view, very close to the team member to Adam's left.

The Captain could see the other enemy soldiers more clearly now. Five or six men approximately fifteen feet apart and disappearing around the curve in the trail. He estimated that most of the enemy personnel were already in the trap, but not far enough for his liking. Just then, there was a slight rustling in the brush to his left, a muted *thunk* followed immediately by a relatively loud gasp.

Riley immediately looked up the trail. The next enemy in line had definitely heard something and now lifted his hand in a fist. While the others knelt down and took cover, he quickly moved forward, looked into the brush where his point man had left the trail. He saw something that startled him and was quickly turning around when ...

Plunk, Plunk, Plunk

The sound of the three-round burst from the silenced M-5 was not loud, but they were more than loud enough as they impacted the second enemy soldier, spun him completely around and flung him onto the trail..

Captain Adams quickly clicked his transmitter three times to indicate that the team should open fire, brought his weapon to bear and began firing himself. As he did so, he cut down the second enemy soldier in line and then quickly exited the back of his firing position keeping several large trees between himself and the enemy. He and the guide then moved through the trees parallel to the trail firing at other figures on the trail in support of their other team members.

With the three clicks of the radio, the entire area had erupted in the muted sounds of the team's silenced weapons overshadowed by the loud *CRACKS* of the enemy's AK-74's, punctuated by several full auto bursts. From well up the trail Riley heard the sound of Chief Watson's FAL, cracking over and over again as rounds continued to fly through the undergrowth near him. Then there were several *BOOMS* as the Claymores were ignited. After that, there were only two or three more muted firings from the silenced M-5's. Then it was over.

""Well, Felipe, that was some kind of mess, huh?" Adams said as he turned back to his guide.

But the guide was not standing there behind him. Hurrying a few steps back through the undergrowth brought the Captain to where he could see one of Felipe's booted legs sticking out of the foliage. Rushing over to his side, he found Felipe lying on his side, a lot of blood pooling under his head. Adams reached down to Felipe's neck and checked for a pulse...there was none. Turning Felipe over he immediately found out why. An AK-74 round had punched a hole right through Felipe's glasses and entered his brain through his right eye. They'd have to be their own guides getting out of here now.

Taking further stock of the situation, Adams found that one of his Colombian team members had been killed and another wounded. The wounded soldier was nicked fairly badly on the arm, but could walk fine. All eight of the enemy soldiers were dead, including the principle objective of the mission.

There, laid out on the trail, was Jose de'Pastoral, the head of security for the entire, now united, Colombian Drug Cartel that had allied itself with the Panamanians and the Chinese. Over the last year,

this man and his followers had assisted, guided and conducted many operations against the Colombian government as it tried to resist the joint Chinese and Panamanian invasion of their country. Many peasants in outlying areas had been butchered. A number of mid-level government officials had been assassinated. On three occasions, battalion sized raids deep into Colombia had been conducted. This man had been the mastermind of it all, and he was now very well terminated. Riley had been specifically brought in and assigned the task of tracking this man down and eliminating him. It had taken months to accomplish that task.

After a number of pictures were taken and all the documents, weapons and anything else of value was stripped from the enemy, Riley Adams allowed his Colombians to do the honors to Jose while the Americans buried the other dead deeply, well off the trail. When the four Americans returned, their eyes beheld the body of Jose, there in the bend of the trail, against a tree right next to the trail itself. The body had been driven into that tree with six bayonets retrieved from the enemy dead. It was placed in such a position that anyone passing down the trail would have to notice it. And the body was headless.

On a wooden pike that the Colombians had fashioned and planted in the ground directly in the middle of the trail and in front of the body, the eyes in Jose de'Pastoral's decapitated head gazed sightlessly back up the trail. A small wooden sign that had been brought along for this very purpose was affixed to the wooden staff below Jose's head. In Spanish, it simply said.

Jose de'Pastoral.

Thus ends an enemy to the Columbian people and a collaborator and supporter of Communists and Criminals. All who pass here consider and take note.

October 25, 2007, 21:02 Local Time

Jungles of Central Columbia

385 miles Northwest of Bogota, Columbia

They had put fifteen miles between themselves and the site of the ambush. After going almost a mile down the trail in the opposite direction from which the enemy had come, the team had taken off across country. They had climbed over one small ridge, down into the next drainage, and then up the next ridge, which they followed for three miles. Now, on the far side of that ridge, in a sheltered outcropping of rock, the team set up camp for the night. If things went well, they would be extracted late tomorrow afternoon by a specially configured U.S. Navy Seal team AV-22, specifically outfitted for CIA operations.

As camp was being set up and security established for the night, Captain Adams took out his ruggedized, special operations palm computer device that had been built in American specifically for operations like this one. It was a newer piece of equipment, deployed within the last six months and built specifically to allow for quick, almost impossible to trace communications in a world that did not have ready access to satellite communications.

Riley entered the message he intended to transmit, reporting on the successful operation and their plans

for extraction into the device. Once entered, that message was then encrypted and compressed. He then attached the device to a 10 meter short wave radio carried by one of his team members. The device downloaded the message into random access memory (RAM) on the radio and then transmitted the compressed file in less than one half second on the appropriate frequency before shutting off.

The team then waited for one half an hour and turned the radio back on. Within three minutes, a response had been received and the radio was again switched off.

Riley Adams then downloaded the message onto his palm device and processed it through the decompression and decryption algorithms. When the message was available, the Captain read it...and then read it again. Then, quickly turning to the men, he issued his commands.

"Alright guys, mount up," he said to the five remaining team members. "We've just been congratulated and as a reward we've been ordered to make for an alternate extraction point tonight."

Only two of the team members had actually been looking at their team leader when he started talking, but all of them had been listening. When he commanded them to "mount up" and then spoke of an alternate extraction point tonight, they all turned their heads in his direction and listened intently. Their weariness was evident, as was their dislike for the orders that was written on their faces and in their eyes. But the Captain knew they would professionally and without fail follow orders... and that is exactly what they did.

"We're going to be pulled out of the alternate location at 2 AM and we have almost ten miles of tough humping to get there.

"Let's go!"

The six men quickly broke camp and prepared to move. As they did, Captain Adams committed to memory the words of the message he had received before turning off the hand held device that it had been displayed on.

COPIED YOUR LAST. JOB WELL DONE. NEGATIVE ON TOMORROW PM EXTRACTION. PROCEED THIS PM TO THE FOLLOWING COORDINATES FOR A 0200 ALTERNATE EXTRACTION. URGENT NEW OPERATIONAL ORDERS. MAKE ALL DUE HASTE. COORDINATES FOLLOW.

November 2, 2007, 21:40 PDT

Personal Study

Pacific Heights Subdivision

Palo Alto, California

Sandra was extremely excited. Her efforts with Dr. Trevor had paid off over the last six weeks. She

had finally convinced him to share with her the methods, procedures and complexities of his use of atomic force microscopies and enhanced mass spectrometric analysis. She could tell he had misgivings, but she also sensed that he was an honest man who was willing to give any other scientist the benefit of the doubt, even if he disagreed with some of their own personal views. If he thought the effort was focused on the advancement of the sciences and the benefit of mankind, and if he felt the methods were legal and moral, he would share.

After making all of this clear, after satisfying himself that it was the case, and after working out the details of their collaborative agreement, he had forwarded the data and the procedures to her. Now, after several weeks of intensive study and programming she had successfully developed the initial algorithms and virtual models to emulate those techniques in a virtual model similar to her earlier efforts with older, slower and less resolute techniques. The net result was that she was finally prepared to apply the unbelievable computational, processing and graphical power of modern desk-top computers to the task at hand.

In addition to the latest methodologies and procedures, Dr. Trevor had also supplied her with the initial data samples that he had used to conduct the research that had ultimately led to the discovery of the Human Reasoning Structures. She had the data representing the tissue specimens and she had the outcome of his initial efforts with the atomic microscopies and enhanced spectrum analysis. She also had her new algorithms compiled, installed and ready to apply to the initial data. Hopefully, the algorithms would run and produce a viable result that she could then compare to the physical data resulting from Dr. Trevors initial studies. By comparing the outcome of her virtual analysis with the actual physical outcome she would be able to gauge precisely whether her modeling techniques had been successful, and she would be able to iterate the process in order to fine-tune the algorithms to maximize her success.

“Now, we’ll just feed the data into the algorithms and see what they produce,” she thought as she used the touch screen menu she had created and touched the “LOAD DATA” option.

She made her way through the various menu selections for the tissue type, the magnitude and type of analysis and the specific algorithms to be employed. Ultimately there would be several options for all of these selections where the program would adjust accordingly for the analysis selected. Tonight, with this initial test, there was only one algorithm and one level of analysis. Once she had made the appropriate selections and had actually loaded the test data into memory, she was finally ready to proceed.

“Nothing left now but to process,” she said to herself as she placed her finger on the screen and pressed the “PROCESS” button.

She was using one of the new 10 Ghz machines loaded with Eight gigabytes of Random Access Memory (RAM) and 256 Mb of graphics memory for the 27 inch flat panel color display ... a real screamer. Nonetheless, given the immense amount of data being processed the machine labored through her algorithms for all of thirty seconds. At the end of that time a flashing PROCESSING COMPLETE message was displayed on the screen and a new menu option became active, DISPLAY RESULTS.

Sandra touched the DISPLAY RESULTS button and then picked the GRAPHICAL option so she could see the result on her flat panel display as they would appear under a microscope image generator. This took several more seconds to process graphically and then ...

She couldn’t recognize a thing.

Something had gone wrong. Where had she made the mistake? This display was just so much gibberish compared to the results Dr. Trevor had obtained from his physical analysis.

Then it hit her. The resolution was all wrong. She was viewing the graphical data at the highest resolution possible and none of the structure was recognizable. Working quickly she checked the resolution of the data provided by Dr. Trevor and zoomed the screen image to the proper setting to match.

And there it was. In fact, due to enhancements she had made in the algorithms based on the later research that Dr. Trevor had done, as well as the findings of the National Academy of Sciences ... her image was much more accurate and revealing than those initial findings Trevor had produced.

“My goodness ... this is very, very nice. This is absolutely exciting!” she muttered out loud as she panned around the resulting image, comparing it to the one derived from the actual physical studies.

“I’ll have to add a resolution setting option into the setup menu, but that’s easily done,” she said to herself,

“I just can’t believe I didn’t provide for that from the start. I guess I was in such a hurry to get going that I just forgot and let it default to the highest resolution. Well, now that I know, it won’t happen again,” she continued.

“Now for the nitty-gritty of comparing the empirical data.”

For the next three hours Sandra worked comparing data and fine tuning her set up and modeling algorithms. Then, well after midnight, she composed an email to Dr. Trevor and added and encrypted attachment that contained the results of her last iteration with the algorithms. She had no doubts that Dr. Trevor would be extremely impressed.

“He’ll probably want some kind of live demo, either online or in person,” she thought.

“But that’s okay, we can give that to him any time now.”

She was sure that once Trevor had verified the accuracy and reality of what she had produced with this experiment and demonstration that he would move rapidly within his own circles to establish the funding to completely productize the results for his own area of research. By agreement, that funding would include a percentage that would in turn pay for Sandra’s further development of the algorithms and modeling into other fields of study, particularly her own.

“Now that I have successfully proven the concept, regardless of what else, I am absolutely confident that it is just a matter of time before we experience the breakthroughs in fetal tissue research we have been looking for all of these years,” she thought to herself as she finished composing the email to Dr. Trevor.

... and she was right, there would be breakthroughs ... but not the variety she had expected for all of those years.

November 8, 2007, 14:40 EDT

FBI Headquarters

Director's Conference Room

Washington, DC

“Okay, let's have a final review of the principle timeline and schedule for Operation Alvarez, both Plans A and B. I want to brief the President and both of the security teams this evening. This is a major counter-terrorist and Homeland security operation and is going to have significant impact on the overall war effort.

“Gerald, start with the domestic operations and proceed to the planned operations in Mexico, particularly on the status of the Mexican government's disposition as it pertains to the raids and our current surveillance on the targets. Then review the physical plans for the raids and the financial components in each area. I'll need a write up on your review after the meeting.”

The FBI Director, Doyle Maxwell, sat down and allowed the Senior Agent in Charge of the operation, Gerald Ludlow, to proceed with the final review. Operation Alvarez had been long in planning and represented a tremendous opportunity for Federal Law Enforcement, operating in conjunction with the Office of Homeland Security and with the NORCOM of the Defense Department, to completely shut down and destroy one of the largest terror networks operating within the United States. It was a network that had been directly responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans and the injury of thousands more ... not to mention property damage valued in the billions ... over the last two and one-half years.

FTA Trucking had been recognized as one of the darlings of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1990's. The company was headquartered in Mexico City, but its North American Operations were headquartered in Dallas, Texas. The company had grown to a fleet of hundreds of new, big rig trucks and had employed thousands. Delivering materiel up and down the Interstate 35 corridor, which had been dubbed the NAFTA Highway, the company had been an overnight success because its new trucks met American safety guidelines (without the licensing fees) and because it boasted a driver training and safety program second to no other Mexican firm. It had quickly expanded its operations to the Interstate 25, Interstate 15 and Interstate 5 corridors into New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and California respectively.

The President of the parent company, Hector Ortiz, had wooed Congressmen and State Governors in the years leading up to and following the passage of NAFTA by the U.S. Congress. His political influence was well known and he was a well-spoken and very dynamic individual. His success had spurred others to look more favorably on NAFTA at a time when many Americans, particularly in the agricultural and trucking industry, were castigating the legislation for what they pointed out were its unfair provisions for foreign trucking and foreign agriculture. In effect they said, it provided legitimacy to and fostered the low wage practices of foreign governments at the expense of their own people and at the expense of American jobs. Those concerns had fallen on deaf ears at a time when American politicians and CEO's were anxious to defend the legislation because of the better earnings it would bring their multi-national corporations, the catering it provided to special interest groups (not to mention the votes those groups could help provide) and because many of them felt that the global economy called for and demanded such practices.

All of those issues aside, as it turned out, Hector Ortiz was also a master terrorist who had ties to international terrorism and communism. Behind his global free market façade was a devoted Marxist and proponent for the Aztlan movement to carve out a new Spanish-speaking nation from portions of northern Mexico and the southwestern United States. In this regard, FTA Trucking had turned into not

only a profitable avenue for him personally, but also into exactly what he had planned with respect to his political and ideological ambitions.

Ortiz funneled many hundreds of terrorists and tons of weapons and explosives into the United States for use during what he viewed as the inevitable conflict. His clandestine ties to foreign governments and his alliances with them led to the development of numerous operational plans long years in advance of the outbreak of hostilities. He had installed one of his foremost allies and proponents, Miguel Santos, as the President of the U.S. Operations for FTA and they had prepared carefully for events in conjunction with the eventual conflict they hoped to be a part of. In March of 2006 that opportunity had come. The FBI's latest data indicated that teams recruited, financed and supported by FTA Trucking had been involved with terrorist attacks against American infrastructure and civilians from the outset of hostilities, continuing right up to the current time.

Only the quick thinking and actions of ranchers and farmers in northern New Mexico had allowed for the ultimate break in the case. During and after the setting of the "super fire" in southern Colorado in August of 2007, ranchers had seen and identified the team leader of the terrorist cell that had set that blaze. Later, when that team leader had come into the small town of Lumberton, New Mexico, to buy supplies for the ranch where he and his team had taken refuge as "migrant" workers, ranchers in the town had recognized him from TV reports and had captured and held him for authorities. A raid on the ranch had captured or killed the rest of that team. In this way, Manuel Mendoza, one of the most experienced and dangerous team leaders in Miguel's and Hector's employ had been captured. Over the ensuing months his long interrogation had paid off and resulted in the identification of numerous terror cells being run by the executives at FTA, including the direct involvement of the top man, Hector Ortiz.

Miguel Santos, had long since escaped from the United States and fled to a hacienda he owned in southern Mexico. CIA and special forces operative had gathered enough intelligence on his operations there to show that he was continuing to train and support ongoing terror activities in the United States. Hector Ortiz was apparently unaware of the intelligence the American authorities now had tying him directly to Manuel's and Miguel's activities. He was clearly secure in his continued executive position at the helm of FTA and felt he had successfully put the stigma of his U.S. Operations President having been associated with terrorism behind him, all the while continuing those very terrorist operations himself.

Now, the FBI, Homeland Security, NORCOMM and the President of the United States himself, were all anxiously waiting for Hector to make his next scheduled trip down to Dallas to review his U.S. operations. That trip was scheduled for November 12th and Alvarez called for him to be taken into custody on American soil as he sat in conference with his U.S. executive staff. Operation Alvarez would accomplish that in conjunction with a special forces raid into Mexico to take Miguel Santos into custody and in conjunction with several other raids within the borders of the United States to capture or destroy other known cells. All of these raids would occur then night of November 12th as Hector himself was taken into custody.

The problem with the plan from the outset had been concern over Mexican approval and assistance. Several within the task force had advocated simply doing the job and not being concerned over Mexican approval. The concern for them was that the Mexican government was corrupt and possibly in league with many of the terrorists themselves. Although Director Maxwell understood and sympathized with this notion at a practical and tactical level, he also understood the political reality. The United States could not afford to have other allies react adversely to any blatant violation of sovereignty. Despite Mexico's potential corruption, the camp favoring gaining approval, pointed out that the nation was an effective buffer against the hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops now moving north into Costa Rica in Central America. America would need the support of every nation in the area to defeat and push back the Chinese and retake the Panama Canal. But the Director knew this was true of Mexico only in so far their

governmental corruption did not extend to the point of comforting and aiding the enemy in any materiel sense. There were many in the administration who had grave concerns over just that issue.

The President himself had ultimately made the decision. Weeks ago he determined that he would personally speak with Presidente Conejo of Mexico and ask his approval for operations directed at a significant terror cell within Mexico's borders. The Mexican President had tentatively agreed with President Weisskopf's request, but wanted more information ... more specifics. When the President had indicated that such intelligence would not be possible until just hours before the operation, the Mexican President had voiced his displeasure. When President Weisskopf had held firm, Conejo had indicated that his Internal Security Minister, Minister Madera, would work out the details with the designated American officials. Doyle Maxwell had been assigned the task of coordination with the Mexican authorities and was now waiting for Agent Gerald Ludlow to inform the entire team of the final results of that effort. As the Director finished his own personal review of the situation in his mind, Ludlow was just reviewing the most recent, and what would turn out to be the last, communication with Minister Madera in that regard.

"As to approval and coordination with Mexican authorities, I am sorry to have to report that there has been a complete breakdown in that regard. Minister Madera informed me as of two hours ago that the Mexican government could not possibly approve of any American penetration of its borders unless the operation was planned with Mexican security forces at least seventy-two hours prior to the raid, with Mexican forces actively involved in the assault and with full disclosure of targets and evidence to Mexican local and federal officials in advance of that final planning. I am afraid we will have to ask the President to approve Plan B as regards the assault itself."

November 8, 2007, 21:30 EDT

Situation Room, The White House

Washington, DC

"Mr. President, there can be no doubt, sir. Two minutes after completing his call to Agent Ludlow, Madera walked over to President Conejo's office and was granted immediate access. That meeting lasted seventeen minutes.

"Madera then left that meeting, returned to his office and placed the call to Santos directly, the transcript of which you have before you. Even though the call was placed on a highly encrypted cellular phone which we could not directly intercept, one of our operatives in the Executive Offices of the Mexican government was able to tape Madera's side of the conversation and our special forces people operating outside of the hacienda in southern Mexico caught Santos' side of the conversation as he spoke on the putting green outside of his home. We have both sides of the conversation.

"Madera made six other calls from within his office on the same phone. He was warning what we believe to be several drug and terror cells-and in most cases they overlap-of a significant "gringo" operation directed at entities unknown and that they should all consider either beefing up their security or moving their operations as soon as possible.

“With respect to Santos, it is clear that he is not sure if he is the target and that he is not sure of our timetable. But he is very likely to take some action in the event he is a target and in the event that the timetable is eminent. We have to believe that Ortiz has been similarly warned, though we have no record of it.”

President Weisskopf considered the words of his CIA Director as he watched the other members of the team in the room with him. He felt a growing anger towards those in power south of the American border. The Director of the FBI, his Homeland Security Director, the Commander of NORCOMM, the Vice President of the United States, the National Security Advisor, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs were all present. He could tell from their posture and from the looks on their faces that each of them were contemplating this revelation and the national security issues it raised along the same lines as he was

Turning to his NSA, the President asked,

“Well, Bill, do we have any indication that Santos is moving?”

Bill Hendrickson had checked the latest real time images coming in from the Global Inspector UAV loitering high above Santos’ hacienda before coming to the meeting. Built of radar absorbing materiel and designed to reflect any radar waves away from the radar’s receiver, the newest Global Inspector UAV aircraft could remain on station for days, even weeks at a time without detection over a nation with the capabilities of Mexico. The People’s Republic was turning out to be a different matter of late, but Mexico simply had no way of detecting the aircraft, short of Mexican defense aircraft happening upon it. That was not going to happen because the Mexican government would give no overt indication of support to the likes of Santos.

“Sir, as of twenty hundred hours there was no indication of any move. Santos, his principle lieutenants and his family are all at the compound and we have seen no indication of planning, either from overhead, or as I understand it from Director Ballard, from our assets on the ground.

“Robert, jump in here and correct me if I am wrong.”

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency quickly answered.

“No, Bill, you are completely correct. No indication as of yet from the ground that Santos is planning a move. Of course, we might not get much indication, he may just hop in a vehicle and drive away.”

As everyone reflected on that very real possibility, Bill Hendrickson continued.

“This afternoon we did see that they brought in more personnel and they are mounting some fairly sophisticated man portable surface to air missiles along with heavy caliber weapons. At any one time we are estimating now that Santos has what amounts to a full Company of irregular forces within his compound and two or three platoon strength patrols outside of the perimeter at all times.”

The President took all of this in and then turned to FBI Director, Doyle Maxwell.

“Well, Doyle, as the individual in charge of the overall operation, what are your recommendations considering everything we have heard?”

Doyle had already thought through all of this. He and Special Agent Ludlow and the entire planning team had discussed it in depth and, short of surprising revelations in this meeting, had already decided upon

their recommendation. He spoke without hesitation.

“Mr. President, I recommend we initiate Plan B and proceed with Operation Alvarez. We simply MUST put these terrorists and enemies out of business. There is no telling what further intelligence we may acquire when we do so and we must make an example of these individuals who have caused the death and destruction to so many of our citizens and their property. While I would like the support and coordination of the Mexican officials and forces, I know we can accomplish all of our aims, including those within Mexico without it.”

The President was satisfied with Director Maxwell’s response. It was exactly the way he felt.

“Alright then, you have my NCA approval. Initiate Plan B of Alvarez as it has been developed. Fred, I would like to meet with you afterwards to develop a very direct and to the point communiqué to President Conejo and his government. I would like that communiqué delivered to them just as the operation starts, while our people are in the process of making their assaults, arrests and confiscations.

“I want it to be clear to Conejo, and by extension and by copy, to any other governments on the sidelines in this conflict or contemplating any type of support for our enemies. In the words of the former President Bush ...*you are either with us, or you are with the terrorists !*

“Make it clear to President Conejo, that while we regret and do not relish this violation of his space, that we will do so now ... and do so again ... in order to protect ourselves from our enemies finding any sanctuary or harbor any place in his nation. Our communiqué must make that last part very plain to him ...*any place in his nation ...any place !*

“Indicate that in this regard we want to give him one last chance to grant us permission while we are doing it ... and that we expect Minister Madera to be apprehended, held and turned over to our forces for trial. Share with him the transcript of this phone conversation as evidence and our concerns about such corruption and leanings reaching to the highest levels of President Conejo's government.”

November 12, 2007, 22:15 CDT

Executive Conference Room, FTA Trucking

Dallas, TX

Hector listened closely as the meeting proceeded. Operations were going well, both commercially and operations of the more clandestine variety. Many of the directors and managers present were not involved in the latter and their reports were solely what they purported to be, reviews of FTA trucking operations along the various Interstate Highway corridors in the United States.

But several of the higher level directors and the vice presidents of U.S. operations, gave their reports given in an elaborate code, the same type of code that had served Hector and Miguel so well over the years. Those reports had a double meaning of not only operational status for the commercial business, but also the operational status of the next wave of attacks and disruptions by operatives FTA had placed all across the central and western United States.

“Times are difficult,” he thought.

“None of the operations go cleanly any more . . . few of the participants escape to fight another day. The Americans under this President Weisskopf have certainly not responded here internally as many of had hoped.”

Hector was referring specifically to the Homeland Security Department and the way it had been altered under Weisskopf. It had gone from a behemoth department encompassing many of America’s Federal Law enforcement agencies and attempting to force that federal bureaucracy down to the local level in an effort to “secure” America, to a Department that coordinated and assisted the rapidly growing efforts of those localities themselves. President Weisskopf’s “Home Guard” initiatives in conjunction with the Firearms Restoration Act he had gotten passed by Congress had galvanized the American citizenry themselves to provide their own security. This had been the single most effective measure the American’s had taken in fighting Hector’s operations, and other like it. . . and Hector knew it all too well. Manuel was in custody, maybe dead. Miguel was in hiding in southern Mexico.

“Simply put, too many of them are armed,” Hector thought as the meeting continued.

“And now they are organized to use those arms. How do you fight and infiltrate more than eighty million armed and prepared citizens?”

Despite this, Hector viewed his efforts, his operations, as a success. Even though the Americans were stepping up their efforts and were tightening their security and improving their interdiction and investigations, they had been hurt. For the last two and a half years America’s ability to mobilize had been hampered and retarded by his own efforts, by the efforts of the many Islamic fundamentalists within America willing to practice Jihad and by the large number of Chinese operatives who had infiltrated the United States. The magnitude and effectiveness of this last group was even surprising Hector. It was turning out that the Chinese had a network within America that was more effective and more numerous than that of his own and the Islamic network combined.

“I believe it will be enough. With the Chinese forces making such substantial gains in the Pacific and Australia assisted by the Indians, with the Chinese gains in Central and South America, and with the Islamic gains in the Mid East, Africa and even Europe . . . I don’t think the Americans will be able to overcome their losses.

“If things go hoped, the general military fighting should be here in America soon, and so it is time for me to gracefully step back and let that occur.”

Hector had no allusions. He knew that in addition to the potential for large military operations coming to America, there was the more eminent threat of the American security and law enforcement organizations catching up to him. Manuel’s capture and detention, Miguel having to flee. . . all of that was a series of events leading ever closer to Hector himself. He had been warned by his own sources and confidants in the Mexican government several days ago, before that fool Madera had contacted him, that a U.S. intelligence operation was imminent. The threat was vague, but Hector was not willing to take too many chances.

In the end, he had decided that it was more risky to break his announced schedule and not appear at this meeting than it would be to go ahead and keep the appointment. His arrival at DFW airport had been nervous, but uneventful as nothing untoward had occurred. He had breathed much easier as he had traveled here to the intersection of I-635 and Central Expressway for the meeting. Apparently, the alert

was going to prove to be another false alarm. Besides, he had important news to announce that would facilitate a graceful and fully legal exit for himself and his trusted lieutenants.

FTA Trucking was being sold. A group of wholly uninvolved investors representing a number of independent American trucking firms had formed an investment consortium and had tendered an offer. After significant confidential negotiating, Hector and his team in Mexico City had secured a profitable deal and had approved it. He would announce it to the executives here at the end of the meeting tonight, and to the press tomorrow. Then, on the 15th he would travel back to Mexico City and plan for the future he felt was within his grasp. His mentors, both in the Caribbean and now in Asia, had assured him that Aztlan would be one of the results of events that were about to unfold, and that he, Hector Ortiz, would figure heavily into the creation and governing of that new nation.

But his mentors were wrong.

As Hector contemplated these satisfying and self-congratulatory thoughts, a small red light on the executive console in front of him began to flash. Almost simultaneously, a soft but insistent vibration from his personal, encrypted security cell phone began demanding his attention.

Hector's blood ran cold. There was only one reason for that light to start flashing and the vibrations from his cell phone only confirmed it. Hector glanced around the room as he rose and excused himself to enter the executive washroom off of the conference room. As he did so, and as the meeting continued behind him, he noticed the Vice President of Operations excusing himself from across the room and walking towards the washroom himself.

Hector could not, he would wait. He had not survived this long by being lax, or charitable. As he entered the washroom he quickly activated a concealed, triple dead-bolt lock. From a hidden compartment he withdrew a Glock 9mm pistol and then reached under the counter, slid a covering off concealed indentation, and then flipped the switch it revealed. As the doorknob to the washroom turned from the outside, first tentatively and then more and more urgently ... even frantically, Hector stepped into the concealed corridor that had been revealed with the flip of the switch and allowed the door that revealed it to close behind him..

Ten seconds after Hector stepped into the hidden corridor, the double doors to the executive conference room to FTA trucking flew open from the outside and fifteen heavily armed members of a Joint Terrorism Task Force assigned to operation Alvarez burst into the room and began arresting everyone there.

Hector never heard the commotion back in the conference room. He had already climbed down two ladders and was approaching a landing that would take him into the fire exit corridor two floors below the offices he had just exited. As he prepared to punch in the security code to the digital pad attached to the hidden door, Hector found he no longer had control of his fingers ... or his arms ... or his legs. Although completely conscience, Hector dropped the Glock and fell to the steel grated floor of the landing, twisting as he did so until his face was directed back in the direction from which he had come. As he watched in an uncomfortably detached way, two sets of boots approached from around the corner of the landing and two sets of strong hands lifted him up.

Once standing ... or more correctly, once being held in a standing position, what he saw shocked him. Four men, dressed in full chemical protective garb approached him while two other men, similarly garbed, held him up. One of the four had picked up and was placing a small cylinder into a protective sleeve of some type. Another of the four approached and spoke directly to him.

“Hector Ortiz, I am Special Agent Ludlow of the FBI and the Region VI Joint Terrorism Task Force. I know you can hear and understand me.

“You are experiencing the effects of a non-lethal nerve agent that has rendered you incapacitated. I am placing you under arrest for murder and terrorist acts against the United States of America, and for conspiracy to commit terrorist acts and murder against the government and people of the United States of America, among a number of other federal and various local charges.”

With that, the agent himself entered the code on the digital pad and the door opened to a stairwell full of more armed men who carried Hector back into the normal areas of the building. He was taken to an elevator and down to the basement of the building where a waiting unmarked FBI SUV would transport him to Federal detention and interrogation.

November 12, 2007, that same time

Main Entry Hall

Santos Hacienda, Southern Mexico

Sporadic firing was still coming from the fields and forests outside of the compound, but here inside the compound, and particularly inside of the main building, all was now quiet.

Captain Riley Adams had led the assault on the compound and was surprised that everything had come off so well.

“This is one of those few occasions where everything went according to plan, even after the firing started,” he thought to himself.

Sniper teams had taken out the surface to air missile teams that were identified in real time by the Global Inspector UAV overhead. They did this as the specially configured SPECOPS aircraft approached up the valley to the east. Those first two aircraft, specially outfitted AC-130H Specter aircraft escorted by F-15C Eagles far overhead, carried two specially configured electronic counter measure pods and two large gas canister pods, one of each under each wing. One of the counter measure pods was a standard jamming pod that jammed every available radio and communication frequency that could possibly be used by the security forces at the hacienda. The other pod was a Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP) generator that would fry every unhardened electronic device in its path and for a half mile wide. The two planes together generated a path of electronic destruction a mile wide as they approached the hacienda and everything from radios to radar to motor vehicles to electric shavers had their electronics fried and simply stopped working as the aircraft approached and then flew overhead. As they passed over, they released a non-lethal nerve gas from their canisters. It was odorless and tasteless, just like the gas used to capture Hector Ortiz. It reacted with the human nervous system upon contact with any exposed skin. Earlier less developed forms had proven dangerous to certain age and health demographic groups, as the Russians had found out when they used their own, earlier development of such an agent to break up a Chechen Terror attack in Moscow in the fall of 2002.

“The stuff we use today is sure a lot more effective,” thought Captain Riley as he contemplated its effects

here this evening.

Because the gas had been delivered by air in a “crop dusting” fashion, it had dispersed unevenly in current conditions and not all of Miguel’s men had been incapacitated, particularly those indoors at the time. But it had played havoc on the large numbers of men patrolling in and near to the hacienda and had made the Special Forces insertion much easier and not nearly so “hot” as it otherwise could have been.

Two hundred Special Forces troops had come in behind the AC-130H gun ships that were by then orbiting in protective mode over the battle area. They had flown in eight AV-22 transport aircraft and landed to the east, south and north of the facility. Some sporadic gunfire greeted them, but this was quickly quelled by the AC-130 gunships and by sniper teams pre-positioned in the hills around the facility. The force had quickly consolidated and simply rolled over the hacienda perimeter with little resistance.

A brief and fierce firefight had erupted as Miguel’s forces contested the American’s assault on the main building and its adjoining recreation room which was doubling as the communications center. Those ten minutes of heavy fighting had resulted in the two deaths that the American forces had experienced thus far this night, and most of the six casualties. By comparison, the enemy had suffered thirty-seven dead and over forty wounded, and over one hundred incapacitated others taken into custody. Some sporadic fighting was still going on in the surrounding hills and jungles as stragglers tried to escape and as one of the patrols, which had had never been fully engaged at all, was tracked down.

As Captain Riley contemplated this, one of his Lieutenants and a senior NCO entered the room with several people in chains and with bags over their heads.

“What have you got for me Lieutenant?” Adams asked as they approached and the NCO instructed the captives to lie down on the floor.

The Lieutenant, once he was sure the captives were safely and completely secure turned to his commanding officer and replied.

“Sir, I believe we have the Avocado himself here along with three of his security team.

“Sergeant Hollister is holding Mrs. Avocado and her three kids in a rear room for extraction and delivery as planned. Originally there were eight members of the security team...but they resisted.”

Satisfied that the Lieutenant had made a positive ID before reporting, Riley walked over to where the captives were lying. Once the Avocado was pointed out to him, Adams approached and knelt down next to him and spoke into his ear.

“Miguel, I know you understand everything I am saying to you. I am the officer in charge of the American forces who have taken you prisoner. You and the surviving members of your forces are going to be extradited back to the United States where you will stand trial for murder, terrorist acts against the United States and for conspiracy to commit murder and terrorist acts against the people and government of the United States.

“Your wife and children will be interrogated and held in custody pending the outcome and results of tribunals concerning their disposition. It is fairly safe to say that you will never see any of them again in this life ... and, unless my surmise is wrong, it is unlikely that you will be seeing them afterward either.

“Lieutenant, get these vermin out of here.”

November 29, 2007, 4:30 PM

Steps of the Capitol Building

Washington, DC

The media was here in all its splendor. In fact, there was David Krenshaw of WNN preparing to start his own coverage.

“Amazing that he would be out here personally,” thought Curt.

“That guy never misses an opportunity to be in front of a camera for a major event.”

Of course, all of this was carefully choreographed. David Krenshaw, as a powerful member of the Council of International Relations, was very supportive of this effort. Off the record, there had already been several very positive discussions and Curt felt he could count on WNN coverage in the best possible light. As he considered this, Curt Johnson tried to imagine the road ahead. Here he was, with an extremely liberal Senator from California, about to announce their bid for the Presidency of the United States. It would be an effort to accomplish something that had never been done before, unseating a sitting U.S. President in the middle of an ongoing war.

“... and a very popular President at that,” thought Johnson as he continued thinking of the course that lay before him.

Things had moved quickly since that meeting in Dallas in September. Warren Woodson had effectively lobbied the DNC and other major contributors to the Democratic party. They all viewed Johnson as an outsider, which he was, and a moderate at best ... but they all knew that nothing else would have a chance of challenging President Weisskopf and his current popularity. The fact that Susan Crater would be on the ticket to balance it and solidly hold the base was what pushed the whole idea over the top.

Most of the major party leadership simply went along because it was the least politically dangerous. Very few of them felt that the ticket had a snow balls chance of seriously challenging the President and they viewed this as a way of advancing a place holder for the party until more favorable conditions presented themselves, hopefully in 2012. Then, they surmised, they could advance the real party agenda with their major candidates who would have no political baggage left over from a failed 2008 campaign.

Curt knew all of this, and he was fine with it. From his perspective, this was not about either political party. He did not view himself as a politician, but he had some strong beliefs about what this President was establishing as a result of the war time conditions. Certainly his feelings about the 2nd amendment and the roll back of what he viewed as “sensible” controls on public ownership and use of firearms was at the forefront of that. But he knew that was not all.

In fact, Curt Johnson also had serious concerns and disagreement on immigration and detention policies that were ongoing in the nation right now. He felt that there must certainly be a way to control their borders without the gross infringement on what he deemed as the civil rights of the these “immigrants”

desiring entry into the country. He felt that the President and his administration were appealing to, and taking advantage of, the fears and anxieties that the war was necessarily producing to advance a very bigoted policy that would ultimately lead to long term stagnation ... and he was not afraid to say so on this topic, or any of the other several major issues he intended to raise ... and if his brief and informal discussions with David Krenshaw were any indication, as evidenced by his presence here, Curt felt he was attracting some powerful allies to his cause.

Curt Johnson, despite his tendencies towards lesser government and moderate positions, firmly believed that the immigration issue was an important one to tens of millions of citizens of recent foreign decent, and he was perfectly prepared to allow the party handlers to make as much political hay out of that as possible. He knew the effort would be hard, he knew that there was likely very little chance that he would succeed, but he felt strongly that he had to make the effort. The embarrassment and the stigma surrounding his resignation and discharge from the Weisskopf administration only further fueled his commitment to get these issues squarely in the public eye in order to foster healthy debate regarding them and hopefully, to have them propel him into the Presidency.

Very soon now, the head of the DNC would stand up to the podium and announce the candidacy of Curt Johnson and Susan Crater for the Presidency of the United States and the party leadership's full support of that campaign. The plan that they had developed over the last weeks called for little Democratic opposition in the primaries in order to best prepare for the national election next November. Curt's thoughts in this regard were interrupted as Susan and her husband arrived and took their seats next to Curt and his wife.

Curt stood and warmly shook both of their hands, a move that cameramen from four networks caught from various angles and that would lead into the news stories that would on the evening news.

"Glad you could make it," Curt joked, "Are you ready for the games to begin?"

Susan Crater contemplated for a moment and then replied as she sat down.

"About as ready as one can be Curt.

"We have a long road in front of us, but I believe it will end up being an historic one."

... and historic it would be, but not in the way either Curt or Susan contemplated.

December 5, 2007, 1:47 PM

Outside the State Capitol Building

Sacramento, California

As the crowd pressed to get as close to the President's path as the security detail would allow Secret Service and other law enforcement agency snipers manned the tops of every building within a mile of the President. Above them all, specially configured and outfitted helicopters buzzed over the area while Air Force fighter jets and surveillance aircraft circled at higher altitudes. If the President insisted on these

regular visits around the country to bolster the moral of the populace, then those tasked with his security and protection would spare no effort or cost to ensure he did so safely.

As the President approached his motorcade, the reporters jostled for position and called out questions to get the President's attention.

"Mr. President, Mr. President," the yelled.

One in particular, JT Samson of SierraLines, was able to get his entire question heard above all of the rest in a brief lull as the President approached his vehicle.

"Mr. President, what is your response to the announcement of the candidacy of Curt Johnson and Senator Crater ... it's been almost a week?"

The President paused and turned to the crowd and the reporters.

"No direct response is necessary. Their announcement speaks for itself. This is a part of our great Republic and the institutions that define it. I welcome an exercise of that process that leads to the fundamental right of American citizens to choose their leaders ... it is, after all, the same process that placed me in the position of responsibility that I now hold.

"I will say this, and you reporters can record it as a policy announcement.

"I will not be campaigning per se in this election. The responsibility that I have in the current circumstances prevent me from even thinking of taking the time to do so. As a nation, as a people ... as a culture ... we face perhaps the greatest challenge and mortal threat in our history. The people of this great nation have seen me in action over the last three years ... in times that have tried us all.

"I will continue doing my job and let the people decide this issue on that basis. I am sure the party will do its share of campaigning. The necessary paperwork will be filed for both the primaries and the national election when that time comes. But neither myself or anyone in my administration will take the time, the money or the effort to hit the campaign trail. We will let our conscientious efforts to fulfill our duty be our campaign. Thank you."

With that, and as JT Samson hurriedly scribbled down his own thoughts on the President's comments, which would be up on his main page at SierraLines on the internet within fifteen minutes, the President waived to the crowd and slipped into the limousine that would take him to Air Force One and his flight back across the country to Washington, DC.

December 2007 through February 2008

Asia and the Pacific

As the western nations prepared to celebrate the Holiday season, events in the Pacific Ocean muted the otherwise joyous occasions surrounding the birth of the Spiritual King of Christendom and the ringing in of a new year. Australia was on the verge of collapse with heavy fighting raging around Sydney. The allies were preparing a massive Dunkirk-type evacuation in case the outer ring of defenses fell, and that fall

appeared imminent.

Admiral Ryan, the overall commander of U.S. and Allied forces in and around Australia continued to attempt to draw the Chinese and their allies into a decisive sea battle that would favor the allies. But the Coalition of Asian State naval forces were content to lay back and guard the sea lanes to their Australian staging areas as their ground forces continued to make progress in the southeast and as they consolidated their positions throughout the continent. The result were several sharp but minor naval engagements, but no decisive battle. As February, 2008, approached its end, Admiral Ryan was preparing a bold plan to force that issue.

Elsewhere in the western Pacific and Asia, the Coalition of Asian States reigned. All nations had fallen before them from Japan across the ocean and across Asia to the other side of India. The line of advance in the Pacific itself extended well out towards Wake Island and encompassed all of the Solomon Islands down to the southeast coast of Australia. There was still guerilla warfare being waged in areas of the Philippines, in Thailand and behind the lines in Australia, but without support and re-supply, the efforts, while bothersome to the local garrisons of CAS troops, were inconsequential to the larger effort.

Lu Pham, the research and development genius responsible for the Chinese LRASD weaponry, and his family enjoyed relative peace, outside of only occasional air raids by allied aircraft and cruise missiles. Lu Pham's team of engineers continued to produce innovative advances for the LRASD weaponry that blunted allied attempts to negate the tremendous advantage these weapons were giving CAS and GIR forces. These new innovations were immediately tested and deployed upon the literally hundreds of conversion ships that the Chinese continued to build. Lu Pham's good friend, Sung Hsu, continued to rise in prominence in the military shipbuilding industry and was contributing extensively to the manufacturing innovations that were allowing the Chinese, through their large shipbuilding conglomerate, COSCO, to meet the war demands of their nation. Hundreds of Chinese ships, with thousands of the latest revisions of the LRASD, Killer Whale weaponry, continued to be one of the key factors allowing the CAS and GIR to continue their expansion without fear of the overwhelming technical advantages that the U.S. Navy and her allies could otherwise bring to bear.

However, the latest American innovations in the form of the Submerged Threat Close in Weapons System (SUBT CIWS) was about to make its debut in the Pacific Ocean. The U.S.S. Shanksville had taken longer to finish its shakedown and trials because of several problems with some of its new systems. Some of those problems included timing and effectiveness of the CSUBT CIWS. But the American developers and weapons engineers believed they had corrected those issues and the Shanksville along with several escorts employing the same defenses would be entering combat theaters of operation in March and April. Soon thereafter, increasing numbers of retrofitted ships would also be coming out of dry docks throughout the CONUS and from the larger repair and dry-dock facilities in the various theaters of operations.

At the end of February 2008, the only areas free of the CAS rule in all of the western Pacific and Asia were those areas of Russia and Siberia that had entered into the economic pact with the CAS and the GIR to exploit Siberian resources. This arrangement had proven immensely profitable to Russia and critical to the war effort for the CAS and GIR. Now, as the Spring of 2008 approached, the continuation of Phase II of the CAS war plan entitled Hung-Lu-Dong turned its attention to the north in preparation for the even more ambitious Phase III, as Jien Zenim had long since envisioned and planned.

December 2007 through February 2008

The Middle East

The GIR continued to consolidate and build up its positions around Israel through the opening days of 2008 according to the Imam Hasan Sayeed's overall direction as implemented ably by his theater CINC, General Talabari. Outside of an area bounded by southern Lebanon to the Golan Heights, extending on the east side of Jordan down past the Dead Sea to the Red Sea and then encompassing the entire Sinai peninsula over to positions along the now closed Suez Canal, the entire Middle East was controlled by the GIR. GIR forces continued to flood into those areas surrounding Israel in preparation for what everyone knew would certainly be one of the most intense, concentrated and viscous battle in history. The lives of literally millions of soldiers and the entire nation of Israel hung in the balance.

While the GIR was consolidating and reinforcing, the allies were doing the same. At great cost, the sea and air lanes across the Mediterranean Sea were kept open into Israel and a river of men and materiel continued to flow into the small nation. While this was happening, the GIR had increased their numbers of Chinese LRASD "Killer Whale" devices and were launching them literally from anything that could carry them into the Sea. Trawlers, cargo ships and all sorts of combatants were modified to carry the various versions of the weaponry. Many of these would then made a suicidal dash into the sea to launch them.

The U. S. Navy and their allies were literally sinking any unknown vessel on contact to avoid the horrific results of a successful launch of these weapons. Ultimately, as a result of the relative short ranges involved all along the eastern Mediterranean coast, the GIR successfully developed coastal launchers for the weapons and employed them successfully. On January 12th, 2008, the U.S.S. Kearsage and the HMS Pendleton Amphibious assault ships were both sunk along with two of their escorts as they approached the Israeli coast by LRASD weapons launched from shore installations far to the north.

Elsewhere, the GIR consolidated its strong positions in northern Africa and all along the Nile River down into Ethiopia and Kenya which had both officially joined the GIR in December of 2008. From the Horn of Africa, extending over 300 miles inland up to the Mediterranean and extending westward along the Mediterranean to just south of Gibraltar, the GIR controlled all of Northern Africa. Well over one billion Muslims now practiced their faith under the great Imam's direction and lived their lives under his political, religious and social order ... an order he fully intended to export to as many enemy infidel nations as Allah would grant.

The only positive response, outside of the continued successful defense of Israel, that the allies were able to accomplish was the landing of significant forces in Nigeria in an effort to establish a strong presence and base of operations in Africa. Brazil, local nations, and small contingents from several European nations had committed forces to this task and a force of several hundred thousand was now safely ashore in the area. Their hope was to move north and east throughout 2008 in an effort to bring pressure on and hopefully out flank the massive GIR forces preparing to attack Israel from Egypt.

December 2007 through February 2008

Central and South America

War continued to rage in Central and South America. Venezuela, Panama and Argentina, supported by

increasing numbers of Chinese, continued to attempt to advance throughout the region. To the north they were advancing into Costa Rica and Nicaragua. In the center they were advancing into Colombia. To the south they were fighting and attempting to advance into Brazil from Argentina. More and more Chinese forces were arriving by submarine, by aircraft that made the long flight laden with enough extra fuel to ensure that they and their cargo of troops made it . . . and by the Chinese surface combatant or commercial container or cargo ship that got through American and allied patrols.

In Costa Rica American forces fell back in a begrudging retreat. San Jose fell and the allied defense strategy called for a fall back into Nicaragua to defensive positions in the hills above the coastal low lands as far north as Managua. Corporal Hernando Rodriguez and the U.S. Army Company that he was a part of had been moved into position along these defensive lines and he was awaiting his first real ground combat there. The retreating American, Costa Rican and Nicaraguan forces were falling back towards them and would take up positions along the line with the larger American forces of which Rodriguez was a part. As March approached, he shared his thoughts, anxieties, aspirations and hopes with his wife Maria and his parents back in Florida by mail. He also made sure that Maria understood that she must pass his love and thoughts along to his new son, Felipe, who had been born in March of that year, 2007, to his new wife in Hernando's absence.

In South America, Panamanian and Chinese forces advanced into Columbia from the north as Brazilian, American and Columbian forces fought Venezuelan forces in the south and east. Due to the nature of the two pronged attack by the Chinese and Coalition of South American States (CSAS) forces and the potential for allied forces to be caught in the resulting large pincer movement, the fall of Columbia was a very real prospect in early 2008. A beleaguered and strained allied supply and manpower system was strained as more demands for call-ups and volunteers went out. The Brazilian and American public responded and more and more forces were trained and deployed into the fight.

The entire circumstance in Colombia and further north in Costa Rica was exasperated by the continued warfare along Brazil's southern border with Argentina. The battles had sea-sawed back and forth between Mercedes, Argentina and Santa Maria, Brazil for over a yea, with neither side making any significant progress. The entire countryside in that part of the continent was turned into a blasted and ruined wilderness as both forces continued to surge back and forth over the same devastated landscape, seeking an advantage to allow them to break through and defeat their enemy. But despite the bloody stalemate, the Argentine forces were accomplishing their mission. That mission was simply to hold and occupy as many Brazilian forces as possible in order to keep them from other theaters of combat. If the Argentine forces could achieve a breakthrough and cause more harm to Brazil, that would be viewed as a significant bonus. In a circumstance where Brazil normally would have had no problem defeating Argentine incursions, the Chinese and CSAS planners knew that the Brazilians would be unable to bring sufficient force to bear because of their commitments elsewhere. In fact it was hoped that the Brazilians would be forced to lessen their commitments in those pother areas as a result of the threat in the south, and that hope was bearing fruit. In Africa, where the planned expeditionary force of 250,000 Brazilians assembling in Nigeria to prepare for northward movement against the GIR in the Spring of 2008, had already been reduced to 200,000 to allow for more forces to be thrown into the fight in the south.

December 2007 through February 2008

Europe

Europe was continuing to mobilize for war through the end of 2007 and the start of 2008. The dream of a European Union was finally realized as the result of the abject threat from GIR forces attacking from Greece into Bulgaria and from GIR armies approaching Ukraine. Due to the fact that Italy, Germany and particularly the United Kingdom had been involved with the warfare from the earliest stages, they carried considerably more weight with the EU. France, which was now involved in a complete mobilization but which had dragged its feet through the earlier days of the fighting, was relegated to a much more minor position in the developing hierarchy and power structures of the new European Union. This structure, with the three aforementioned nations filling most of the powerful positions on the various economic, military and social committees, was formerly adopted by the last nations on the continent in late December of 2007, between Christmas and New Year's Day.

The Euro, now adopted by the entire continent, including the United Kingdom, was doing quite well given the circumstances ... better than anyone would have imagined. Funding for production and power facilities, particularly alternative energy facilities was not an issue within the European Union. The Continent's major concern was fuel and, taking their lead from energy policies in the United States, all oil fields were being exploited, both on land and in the North Sea as environmental issues were placed completely on the back burner in the face of the mortal threat.

A large multi-national Euro Force, called the Unified European Defense Force (UEDF), was already in place to attempt to block the GIR thrust coming across the top of the Black Sea. This force was now bolstered by twenty divisions of French, Dutch and Scandinavian forces sent in to reinforce them. The GIR forces they faced, who were technically already in Europe, were receiving large numbers of reinforcements daily that were being funneled through Georgia, Armenia and up the open road the Russian Federation had opened for them.

Those GIR forces were continually harassed and picked at as they passed through the Armenian region by the partisan and guerilla network that was growing there under the direction of Captain Luke Hansen. Captain Hansen had become of a local hero in the entire region as his forces continued to harass the GIR forces stationed there, as well as those passing through. He was also considered a hero and an extremely valuable asset by the his entire command structure. His band of fighters would figure heavily into future events, particularly as the CIA Director prepared Riley Adams for insertion into the area for his upcoming mission.

Despite the harassment, over a million GIR personnel had passed through Georgia and Armenia and had moved north of the Black Sea where they were poised for the invasion of free Europe in earnest. Abduhl Selim, now an experienced Captain in the GIR forces, was with this group. He continued to climb through the ranks and had been recognized all the way up to the upper echelon of commanders in the GIR army who had awarded Abduhl with the GIR Order of the Imam medal for his role in preventing a large riot from escalating in Russian territory as GIR forces paused at a large supply depot to re-supply.

While waiting there, GIR forces were accosted by a large crowd of angry Russian citizens who were members of the Russian Orthodox Church from a nearby city. Only Selim's quick thinking and absolute control over his soldiers had prevented that major riot from turning into a massacre of Russian civilians that could have had drastic results to Russian/GIR relations at the most critical time.

The Order of the Imam medal was the equivalent to America's Silver Star, just one level below the GIR's Mahdi Award, which was the equivalent of the Medal of Honor. It had been awarded on the basis of Selim, while under direct fire himself, personally maneuvering through all of his personnel and holding them in check, taking the minimal action necessary to extract his more powerful force from the area when most commanders would have overwhelmed their attackers. General Talabari had presented the award to Selim himself and become somewhat enamored with the young Captain and his history. He ordered his

staff to research the complete story of Selim and prepare a summary of his accomplishments and experience for presentation to him in March. General Talabari was already formulating plans for the young Captain, but he wanted to be thorough.

To the south in Europe, another European force of German, French, Italian, Spanish, Czech and Austrian forces were moving across the Balkans to the aide of the Bulgarians, Romanians and Yugoslavs who were being rapidly pushed back by the large and powerful invading forces of the GIR and Greece.

The biggest concern in Europe continued to be the disposition of Russian forces. There was great concern with the continuing bonanza that the Russians were experiencing out of Siberia, and with the relationship that Russia already had with the CAS and GIR in that regard, that it would not take too much for the Russians to form a military alliance with Europe's enemies and add their great weight to the invasions that were already occurring. This concern stretched across the Atlantic and was a major focus of the Weisskopf administration. The Americans were working closely with the various representatives of the European Union to keep Russia neutral at the worst, or to turn them completely away from the CAS and GIR at the best and have them enter the war on the side of the allies, thereby cutting off the wealth of resources those enemies were extracting out of Siberia.

December 2007 through February 2008

The United States

The United States was rapidly increasing its production capabilities as it moved closer and closer to complete energy independence, a goal the Weisskopf administration intended to achieve by the end of 2008. Rich new oil fields in the Gulf of Mexico, off the west coast and particularly in Alaska had been developed and were in full production. These oil fields would reduce American dependence by over 50% once they were fully operational.

Huge tracts of the American southwest had been set aside for and developed into solar and wind energy fields. From Texas to southern California, twenty-five separate mega-facilities had been created. Although each had a primary focus of either wind or solar electrical generation, each was also a hybrid system utilizing the secondary source, either wind or solar, to compliment the primary. Most facilities covered several hundred acres at a minimum and were placed in remote regions with strictly enforced ground and air approach buffer and security zones. These federal and state efforts in the southwest when coupled with the individual efforts of corporations and individuals across the nation were reducing America's energy independence by upwards of 30%.

Finally, from an energy perspective, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had been scaled back significantly as a result of pressure by the Weisskopf administration. This was resulting in the building of several dozen new nuclear plants all across America by large Architectural, Engineering and Construction (AEC) firms like Bechtel Power Corporation and Brown and Root. For decades these companies had not been able to afford to build nuclear plants in America as a result of successful efforts by environmental and other lobbying groups in establishing policy that called for any nuclear plant to have to meet the latest nuclear code while the plant was being built, as opposed to locking in the code (outside of any major safety discoveries) when the plant construction was started. That policy had killed the nuclear plant industry in America because no AEC firm could afford to build such a plant when there was the potential for a complete retrofit to new code at anytime during the construction, including only months or

weeks before the plant was complete. The risk of such costly retrofits, and the eventual retrofits themselves, drove costs up so far that it was not economically feasible to consider building new nuclear plants in America after the late 1970's and early 1980's.

So, the AEC firms in America had been building safe nuclear plants, the safest in the world, for nations outside the United States for all of those years since. Many of those plants, in fact the majority of them, were now benefiting America's enemies. Under the Weisskopf administration, Executive Orders were signed, legislation was adopted and policies were changed so that nuclear plant construction once again conformed to the nuclear building codes in existence at the start of the project. Immediately upon the institution of these policies and regulations, dozens of plants were started in the continental United States and they were all now almost finished due to the emphasis on completion, the huge work force available for construction, and because the focus was clearing red tape for the construction rather than creating it. These plants would reduce the dependence on foreign oil in America by another 25% themselves.

Despite periodic missile attacks from the Gulf of Mexico and on occasion from area off the Pacific Coast, several dozen new shipyards had also been completed and they were now pumping out new cargo ships, new tankers, new support and auxiliary ships, new destroyers, new frigates, new cruisers, new amphibious assault ships (which were serving a dual role as troop carriers and sea control ships) and new full deck carriers. The rates weren't what the President had called for yet, but production was picking up and new flotillas, new task forces and new fleets were forming up as quickly as they could be built and as quickly as they could be outfitted and shaken down. Unfortunately, there was a great need for them as so many ships were falling victim to the LRASD devices being employed by the enemies of the United States. President Weisskopf and his administration had successfully lobbied the congress to provide the funding to meet the challenge. America was not going to hold back because of a fear of losses. The survival of the nation was depending upon America's willingness and ability rise above the adversity and President Weisskopf was determined to help the nation do just that...regardless of cost or loss.

Terrorist attacks still occurred on a regular basis targeting infrastructure around the nation. But the numbers were dropping off and the effectiveness were dropping off as the borders were now sealed, as the Home Guard Units became more and more effective and as existing terrorists were killed off in a war of attrition. Most Americans recognized the success and progress in this area, but they knew that the fight was far from over as most felt that there were many cells of terrorist still within the borders who were still awaiting orders to go into action. The citizens were also increasingly concerned about enemy forces and their progress in Central America. In addition, more and more analysts, editors and members of the common public recognized the tenseness in relations with Mexico and were more and more concerned with the potential for Mexican collusion with their enemies. Federal and State forces all along the border were bolstered and strengthened and efforts to diplomatically address issues with Mexico were redoubled.

During this period of time, Leon Campbell enjoyed his recuperation with his family in the Boise, Idaho area. He spent many hours with his brother, Alan, talking with him, encouraging him and preparing him for service to his nation. Leon was interviewed regularly by local and national news and talk shows and became quite the spokesman for vigilance amongst the citizenry in support of the war effort. In early January of 2008, he began working in recruitment. He was a natural icon to draw young men to the service of their country. It was stateside, it was safe...but it was not something Leon was neither comfortable or satisfied with. He wanted to be back out in the action.

Colonel Jess Simmons was surprised that he was allowed to stay in Texas much longer than expected, allowing him many weeks of quality time with his wife. He also spent a lot of time at the Joint Reserve Base in Ft. Worth, training and schooling units that were slated for transfer to Israel. In addition, he was

able to several weekends on his ranch up near Montague, Texas, repairing fence lines, clearing brush and doing general maintenance work around the place that was needed as a result of his long absence. All too quickly the time passed and the inevitable call came. In mid-February, Jess bid his wife, Cindy farewell as he shipped out for Israel. As he thought of her working back in the aircraft plant there in Ft. Worth, his heart swelled with love and with pride in her. He was so blessed to have been able to have the time with her, but he regretted that he had been unable to see his son while he had been at home.

Billy Simmons, who had received a battlefield commission to the rank of Captain, was still fighting in Australia and any leaves he got were very short and taken in-theater, usually right there near Sydney, or occasionally in New Zealand. Jess was immensely proud of his son and naturally concerned for his welfare. But he knew that the dangers, the risks and the severity of the situation all came with the territory. As Colonel Simmons contemplated his son's situation before trying to catch a few hours sleep on the long flight across the Atlantic, he never would have imagined that he would never have the opportunity to meet his son face to face again.

In Florida, Maria Rodriguez was busily raising her young son, Felipe. He was only a few months old, but as he learned to crawl and became aware of his surroundings, Maria could see so much of his father in him. She spent a lot of time with Hernando's parents and they talked for many long hours about the future when Hernando returned from the war. None of them could hide their fear and anxiety regarding Hernando. So many right there in south Florida and all around the nation were dealing with the loss of the loved ones.

The fear was not relegated to losses on the battlefield in some distant country either. Maria and the Rodriguez's were also concerned for the safety and welfare of one another, particularly young Felipe. Terror attacks continued within the borders of the United States. Mr. Rodriguez had joined a local Home Guard unit and faithfully fulfilled his watch duty each week. He had learned to shoot and regularly took his wife and Maria out to the range so they would be prepared as well. Maria carried a small automatic pistol with her wherever she went and was proficient in its use. She was proud of that fact and shared it with Hernando, who also swelled with pride at how his wife was responding. He was comforted to know that she and her family had taken measures to provide for their own personal defense, while he was away, helping provide for the national defense.

Maria was also proud of her father-in-law. Mr. Rodriguez took his Home Guard duty seriously, as did millions of other Americans. He trained as hard as he could and was religiously punctual for his four, six hour watch duties each week. They had all learned, all over the country, by hard experience what a lack of vigilance could mean. It was written in the blood of tens of thousands who had died and scores of thousands who had been injured or wounded . . . and they knew it was not over. For his part, Mr. Rodriguez wrote regularly to his son and shared in writing with him the experiences of their mutual service to their country. The feelings this engendered between father and son, between wife and husband, between extended family members were extraordinary. It was a phenomena that was sweeping the country and binding the nation together to unitedly face the mortal threat as men and women serving directly in the armed services became brothers and sisters in arms to their many family members and friends who were also serving at home.

In Boston, Dr. Joseph Trevor had received and reviewed Sandra McPherson's work. He was extremely impressed and excited about the prospects this software would enable for continued advances in genome research and particularly for further advancement and understanding of the Human Reasoning Structures he had discovered. As Sandra had thought, Dr. Trevor wanted to personally see a demonstration of the prototype software she had created. Dr. Trevor made the trip out to California in early December with his wife Elizabeth who had gotten the time off from her work to do so. The result were even more compelling than the initial test. Sandra had continued to modify and improve the

algorithms and her persistence and talent paid off. While there, Joseph learned to use the software himself and was able to replicate the results against another sample of data he had brought with him to California, hoping for just that opportunity.

As a result, when he returned to Boston in mid-January, Joseph was able to quickly convince his own supporters of the importance of funding the development of software modeling in a major way. He used the demonstration software right there in the conference room to help convince them, and they were completely convinced.

As Dr. McPherson began receiving funds to further develop the software package and extend its functionality in late January, she worked with her friends in Europe to prepare the initial samples of fetal tissue she would have them use to develop the data she would then use in California. By late February the preparations were complete, the tissue had been gathered, the data had been created and she was anxiously anticipating the arrival of the data so she could apply her newly-developed virtual atomic microscopy software to model it and try to unlock its secrets..

As the primary season approached for the presidential election, Curt Johnson and Susan Crater doubled their efforts to position themselves for the eventual campaign against President Weisskopf. Even with the full support of the DNC, there were a number of other candidates attempting to mount credible local challenges to their nomination to lead the Democratic party. Johnson and Crater largely ignored those challenges, preferring to spend the time developing and pointing out the differences between their ideas and plans and those of the President's administration. They felt that with all of the bad news on the war front, that they had a good chance of discrediting the President and undermining his popularity. But they also knew they had to be very careful in doing so to ensure that they did not offend the citizenry in a time of war when so many Americans, at home and abroad were paying the ultimate price.

For his part, President Weisskopf was unerringly true to the position statement he had given outside of the state house in Sacramento, CA, regarding the election. He did not campaign and he did not mention his challengers. Many in the press and amongst the opposite party tried to point out that his many trips across America to inspire and bolster the public from a moral and a production perspective were, in effect, what they called *stealth campaigning* ... but the charge never stuck in the minds of the people, despite the efforts to the contrary. President Weisskopf in public and in his security, economic and social meetings never mentioned the election or the positions of his challengers. He simply continued his monumental personal efforts on the war front. His party, his supporters ... and increasingly larger numbers of the common citizenry ... loved it and took up the same sentiment. For the first time in history, as a presidential primary season approached, there were no challengers on the Republican party's primary ballots in any of the fifty states for the office of Presidency.

One of the most critical and time consuming tasks for the President, and one of the most frustrating, was what the President considered the strategic issues of the war to date. That was the diplomatic efforts associated with influencing the Russian Federation. On many occasions the President and his staff, particularly the State Department, despaired over the seemingly nonchalant attitude of the Russian President. The President couldn't count the times that he had personally spoken with President Vladimir Putin and urged him to consider moving away from the ideological and economic ties Russia was embracing with the CAS and GIR. The trouble was, Weisskopf genuinely liked the Russian President and could not understand how the Russian could be so blind to the historical danger to his own nation, not to mention the clear and present danger to American and the rest of the allies.

Ultimately, Weisskopf surmised that the Russian President wasn't oblivious to the dangers at all. He determined that Putin simply felt that he had the situation under control, figuring that neither the West or the East was in a position to risk having Russia become an enemy of either side. Weisskopf came to the

conclusion that Puten's reasoning provided that as long as the two gargantuan cultures of West and East were embroiled in mortal and resource depleting combat, that the Russian Federation could remain above the fray, with neither side willing to risk him as an ally of an enemy. As time went on Weisskopf wondered whether or not the Russian was right, whether he was actually smart enough to be successful in his manipulation of the situation throughout the war.

Weisskopf knew that if the positions were reversed, he could not coddle such danger. He could not cozy up to such risk in the hope that the untrustworthy and monstrously evil represented by the CAS and GIR would be satisfied only with America and Europe . . . he felt certain that they would not and that it would be better to stand united than to stand alone. He spared no effort in sharing this sentiment with President Puten , but he was disappointed by the continued assurances from Puten that the American was not to worry, the he, Puten, had everything under control. Unknown to both leaders, the ultimate disposition of Russia in World War III was about to be decided for her, and it was not a decision that either men would control.

Chapter 4

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other"—John Adams

March 12, 2008, 12:35 Local Time

Outside of the Presidential Offices

New Delhi, India

Minister Buhpendra Gavanker sat in the outer office patiently awaiting his appointment with the President.

"Perhaps now I will learn what this emergency meeting is all about," he thought, "they had to bring me all the way here from Siberia and I had to attend the meeting personally to know."

He'd been called back to the capitol here in New Delhi two days ago from his posting in Gavank, Siberia. It had been unplanned and very urgent. He would not soon forget the flash dispatch he had received or the fact that an Indian military aircraft was within twenty minutes of arriving for him when he had received the message. An Indian officer, a Colonel, had arrived with the transport and he had been whisked away with only an hour's time to pack.

As he had been leaving for the airport, he could still hear General Nosik's parting jab.

"Well Bu, I suppose you must come to expect these things now that you are an official *minister* . You will find that the higher up that food chain you climb, the more immediate and firm the claim your bosses will have upon you!"

And then the Russian General who had recently been promoted to the commander in chief of all Russian security forces in Siberia had laughed heartily as he slapped Buhpendra on the back.

"That Andrei," thought the Minister, "he certainly has a sense of humor, but he also knows how to use it to cause one to think. I really do wonder sometimes if this Minister title they have hung on me will be worth it in the end. It certainly has helped with the handling of requisitions and getting a response from the Siberian officials, but the General certainly has a point."

As he concluded these thoughts, an aide came out of the President's office and invited Buhendra to come in for his meeting with President KP Narayannen. When he stepped into the room, the President rose from behind his desk and came around to greet him.

"Come in, come in, Minister Gavanker, so good to finally meet you. Please, " he said as he put his arm around Buhendra's shoulder, "have a seat."

Buhendra noticed that there were four other people in the room. There was a high ranking General officer in the Indian Army, another officer of similar rank in the Indian Air Force, the Defense Minister and the Foreign Minister, Rahmish Patel, all in the room with the President. The Foreign Minister, in Buhendra's estimation, was a very capable diplomat and administrator. He pushed very hard for India's best interests, but he was also extremely ambitious. After a few introductions and pleasantries, the President began the meeting.

"We are sorry for the urgent nature of this meeting Buhendra, but as you will find, it was completely necessary.

"As you know, your efforts in Siberia as a part of the Siberian Economic Development Treaty on behalf of India have been very much appreciated by all of us here in New Delhi. In fact, they have been very critical to our economic progress and to the improving conditions and well being of our citizens throughout the nation. We commend you for that service and promoted you to the Minister representing India to Siberia as a result of it. We want to continue to emphasize the critical nature of your assignment and work there.

"It is our of a recognition of the critical nature of your work there, and due to significant developments associated with it, that we called this meeting. Before I allow the Foreign Minister and then the other gentlemen here in this meeting to continue, let me preface their remarks with the following.

"Everything that will be discussed today is classified Top Secret. Given the nature of the new developments that we are about to share with you, I want to ensure that everyone in this room, including yourself, Minister Gavanker, understands the gravity and nature of the situation and the data. Our national security is directly dependent on our recognition of this and on our commitment to it. Do you understand?"

Buhendra was taken back by this language. He wondered what on earth could have developed that could evoke such a prelude. He thought it must have something to do with the war effort, something he was unaware of. Perhaps some rare elements had been discovered that he was unaware of, probably associated with the nuclear program. No matter, he was a loyal Indian and completely understood his duty and intended to fulfill it.

"Yes, Mr. President, I understand and will comply completely with any security requirements. What are the developments of which you speak and how can I be of service?"

The President turned to his Foreign Minister, whom the President himself was still wary and distrustful of, and said,

"Rahmish, please fill Minister Gavanker in on the diplomatic essence of the developments. When you are complete, we'll have the Defense Minister and the General's continue."

March 12, 2008, Two hours later

Again Outside the Presidential Offices

New Delhi, India

Buhendra was shocked. Despite the explanations, assurances and plans that had been rehearsed to him in the President's office, he continued to ask himself.

"An independent Siberia? An official announcement tomorrow morning? Troops and materiel to support the independence already in place from both India and China?"

Gavanker was not a military man, but he had a keen mind and that mind had already put together the essence of the puzzle.

"They knew, they knew all along. It must have been the plan from the beginning and Andrei was right. Andrei! How will he react to this?"

Buhendra already knew the answer to that question.

"He will fight."

The Siberian Economic Development Treaty had been signed by The Russian Federation, India and the People's of Republic of China over two and one-half years ago. Since that time, the GIR had been brought into the fold. All were exploiting the vast resources of Siberia, trading materiel resources for hard currency. India and China, the principle members of the Coalition of Asian States (CAS) and the Greater Islamic Republic (GIR) were receiving tremendous amounts of natural resources in exchange for the hard currency that the Russian Federation desperately needed. China and India alone had sent hundreds of thousands of workers into the vast northland to discover and exploit the minerals, lumber, hydro-electric, petroleum and other resources so abundantly available there.

Andrei Nosik, the Russian General in charge of security for the various sites inside of Siberia, had been very distrustful of the entire affair from the beginning. As the Colonel in charge of securing three "sites" in the beginning, he had noted that most of the workers were young men. It was not lost on him that their discipline and their immediate supervisors resembled something much more akin to military units than they did work crews. But he had been over-ruled by his Moscow superiors, and he had done the best with the forces he had been supplied.

His ability to "make due" had not been lost on his superiors. He was promoted first to the General in command of a major region of Siberia, and ultimately, in the last few months, to command all Siberian security forces for the Russian Federation. That latest promotion had forestalled his planned retirement, a retirement that Buhendra knew the General had been looking forward to.

Now, despite his continuing regular and insistent communiqués back to Moscow requesting more resource, his superiors continued to recognize those concerns for what they were...loyalty to the Rodina, to the Motherland. And, although those same superiors did little to respond to the requests, they nonetheless remained confident that Nosik's prior experiences in Afghanistan and in Eastern Europe would allow him to fulfill his assignment, even if he felt he was undermanned. Still, the General was constantly commenting, even to Buhpendra, that he didn't feel he had enough. That he would make such comments to Buhpendra, was a testament to the friendship that had developed over the last thirty months between them.

"Now it is clear that he was right all along," thought the Minister.

But Minister Buhpendra Gavanker, soon to be the Indian Ambassador to Siberia, would not let that friendship stand in the way of his duty. If the Siberians desired independence, and if his nation was going to recognize and support it, his duty was clear, despite whatever feelings he may have towards Andrei personally and despite whatever action Andrei would take opposing Siberian independence.

"And he most assuredly will take action," concluded Buhpendra.

His conviction regarding this had been candidly communicated to the President, the Foreign Minister, the Defense Minister and the Indian Generals. In response to this conviction, the Defense Minister and the Generals informed him that operational plans already accounted for it.

85,000 of the Indian "workers" in Siberia had been soldiers all along. Their small arms, mortars and machineguns were already cached in the wilderness outside of patrol perimeters that the Russian security forces had established. Perimeters that Nosik had briefed the Indians on regularly and that had been included as a matter of course in Gavanker's reports back to New Delhi. The non-commissioned officers (NCO's) and officers were already there acting as supervisors just as the Russian General had feared all along. The same was true for 150,000 of the Chinese workers. When coupled with the 50,000 troops the Siberians would muster, close to 300,000 troops would be deployed in Siberia in the next few days in support of independence. Taking into consideration the element of surprise they hoped to maintain, it was felt that these forces would be more than sufficient to deal with the Russian security force of 35,00-40,000 under General Nosik.

Within two weeks, China, India and the GIR planned to insert well over 500,000 more troops into Siberia, moving along the western Siberian border with Russia in support of the new Siberian government. They would be moved in from the border areas of those nations with other internal forces already en route to take their place on the border. The same iteration would be accelerated and occur ten times over the next two and one half months as over five million GIR, Chinese and Indian troops were committed to what each was now designating as Barbarosa East in their own languages.

But Ambassador Gavanker was not yet aware of that extent of the operation. He would return to the Siberian capitol within a few days, after the Russian security forces had been withdrawn, defeated or completely driven from the Capitol. The Russian forces at the work sites, particularly at Gavanker where General Nosik's headquarters were located, would not be given any such opportunity. The military's operational plans called for their positions to be completely over-run in a surprise attack the next morning just before the Siberian official announcement in the Capitol.

March 13, 2008, 04:15 Local Time

Private Quarters

CINC, Russian Security Forces Command HQ

Gavank, Siberia

THUD

The sound immediately awakened him from a deep sleep as his phone began to ring. As a result of his prior combat experience, long ago in Afghanistan, he recognized the *THUD* for what it was, the firing of a heavy mortar.

"One, two, three, four ..." he counted, waiting for the sound he knew was coming as his phone continued to ring and as more and more *THUDS* sounded.

BOOM!

"Less than 1500 meters," he thought. Quickly picking up the secure phone he answered, "Nosik"

The intensity in the voice of the duty officer told him as much about the current situation as the sounds coming from outside, where more *THUDS* were mixing in now with the sound of small arms and machinegun fire.

"General, we are under attack. Overwhelming numbers of enemy personnel of unknown origin are breaching our perimeter on the east and south. There is significant suppressing fire also coming from the north and west."

The east and south were the directions to the large Indian dormitory and housing units.

"Order all units to execute defense plan Zebra immediately. Have my staff meet me at point Kilo in five minutes," the General said as he hung up the phone and his security detachment began pounding on his door.

Defense plan Zebra was the contingency plan that the General had his staff work up for the potential of hostilities between his forces and the on-site Indian workers. There were almost six thousand of his personnel at Gavank and over forty thousand workers. These numbers, particularly if there were any quantity of arms supplied to the potential belligerents, made the outcome almost a foregone conclusion.

"Given the sounds of those mortars, machineguns and small arms, I would say the belligerents are well armed," the General surmised as he quickly prepared to leave.

The plan called for several large transport aircraft, several fighter aircraft, half a dozen attack aircraft and four attack helicopters to be on an alert-five status twenty-four hours a day. It also called for the

collapsing of the perimeter of the base to right around the airfield in a holding action. The plan utilized a number of his tanks and Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV) to immediately extend security out along the take-off flight path of departing aircraft to protect against anti-aircraft fire. Over the last twenty-four month, since the onset of these procedures, it had been difficult to maintain the readiness of these forces to the degree the General wanted. But he had persevered.

"This morning we shall see if it pays off," thought the General as he picked up his own personal sidearm and the fully loaded AK-74 he kept in his own personal quarters. Upon doing so, he opened the door to his eight man security team who quickly hustled him towards the alternate command center at Point Kilo.

March 13, 2008, Seven Minutes later

Alternate Command Post, Point Kilo

CINC, Russian Security Forces Command HQ

Gavank, Siberia

"Kalinkov, what is the situation," the General demanded as their impromptu meeting got underway. He could not help but notice that several members of his staff had not arrived. He concluded, correctly, that they never would.

The commander of the base's security forces, Colonel Kalinkov responded.

"General, we have fallen back to the planned security lines established for defense plan Zebra. The rest of the base has been over-run. The 1st and 3rd Companies are intact and engaged along the perimeter but all other commands are completely disorganized. We are currently forming up another Company from existing combat units and ..."

The General interrupted.

"As of this minute, all remaining personnel on this base *ARE* combat units. Do you understand?"

As the security force commander soberly nodded, the General continued.

"Good, form up as many companies as possible from the available personnel. Arm them all and put seasoned officers or NCO's over them. I want to provide a defense in depth as we evacuate to our contingency site. We must get as many aircraft as possible into the air to accomplish that purpose. What is the contingency location for today, and has Moscow been informed?"

The General's chief of staff checked his notes and responded.

"General, the contingency base for today is fire base Lima. Preparation there have been complete for

three months and our personnel report that the base is secure.

"As to communications with Moscow, our long range communications were taken out in the initial attack by sappers. Our aircraft in the air are attempting to communicate as we speak, relaying the message to any friendly unit they can speak to."

General Nosik was pleased to hear about the contingency base, but knew that communicating this attack, which he suspected was wide spread, was critical. He also knew that they would have to fight hard to get any appreciable part of this command and the assets on this base relocated to the contingency site.

"Alright. What about communication with our other forces? Also, what is the status of our aircraft and the perimeter now. Colonel?"

The Colonel Kalinkov, and who had been communicating with his own staff as the Chief of Staff had been talking, turned to Nosik.

"General, we lost communications with all other bases when the sapper took out our communication facilities. They took out both the primary and the secondary equipment. When our initial aircraft took off, they ran into significant surface to air attacks. Our armor had deployed, but several surface-to-air missiles were launched from prepared positions before we could respond. We lost three of the attack aircraft and two of the helicopters. The remaining airborne aircraft are now punishing the enemy, both those trying to storm our perimeter to the east and south, and those suppressing us to the west and north.

"General, one of the fighters flying CAP briefly made contact with our forces at the Cobalt operation. They indicated that Chinese workers were over-running their position and that Colonel Propov had been killed while trying to make his way from his quarters to the command post... we then lost all communications with our forces there."

Andrei Nosik was deeply effected by the loss of Colonel Propov. He had been a good soldier and a good friend. He would take time later to properly mourn him, and to avenge him. He also contemplated how closely he had surely come to death this morning as well. Surely the enemy had targeted him immediately. Only their prior planning, his quick instincts and the professionalism of his security team, mixed in with a healthy dose of luck, had saved him.

"Each of you understands and knows your duty. We will proceed with Zebra as planned. Get as many aircraft loaded and airborne as possible. Form a phalanx with the remaining armor, IFV's, trucks and other vehicles carrying the rest of the personnel. Once the aircraft are away, that mechanized battalion will brake out and make its way by the route proscribed to Lima.

"I want my staff and their security team to get on the first transport out and set up the command HQ at Kilo. I will follow on the last transport with my own security detachment."

Turning to the Colonel Kalinkov, the General said,

"Petri, you will be lead the remaining forces. Take charge of the column and make your way to Lima. I am counting on you to get that armor and the remaining personnel there. There will be constant air support for you just as long as we have fuel, ammunition and aircraft. I promise you that.

"Does everyone understand? Good, carry on."

As the General and his own security detachment left the alternate command post and made their way towards their designated aircraft, the General noticed the rapid flashing of massed mortar fire and small arms fire lighting up the very early morning night sky around him. Though the front lines were several thousand meters away, the flashing recalled to his memory the dream, no the nightmare, he had on so many occasions almost a year ago. The dream of a constant flashing, lighting up the night sky. In that respect the dream and this reality were similar, but this reality was definitely not that dream. The flashing was not nearly as frequent and the sound was wrong. In that nightmare the flashing made for one perpetual light show, lighting up the surrounding landscape as if though it were day, with only a minor flickering effect, so numerous were the guns firings. In that dream the sound was clearly that of a constant, almost incomprehensible, deafening artillery attack, large artillery along a front that measured in the scores of miles. Here, the light was more of a constant strobe of light, with dark periods in between and the sound was an almost continuous, hollow and muted *THUDDING* of many, many mortar tubes being fired.

"Well, this mortar fire may not be heavy artillery, but it will certainly kill all of us here unless we hurry. Still, I wonder what the meaning of that other dream is . . . if it has any meaning at all," thought the General as he hurried along.

He would find out soon enough.

March 13, 2008, 03:57

Presidential Situation and Planning Center

The Kremlin

Moscow, Russia

"Mr. President, reports are sparse and communications with all of our facilities in Siberia are out, but here is what we know.

"Approximately three hours ago we received a transmission from one of our AWACS aircraft to the east of Moscow indicating that they had just received a relayed transmission from fighter aircraft stationed in the Urals who had received the message from other aircraft further to their east. The original transmission was received on a secure frequency normally used by our defensive CAP aircraft throughout the Rodina, including those in Siberia. Let me read the printed dictation of that transmission.

Any Russian Federation aircraft on this frequency, this is an emergency transmission relayed from CINCSIB, I repeat this is an emergency transmission relayed from CINCSIB. OPLAN Zebra has been executed. I repeat OPLAN Zebra executed. Heavy fighting at Gavank. Other facilities reporting [rest of transmission garbled]

"Mr. President, that was all of the transmission that was relayed."

President Vladimir Putin took only a moment to consider the report. Looking around the room at his

hastily gathered security council, he asked.

"Someone quickly fill me on the essence of OPLAN Zebra."

The Defense Minister responded.

"Mr. President, OPLAN Zebra is a contingency plan that General Andrei Nosik, the Commander in Chief of our defense forces in Siberia, set in motion over a year and a half ago. It was based on his continuing concerns regarding the numbers and disposition of Indian and Chinese workers ..."

The President interrupted testily.

"Yes, yes. We are all aware of the General's concerns. They have been voiced to us over and over again and right now I do not have the time or the demeanor to listen to them again. Just let me know the essence of this plan."

Winning at the impatience of his President, the Defense Minister continued.

"Basically, Zebra calls for a rapid withdrawal of the General's command headquarters in the event his position was in danger of being over-run by an attack of the Indian workers at Gavank. The overall operation calls for similar withdrawals at the other facilities so that Russian Siberian Defense forces can regroup and then counterattack."

The President turned to the Commander in Chief of the Russian Army.

"General, what are your thoughts regarding this. What is your understanding of its disposition?"

Without hesitation the General replied.

"Mr. President, we had urged against it and refused the funding as a result of this administration's policy to allow no overt military operations by our Security Forces in the region that would either destabilize or threaten the Economic Development treaty. Apparently the General implemented it on his own with whatever resources he could scrape together."

The President, never in a good mood so early in the morning in any case, was growing fouler by the moment.

"Am I completely surrounded by people who have a capacity to only state the obvious? General, I am aware of this administration's policies. I am asking you what the current disposition is. What is the likelihood that this has happened, that Chinese and Indian workers have attacked our Security Forces causing General Nosik to implement this plan of his?"

Again, the general responded to his President without hesitation, and with complete professionalism, in spite of the rebuke.

"Mr. President, we have not been able to confirm this report directly. Even though this is the case, given our inability to communicate with any of the facilities in Siberia over the last several hours, including those forces stationed at the capitol, I believe there is an increasing likelihood that it has occurred. I would recommend that we begin to ..."

As the General got to this point in his reply, the President's Chief of Staff interrupted him.

"Excuse me General, but Mr. President, I have just been informed that WNN is carrying a live broadcast of an important announcement by the Governor of Siberia."

Motioning to one of his aides, the Chief of Staff indicated that he should turn the audio-video equipment on.

"Please, everyone hold for a moment while we watch this on the screen."

As the screen at the front of the room came to life, an image of the Siberian Governor appeared sitting at his desk in his office. There was a banner along the top of the screen indicating that the program was a special, breaking WNN report. As the sound became audible, the Siberian Governor was already speaking.

"... and so, on this date, March 13, 2008, the Parliament of Siberia has voted unanimously to declare independence from the Russian Federation. We bid our friends in Russia the most profound thanks for our efforts together over the last many decades. We trust that we can continue in friendship as we go forward.

"We have press and diplomatic packets available. The official diplomatic packages have already shipped by courier to the major nations of the world, including Moscow and including the United Nations, documenting how we would propose our independence and sovereignty move forward.

"There will be announcements from Beijing, New Delhi, Tehran and Tokyo this morning recognizing our independence. We expect announcements later in the day from other areas of the world, including Argentina, Malaysia, Singapore, and Greece.

"As to the disposition of the current Siberian Economic Development Treaty, we will propose a staged transition over the next two years where the hard currency is shared between ourselves and the Russian Federation. This would start at 80% to the Russian Federation and 20% to Siberia, transitioning every eight months by 20% such that at the end of two years, the percentages reverse to 80% to Siberia and 20% to the Russian Federation. These percentages would then remain in place for a twenty-year period, or until such time as the treaty is dissolved by a majority of the participating parties ..."

President Vladimir Putin could not believe his ears. The treachery was appalling, the ruination of his own carefully laid plans for Russian neutrality in the current war and the resulting prosperity while the world languished burned him to the core. It was clear that China and India had carefully prepared this day for several years. The whole world had anticipated what the Chinese and her allies would attempt on the second anniversary of their attack on America.

"Well, now we here in Russia know, and it is the surprise of our lives and it will undoubtedly shock the world," the President thought.

"Just like they did in attacking the Americans," thought the President.

"I should have listened to Weisskopf when I had the chance."

If this proves to be true, and with that WNN report there was really no doubt, then it was clear that the CAS and the GIR had taken abject advantage of his plans and had played him like some kind of musical instrument.

"Turn that damned thing off!

"Call the parliament into emergency session and schedule an address by me to them for early this afternoon. I want articles of war prepared and discussed.

"General, confirm or dispel these military attacks, however you have to do it, and do it in the next four hours."

Turning to his Chief of Staff and his Foreign Minister, the President continued, "Get a draft statement put together that the Russian Federation summarily rejects this independence claim and that the fool in Siberia has twenty-four hours to reconsider, and get that communiqué officially transmitted this morning

"Also, get the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Chancellor of Germany, the President of the European Union and the President of Brazil on a secure communication line for me, in that order. If China, India and the Islamics want war... it is war we shall give them, such a war as they have never conceived."

President Putin would find out soon enough that speaking such words was going to be much easier than turning them into reality. In fact, he would find that it was going to be far more difficult and far more costly than he could possibly imagine, for his nation and for himself personally.

March 15, 2008, 08:25

Situation Room

The White House

Washington DC

Bill Hendrickson, the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States, completed his briefing to the National Security team with these words.

"Based on everything that the Russians have shared with us, and based on our own intelligence sources and those of our allies as I have described them, the Russians are looking at a situation very comparable to the German Operation "Barbarosa" launched against them in the spring of 1941.

"That is to say, they have been taken completely by surprise and have lost significant assets all across Siberia, both tactical and strategic assets, including many of their deployed ICBM's across the Siberian frontier. Although many of these were destroyed by Russian forces defending them, we have to deal with the reality that the Chinese have undoubtedly increased the size of their nuclear option significantly as a result of the last two days fighting.

"When it come to the number of Chinese and Indian troops involved, our best estimates indicate that in addition to the two to three hundred thousands troops the Chinese and Indians already have in Siberia, there are many hundreds of thousands more troops pouring across the borders into Siberia as we speak.

They appear to be developing a large pincer movement against retreating Russian forces. We expect that within two weeks the CAS forces will cross the Siberian frontier into Russia proper. Within four to six weeks at the outside, the Chinese and Indians force will be approaching the Ural mountain range from the East. The Russians have that long to develop their defenses.”

President Weisskopf took this in. He had to ask the pointed question.

“Bill, in light of all this, what is our best determination, will the Russians go nuclear?”

Hendrickson had given considerable thought to this since news of the Siberian declaration of independence and the resulting fighting between Russian troops on the one side and Siberian, Chinese and Indian troops on the other had been announced. He had consulted the top strategic thinkers within the U.S. think tanks and war colleges and had spoken with several allies, particularly the United Kingdom, Israel and France, who had significant nuclear arsenals of their own. They had all agreed on one thing, the Russians could go nuclear at any time ... they certainly would go nuclear if the Chinese broke through the Urals.

“Mr. President, our best estimate, or forecast, is that the Russian command authority would almost certainly utilize their strategic deterrent, their long-range nuclear weapons, if the Chinese and Indian forces break through the defenses in the Urals. They may employ tactical assets before that, as enemy forces approach their positions ... it will depend on the strength and depth of the Russian positions and the composition of the enemy. It will also depend on the numbers and capabilities of the Chinese systems. The Chinese have not threatened us with such resources to date because I honestly believe that they are not concerned about unilateral or pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons by us first. They may do so with the Russians because they, like ourselves, will be uncertain what the Russians are going to do, how they are going to respond. This is the consensus of both our own strategists as well as those of our major allies”

President Weisskopf considered all of this. Everyone of them in this room had been anticipating, and preparing for another "*anniversary special*" from the Chinese like last year on American soil. Apparently, the Chinese and their allies had arranged something completely different this year, but something equally audacious and threatening in overall strategic terms.

"I tried to warn Puten ... I wish he would have listened ... I'll bet he wishes he would have listened now," mused the President as he turned to his Secretary of State.

“Fred, I spoke to Puten yesterday. I want to speak to him again today. Our own hands are full, but perhaps we can get a battery or two of our AEGIS Theater ABM assets prepared to deploy around Moscow and other sensitive areas to help augment their own ABM assets. In addition, if we can get the EU to commit significant forces to Russia’s aid, perhaps we can put off or forestall their use of nuclear weapons.”

Before Fred Reissinger could answer, John Bowers, the Vice President interjected.

“Mr. President, pardon my interruption, but would it be possible to forestall the offer of the AEGIS technology? Russia has stood by while the rest of us have gone through hell in this war. I am certain, that short of this invasion, they would probably continue to do so. I believe our developing alliance with them is one of convenience and we should be very reluctant to place such technology in their hands.”

The President listened intently, and then responded.

“John, your concerns and suggestions are duly noted. We are facing a scenario that could get completely out of hand quickly. While I have no doubts as to who would win a full scale nuclear exchange pitting ourselves, Russia, the UK, France and Israel against the CAS and the GIR, the resulting victory would be so horrific that I must seek victory conventionally if at all possible. Those enemy nations have hundreds and hundreds of weapons between them.

“Make no mistake, if they attack us in such a fashion, we will respond overwhelmingly. I am afraid if Russia and China get into it, that there is very little hope for it not to quickly extend to us. My hope is to avoid that eventuality. The Chinese must know that the Russians are protected and that use of these weapons against them will be completely one sided.

“I have no intention of giving this technology to the Russians. I am thinking more along the lines of deploying our own people and equipment to operate the weapons. That would be an ironclad part of the agreement. The Russians would give only the final fire authorization.”

John replied.

“My concern is not so much China as it is Russia. I know the Chinese will not use their weapons first in the current circumstances. They have no reason to, they are progressing on all fronts without them. My concern is that the Russians will unilaterally use them to break up the huge CAS advance and that this action will cause the Chinese, Indians and GIR to respond with everything they have in the hopes of overwhelming the Russian and our own defenses. In such a scenario, it would actually be better for the Russians to be more vulnerable than less.”

Heads around the table were nodding as the President reflected upon his Vice President’s words. Turning, the President faced Admiral Crowler, his Secretary of Defense.

“George, what do you think?”

Admiral Crowler, who had been very involved with the development of the theater ballistic missile defense capability of the AEGIS system while he served as the Chief of Naval Operations, gave a very direct and to the point response to his President.

“Mr. President, I have to concur with the Vice President. With the magnitude of the conventional forces coming at them, the Russians will be more apt to use their nuclear weapons first if they feel their shield is solid.”

The President concurred.

“I have to agree as well. Are there any feelings to the contrary?”

After pausing a few seconds to give others time to voice a dissenting opinion, and upon receiving none, the President continued.

“Okay, so be it, No AEGIS systems at this time for the Russians. Thanks for the input John.

“Fred, still get me in touch with Puten this morning as soon as possible. We will discuss other support efforts that are more conventionally oriented, perhaps consider a couple of J-STAR aircraft and their crews and support elements as force multipliers to help blunt the CAS onslaught if the communications to Russian equipment can be worked out. If not, we may have to divert some equipment of our own. I will also propose and explore the EU support with Puten and begin working that out at the highest levels.

Fred, you will need to be prepared with your staff,” and turning to the Secretary of Defense, the President continued, “and George you will need to prepare your people to work out the details with the Russian and EU staffs to implement it once agreement is reached.”

March 21, 2008, 16:07

COSTIND Headquarters

Beijing, China

General Hunbaio reviewed the information he had just received over the secure telecommunications channel from Mongolia. The entire communiqué provided information that was both exciting and disconcerting at the same time. Next to his nation’s development of strategic nuclear arms, the LRASD weaponry and the Anti-Ballistic missile defense, this information dealt with what the General considered the fourth most important military research and development program his nation had embarked upon in the last twenty years.

The good news was that final field tests at the research facility and range located in the vast wastes of Mongolia had proven successful. The bad news was that an American enemy agent had been discovered who had access to the development program and test results and it was not known what, if anything, the agent had been able to communicate. They would have to assume that he had been able to communicate everything he knew.

“And to think I had taken that traitorous monster under my own arm and promoted him,” thought the General.

Dr. Li Zedong had been the Director of quality assurance on the program. His background and allegiance had been thoroughly checked out.

“Or so we thought,” thought Hunbaio.

“Li Zedong’s roots went right back to the organizer and founder of the people’s revolution. He was a great-grandson of the Mao. How could he betray his people and heritage? When and where had the Americans gotten to him?”

As he asked himself this question, the General already knew the answer. It had to have occurred while Li was attending the prestigious Ivy League college in America. Nothing else made sense. He had come home and played his part to the tee, climbing the ladder within the party and within Hunbaio’s own R&D organization. For the last ten years, Li had capably overseen the QA efforts of several highly sensitive projects within COSTIND, the Chinese national science and technology development effort for the Chinese military over which General Hunbaio presided. Just before the start of the war, in February of 2006, Dr. Zedong’s career progress had culminated in his being promoted to head the QA effort for this very project, and he had done an admirable job.

When discovered two weeks ago gathering and recording highly sensitive information for which he did not have a need to know, the Dr. had immediately activated a small cyanide capsule ingeniously built into

his college graduation ring which had injected the poison into his blood stream and caused his death within a few minutes. Upon analysis, there was little doubt that the device, along with three others found in the Dr.'s other possessions, had come from America.

"Well, no true spy is ever obvious," thought the General as he contemplated the potential harm to the new program. "it would be foolish to think that the Americans have not had any success in infiltrating us. We certainly have infiltrated them."

"Besides, even if the Americans know about it, there is now very little they can do. They have already invested their billions and fielded their systems, it will not be possible for them to undo all of that development and deployment any time soon . . . and it will not be possible for them to counter what we have developed with any presently known technology. It will take them months to determine the major characteristics of the *theta shih* system and much longer to discover all of its capabilities.

"... and they will only learn those capabilities as they lose their own...their vaunted stealth aircraft."

General Hunbaio's prognosis was based on his knowledge of the entire process that had led up to the recent successful test of the new Chinese stealth detection system. It was an advanced hybrid system, tied together and controlled by the latest supercomputing technology based on the most advanced micro-circuitry.

"It was amazing what a rapid boost in research and development we got at COSTIND during all of those years when our factories produced the tens of millions of personal computers for the west," thought the General.

"We benefited richly as their computing, memory and micro-technologies continued to advance, and continued to be outsourced to our manufacturing plants...and then as the Americans actually outsourced the development of that technology to our labs to save even more money. Well, they aren't saving money anymore, and they are losing far more than their highly valued dollars. Not only did we benefit from their technology...we took it and ran with it ourselves to develop even more advanced systems to our own purposes.

"What fools the west had been...and how wise we have been," he concluded to himself as he continued to reflect on the magnitude of what they had developed.

The *theta shih* system consisted of sophisticated passive electronic sensing equipment coupled to the latest bi-static and multi-static radar technologies which were proving more and more capable of detecting and tracking American stealth aircraft...but were not proving capable of acquiring and then achieving a strong lock on the later models. So, although the older stealth aircraft, like the American F-117A stealth fighter, could be acquired and locked on with just the passive electronic sensing and static radar technology, the newer and more exotic stealth aircraft, like the B-2 bomber, the JSF, the F-22 and particularly the SR-77 and HR-7 reconnaissance aircraft required something more. And that's where the most important component of the *theta shih* system came in, the component it was named for.

This integral and most remarkable development in the new Chinese stealth detection system was a *ta shih* scalar radar, which was a combined electro-gravitational field emitter and detector based on the revolutionary physics of scalar electromagnetism. The scalar radar device could detect and track scalar waves generated by objects as they flew through the air and interacted with the various electrical, magnetic and gravitational fields they encountered. Since conventional stealth technology was based on vector field principles, the scalar detectors would simply side-step the American technology once they had been developed to the point of functional, battlefield use. Based on the latest test by the Chinese

research and development team in Mongolia, the General was convinced that now they were.

Basing their work on initial theories established in the United States and Russia in the 1980's, the Chinese researched, developed and perfected magnetic pole and field technology over a twenty-five year period to the point of practical application in this area. By utilizing exceptionally strong magnetic poles to infold energy and then coupling that with strong magnetic fields from powerful superconducting magnets, spacetime in specified regions could be ever so slightly bent and altered just enough to allow enough of a vertical projection of the scalar wave so that it could be detected.

In order for the system to work properly, it had to prevent the detection of superfluous "normal" radiation that might otherwise impede detection. This was accomplished by encasing and shielding the superconducting magnets and poles associated with the system in an advanced, grounded Faraday cage. By doing this any superfluous waves generated by other radiation was grounded in the shield, while scalar waves readily penetrated it undiminished. In other words, the Faraday cage striped away the ordinary waves, allowing only the scalar waves to penetrate for detection.

In essence, *theta shih* system became the ultimate detector for any body moving through spacetime. But it had been tuned specifically for detecting aircraft and missiles in general, and stealth aircraft in particular. The range of the scalar wave detection component of the system was limited when compared to normal radar systems, so the hybrid system used the longer range detection capabilities of the passive electrical sensing, bi-static radar and multi-static radar as a trigger. Once a likely stealth target was detected by those systems, the scalar wave detector could then be focused and tuned on those targets to effect definitive identification, acquisition and targeting.

The entire system was digitally tied to miniaturized, high speed super computers with significant arrayed processing capabilities, which analyzed the detected scalar waves in conjunction with the electronic intercepts and radar data to determine, with a great degree of accuracy, what type of stealth aircraft was involved. The system then controlled the intercept of the target with whatever weapons system was slaved to it. These systems could be anything from ZU-23 anti-aircraft guns up to and including the new KS-3 anti-ballistic missile systems.

The testing in the Mongolian high deserts had proven the system's effectiveness using all of these various weapon types against all models and types of stealth technology the Americans were known or thought to be using. This included radar reflection shape technology, radar absorbing structural technology, coatings...and even the newer, more exotic ionization fields and special electronic charging systems that the Americans were employing on their newer aircraft.

"No, now there will simply be no place for them to hide," surmised the General.

"Anytime they approach our forces, we shall shine the light of *ta shih* on them and illuminate them as the daylight illuminates the earth."

March 21, 2008, that same time

COSTIND Headquarters

Beijing, China

Now General Hunbaio reflected back to the earlier days of his own long standing involvement with the program. Back to the days when the initial theories utilizing passive electronic detection, bi-static and multi-static radar detection had been advanced in the early 1990's. From there they had progressed to the point where rudimentary systems for those technologies had been developed by late 1998. The earliest systems was unwieldy and unsuited for the control of anything but directed anti-aircraft projectile fire and older anti-aircraft missile technology at the time.

Then, an opportunity had presented itself when the United States announced its intention of using air power to force Serbia to bend to international pressure regarding its Kosovo province in late 1998 and early 1999. The Chinese had secretly contacted the Serbs and gained permission to conduct live-fire, combat tests of the rudimentary system during the resulting conflict. The systems were slaved to Serbian SA-3 anti-aircraft missiles for the tests. The General himself had flown to Belgrade with a hand-picked team and witnessed the precision and apparent invulnerability of the U.S. led air assault. He had personally supervised the installation of those initial stealth detection systems and then monitored their use throughout the entire eleven week allied bombing campaign.

Over two dozen missiles were fired in the first few weeks of the war at contacts identified by the equipment as American F-117 stealth fighters. In those first weeks there were no hits, but they did achieve several close intercepts. The Americans must have been concerned with those intercepts because they started flying their stealth fighters at higher altitudes to avoid them. Then, on March 28, 1999, there had been success that had rocked the world's military analysts.

On that night, an F-117 stealth fighter was detected at a 5,000 meter altitude in an attack profile over Serbia. Three SA-3 missiles had been launched and one of them set off its proximity fuse and exploded just a few meters below and to the left of the aircraft. The force of the explosion and the resulting shrapnel damaged the aircraft so severely that it crashed into a farmer's field. For the first time a vaunted American stealth aircraft had been downed in combat. . .and the Chinese were the ones who accomplished it. The General would never forget the adulation and excitement. He would never forget his own feelings as he contemplated the shock and surprise the Americans must have felt.

Although the pilot ejected safely and was successfully rescued by a massive U.S. and NATO search and rescue effort, the stealth aircraft had come down in the farmer's field relatively intact. Then, to the amazement of the Serbs and the Chinese, and later to the amazement of the American high command itself, local American forces had not destroyed the aircraft wreckage as it lay there in the field. Unbelievably, an absolute intelligence coup had been left in that farmer's field and the Chinese and Serbs took full advantage of it.

As he contemplated this, the General side tracked for a moment in his thoughts.

"Funny how the American press never followed up on the pilot of that aircraft," the General mused.

"He was not the pilot whose name was stenciled on the aircraft itself and the Americans did not use their amazing rescue mission they had mounted for any PR purposes."

The General had found those two pieces of information particularly odd given the American president who had been in power at the time. Utterly predictable and easily handled by the Chinese intelligence services, that President had always made abject use of any operation that could be applied in and conceivable manner to make him look good. That he had not done so with this particular event had been

a topic of much discussion and analysis in the People's Republic of China intelligence circles.

Ultimately Chinese intelligence had concluded that the reason the pilot's name and story were never forthcoming was because the pilot himself had not been American. The PRC came to the determination that the Americans had allowed German pilots to be trained in the use of their aircraft and then used in the air over Serbia. Since Germany occupied over half of the air base near Alamogordo, New Mexico where the F-117's were based, and where several wings of German Tornado and RF-4E reconnaissance aircraft were also based for training purposes ... at one of the most sensitive American air bases in the country ... it would have been easy for this cross training to occur had it been found to be advantageous and so ordered by that particular administration. In the war in Kosovo, such a circumstance would have been very "politically correct" to help ensure German support. That particular American President and his entire administration had been caught up in political correctness to the point that they most definitely would have allowed such an operational initiative to become reality, irrespective of the security and intelligence risks, if they thought it would buy them something ... in this case that German support in Europe.

This conclusion was supported all the more in Hunbaio's mind as a result of his own other intelligence successes with the Americans at the time. It had been his idea to have a beautiful Chinese woman, who was a Colonel in the Chinese intelligence services, pose as the head of the People's Republic commercial aircraft industry and visit Washington, DC, on multiple occasions during those years on what were deemed trade missions. As a result, she had been able to gain direct access to the American President and his top economic advisors.

The American President's weaknesses in this regard were well known. After the meetings with the beautiful Chinese "executive" in the White House, the President had ordered the transfer of all reviews of dual-use technology away from the U.S. Defense Department to the much less secure Commerce Department to "speed up the process and cut through red tape". What had resulted was the transfer of significant aircraft, missile and rocket staging technology to the People's Republic that was directly applied to military research and development applications under COSTIND. It was a tremendous coup for the People's Republic in general and for Hunbaio personally. It had continued unabated for almost eight years.

But all of that had been in addition to the matter at hand at the time in Serbia. The General knew that what had really mattered at the time was the fact that the Chinese equipment had locked on to and downed an American stealth fighter. It also mattered that the wreckage had been recovered so surprisingly intact.

The Serbs had gathered that wreckage that night and into the next day. By previous agreement, the Serbs allowed the Chinese technicians to pour over the wreckage and analyze it first and to retain up to two hundred pounds of the wreckage ... two hundred pounds of the wreckage material of their choice. The resulting data had been an intelligence and technological bonanza for the Chinese. It was also materiel that the Serbs would make good use of over the next several months as several other interested nations also would be given the opportunity to review and analyze the wreckage ... of course at a significant cost in terms of hard capitol and future commitments.

But General Hunbaio and his nation had been the ones to benefit the most. Having obtained the desired amount of physical material, the Chinese had prepared a detailed analysis and report and were prepared to ship the data along with the physical materiel back to China in early May. Apparently the American CIA had gotten wind of the Chinese involvement and convinced the American government to act. On May 8th, 1999, the United States had used the much more advanced B-2 stealth bomber, which was impervious to the level of the technology the Chinese employed to bring down the F-117 stealth fighter,

and dropped several large, guided munitions on the Chinese embassy where the data and materiel was located, destroying it and killing several of the General's best people.

To the American's chagrin, the data had previously been electronically transferred in a raw and preliminary form, which allowed the detailed reports to be reconstructed. In addition, thirty-three pounds of the most valuable stealth wreckage material was recovered from the ruins of the embassy and shipped back to China. But the General's personnel were much more difficult to replace, both technically and emotionally.

In the end, the press had never known the real reasons behind that strike on the Chinese embassy or the intricacies and import of the F-117 incident. Although the two governments never formally or informally discussed it, they both knew that it was an event of great import. Neither side had ever forgotten it.

From that day, the General had vowed to bring the stealth detection program to fruition until he could reliably acquire and shoot down any American stealth aircraft. It had taken several years of testing, additional espionage work and significant technological breakthroughs in research and development to accomplish it. Now, the technology appeared well tuned to all of the various stealth materiel the Americans employed and the various methods that were utilizing to try and shield it. The COSTIND engineers had done their duty and the PRC now had the infrastructure in place to continue the development so as to counter the sure American response. What was left now was to get the weapons system produced on a massive scale and end the Americans advantage in this area once and for all, like they had already accomplished on the high seas.

April 2, 2008, 03:07 local time

145,000 feet over Eastern Siberia

Approaching Mongolia

The approach had come in right over the North Pole. Taking off out of Alaska, separation from the SR-77 Pervador aircraft south of the Arctic Circle at the southern edge of the ice cap on the Asian side and final refueling before ingress just north of the Siberian coast. Now it was time to turn to the south east, kick the PDW engines of his HR-7 Thunder Dart in and scream across Mongolia before turning back towards the Arctic Ocean and a refuel before heading "to the house".

Colonel Mendenhall had made many reconnaissance flights over enemy territory in the last two years. From China to India to portions of the Mid-East, there was not a place on earth America's high-altitude, high-performance, exotic stealth reconnaissance aircraft could not penetrate with impunity. The need for them to do so had become even more pronounced as a result of the "space wars" that were continuing in this conflict where each side was regularly downing the other's reconnaissance satellites. So more pilots were trained to fly the SR-77 and HR-7 combo and the program was extended to both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force.

Still, "Mac" Mendenhall was the most experienced hyper-velocity reconnaissance pilot America had. He was now also a squadron leader and had been given the lead role in developing the training program for the newer pilots. He was planning for this mission to be his last combat operation so he could focus more

on that training. If the truth be known, his superiors had hoped he would assign one of his more experienced pilots to this flight, but “Mac” was simply not able to turn down such an important mission.

There were also dangers. The most critical of these were the latest KS-2+ missiles the Chinese had developed and employed on the mainland two years ago, and which they were proliferating to all of their allies as a result of the war. But, although the Chinese had surprised him and his superiors with their ability to reach the altitudes he operated at, they had rarely had enough notification to come close to a physical intercept at the speeds of the HR-7 aircraft, and they had never been able to get a solid “lock-on” to the stealthy aircraft’s airframe.

On one occasion, in May of 2005, when the Chinese had made first use of the KS-2+ missiles, they had actually achieved a lock-on, but that had been a thermal lock based on Mac’s ignition of his afterburners at the time after being surprised that the missiles had reached his altitude. America had since learned that those missile’s seeker heads and the software behind them were not capable of a solid lock-on based upon radar. Since that time, the NRO and other military reconnaissance pilots flying these aircraft had remained much more cool and no aircraft had been lost.

“There are rumors through intelligence channels of an even more advanced missile,” Mendenhall thought as he approached his next navigation point.

“I’ll have to keep that in mind.”

Today the mission was taking the Colonel back over enemy held territory on the mainland of Asia, over Chinese owned Mongolia. The mission profile called for the flight to pass within forty kilometers of a research facility on the high plains of central Mongolia and to capture thermal and electro-magnetic readings across the spectrum as well as visual imagery of the facility. This data would be transferred directly to higher altitude drone aircraft operating over the Arctic Ocean which would in turn relay the data to an AWACS aircraft operating near the pole. From there the data would be transferred back to the States and received in real time back at the NRO headquarters in Chantilly, VA and at the situation room in the White House.

“Concern for what is going on at that research facility looks like it reaches all the way to the top of the food chain,” thought the Colonel as he prepared to activate his sensor package.

April 2, 2008, 03:10 local time

***Ta Shih* Enhanced KS-3 Missile Battery**

PRC COSTIND Research Facility

Central Mongolia

Captain Hu Ziyang recognized the approach profile of the oncoming enemy aircraft. He had dealt with them before. In fact, it was as a result of those earlier encounters that he had been promoted and assigned the task of protecting this critical research facility from enemy air attack. His standard radar was

registering the intermittent, hyper-velocity contact typical of an American high-altitude, hyper-velocity stealth mission. Other than the intermittent contact though, that equipment was unable to lock-on. If the approach profile came close enough, he knew he could launch his un-enhanced KS-2+ and newer KS-3 missiles and hope for an infra-red intercept, but that was literally a long shot.

But tonight, the Captain knew he would not have to rely on any such long shot.

“No, tonight my elusive American friend, we are going to bring you down hard,” thought the Captain as he waited for the intermittent contact to come within the 250 km range of *hista shih* sensors.

As the contact came within range, the Captain ordered his two enhanced KS-3 batteries to activate their *ta shih* detectors and within two seconds he had his answers.

“Captain, the system has identified the approaching aircraft as an American HR-7 hyper-velocity stealth reconnaissance aircraft closing on a bearing of 282 degrees, altitude 45,000 meters, speed mach 4.2 We have a solid lock.”

April 2, 2008, 03:11 local time

160,000 feet over Central Mongolia

Approaching PRC COSTIND Research Facility

“Mac” Mendenhall had already activated his sensor package and was just beginning his turn. The data was already being recorded, encrypted and communicated in bursts to the circling drone aircraft that were flying at an altitude almost twice that of his own well to his north over the Arctic Ocean. At the speed of light, they were transmitting the mission data back to North America, the NRO and the White House.

Mac had also noticed the various conventional radar bands that were trying to get a lock on his aircraft and was flying secure in the knowledge that they could not do so. He knew that at any moment the Chinese would launch their high performance missiles at him in an effort to get an infra-red intercept, but he also knew how to handle that and avoid the lock-on if he simply kept his cool.

What Mac hadn't noticed ... what Mac couldn't notice, because his equipment had no way of sensing it, was that the Chinese *ta shih* detectors associated with the two enhanced KS-3 missile sites had already bounced particles off of his aircraft and locked on to him. When their missile launches were monitored by his aircraft, it came as no particular surprise to him. What did come as a surprise to the Colonel, and to every American who was monitoring the engagement, or who would later see the data that recorded it, was what followed those missile launches.

MISSILE LAUNCH, MISSILE LAUNCH, MISSILE LAUNCH

The red flashing of the warning light and the accompanying incessant words in his headset, though of no

great surprise and of no immediate concern, did get the adrenaline flowing and cause the Colonel to focus on his defensive systems while the sensor package continued its automated sequence of recording, encrypting and broadcasting.

Within thirty seconds all of that changed as both surprise and immediate, mortal danger overshadowed past experiences and as the Colonel's training kicked in to compensate.

The KS-3 missile was a significant enhancement over its KS-2+ forerunner. Capable of engaging targets at up to 70,000 meters in altitude (210,000+ feet), and capable of a maximum speed of Mach 10, the KS-3 missile was designed to intercept incoming ballistic missiles. In the conventional mode, using normal radar, the missile had a maximum range of 500 km (over 300 miles). In the *theta shih* enhanced mode, all of its performance criteria remained the same, except for the range. Since the current *ta shih* detectors only had a range of 250 km (150+ miles) the stealth directed range was limited to that distance.

As Mac Mendenhall approached at mach 4.2 and closed to within 175 km of the facility he realized that the four missiles rising to meet him were accelerating more quickly and to higher speeds than anything he had experienced before. Quicker and faster than anything he had ever been briefed on.

When those same missiles passed through 130,000 feet and showed no deceleration at all, but continued to accelerate past mach 7, Mac knew he was in trouble, and he knew that he was facing a radically new and more dangerous Chinese threat. Every instinct told him this and he wasted no time responding.

"Hightower, Hightower. I am aborting the approach and performing an immediate emergency egress to vector ..."

Those words were the last words Colonel Mac Mendenahall would ever utter. At that instant, as he concentrated fully on his egress and defensive measures, and just as the Colonel desperately activated his ejection module, two missiles slammed into his aircraft at a speed in excess of mach 8 resulting in a massive explosion and total disintegration of Mac's aircraft.

April 2, 2008, 03:15 local time

***Ta Shih* Enhanced KS-3 Missile Battery**

PRC COSTIND Research Facility

Central Mongolia

It was over. The Captain could scarcely believe it.

Where there had been a solid return from the approaching and then rapidly turning American reconnaissance aircraft, there had appeared the plotted tracks of the missiles converging, a brief expansion of the contact return ... and now nothing. The system stated simply.

CONTACT DESTROYED

The American had really had no chance. Had he immediately turned to egress at maximum thrust the moment his own systems detected the KS-3 missile launches he might have gotten away. But, clearly the American thought that these missiles, although faster, would not be able to lock on to him, or even reach him since he was flying at a higher altitude than the KS-2+ missiles were capable. So, he had flown on, and in so doing, he had sealed his own fate.

Two of the missiles had struck right after one another as the American accelerated to mach 5.3 and turned away. There had appeared to be a separation of some type just before impact that could have been an ejection of some sort, but the expanding contact register resulting from the explosions had engulfed it all. Nothing of any measurable size coming out of that explosion had been detected by the sensors, either *theta shih* or conventional radar.

“And no wonder,” thought Captain Hu, “any non-aerodynamic debris or ejection module, hitting the air stream at mach five would be pulverized into nothing but the smallest of fragments ... metal, plastic ... or flesh.

April 8, 2008, 18:37 local time

U.S.S. Tarawa Flight Deck

Off the Coast of Sydney, Australia

Captain Simmons had seen a lot of death and destruction over the last several months, more than he would have ever dreamed possible. As the allies had retreated across Australia and finally been confined to the southeast corner of the continent immediately surrounding Sidney and Melbourne, he had dealt out his share of that death and destruction on the advancing hordes of Chinese, Indonesian and Indian soldiers. In the process Billy had two helicopters shot out from under him and lost three rear-seaters.

As many combat veterans experience, Billy had become reluctant to get to know those he flew and fought with too well ... the pain of the loss just keeps on mounting, the personal sacrifice, though hidden, just keeps on building. Still, that personal sacrifices was not enough. The collective sacrifices of all of the allied forces and the Australian civilian population were not enough ... in fact, they had been woefully inadequate in the face of what they were fighting.

Billy had watched first hundreds of thousands and then several million Australian civilians herded like cattle in advance of the enemy onslaught, terrorized by the rumors and accounts of what was happening to their countrymen and their property falling under the CAS and GIR rule. There was little doubt that the accounts were true ... the world had seen abject evidence of it on WNN and other networks over and over again. But none of what Billy had personally witnessed up to this point compared to what he was witnessing now.

The enemy numbers were overwhelming. A breach had occurred and spread on three fronts. Melbourne had fallen almost three weeks earlier with great destruction and a tremendous loss of life. Billy could scarcely bear to think about what his eyes had witnessed, the death and misery of so many women and children. There had been a resulting huge influx of civilian refugees into the Sydney area, many of them

injured, most all of them completely possession-less except what they had been able to carry on their backs.

Now, Sidney was imminently threatened in a similar manner, except that it would be far worse.

"Now there's no place left for them to run," Billy said to himself.

Allied forces were now embroiled in an overall evacuation effort that made Dunkirk in World War II pale in comparison. Operation Plan NZ-AUTUMN was in full gear and one and one half million Australian, American, United Kingdom, Canadian, Brazilian and other allied troops were being withdrawn in the face of an enemy force that had swelled to over four million front line combatants. In the face of those numbers, over five million Australian citizens also desperately wanted out.

"But most of those will never make it," Billy realized as he contemplated the horror that would ensue in those final hours.

"It'll be a miracle if most of the allied military forces get out, much less all of those folks," he thought.

Seeing to it that such a miracle occurred was what Billy and all of his compatriots were focused on twenty-four hours a day.

The Allied naval force off of Australia had grown to be the largest naval force the allies were employing anywhere in the world. The U.S. now had a large deck carrier force of four carriers in the waters between New Zealand and Australia, the U.S.S. Shanksville having arrived in theater within the last week with her battle group. That total force was shielded by no less than six Aegis cruisers and fourteen Arleigh Burke Aegis destroyers, complimented by eight attack submarines. Each carrier carried an air wing consisting of 20 F/A-18E Super Hornets, 12 F/A-18F two-seater Super Hornets, 12 F/A-35C Joint Strike Fighters, 10 F-14D Tomcat, 10 S-3B ASW Vikings, 4 E/A 6B EW Prowlers, 4 E2C AEW Hawkeyes and 4 SH-60F Seahawk aircraft. Over three hundred aircraft on the large carrier task force alone that was defending the sea lanes and trying to hold back the advancing enemy forces. The ground based air component of the allied efforts had dwindled to less than one hundred aircraft as the large enemy forces came closer and as those aircraft that could still take off and land from increasingly threatened airfields were forced to retreat to New Zealand so they could fight another day.

Closer in to the coast, the allies were employing seven Sea Control Carriers to augment defensive duties and to punish the advancing enemy further. The four U.S. ships similar to the Tarawa, which were in reality built as Amphibious Assault Ships, were employing an air wing of 8 AH-1Z Super Cobra, 4 AV-22 Osprey and 12 A/F-35B VTOL Joint Strike Fighters in the Sea Control mode. The HMS Illustrious and the completely repaired HMS Ocean were both employing mixed, sea control air wings for the United Kingdom, eighteen aircraft on the Illustrious and twelve on the Ocean. Finally, the newly commissioned HMCS White Horse, the Canadians new Amphibious Assault/Sea Control carrier was also operating close to the Australian coast with an air wing of 10 Joint Strike Fighters and 8 ASW helicopters.

With all of the escort ships, with the support, replenishment, ammunition and other logistical ships and the naval amphibious ships, the allies had well over 250 military vessels operating off of Australia in support of the evacuation. Added to this were the over 1000 Australian and New Zealand commercial and private vessels that had volunteered to carry men and materiel away from the beleaguered continent.

As he climbed out of the cockpit and as he and his companion made their way across the flight deck towards a debriefing and then a quick four hours of sleep, Captain Simmons contemplated the mission he

had just completed.

"All ordinance expended, almost all of our fuel ... seeing Terry and Mike go down in that fire ball ... Lord God Almighty, when will it end? Will it ever end?" he thought.

"... and the poor civilians"

Billy had been operating about thirty five miles inland just to the west of the Great Divide Range, where the front lines of battle were now located. The suburbs of Sydney were being hit and hit hard. Seeing the homes and business of civilians going up in flames while those very people ran to the east for their lives, into a more and more cramped space, had broken Billy's heart again and again ... and strengthened his resolve.

"These monsters must be stopped soon ... this scene cannot, *it must not* come to my home in America," he had thought as flew over the scenes of destruction and engaged the advancing enemy.

"I pray to God that we can somehow stop it for these fine people here ... and if not, that enough of us can survive to one day come back here and set things aright, to retake these lands for their rightful owners," he completed.

As he formed those thoughts, and concentrated on avoiding enemy flak, the very idea of surviving was driven home to him as his wingmen, Terry and Mike had been killed in a blinding explosion to his right. Billy saw that a nearby ZU-23 radar guided anti-aircraft emplacement that had remained passive until the American helicopters were right on top of it had been the cause of his friend's deaths. Billy had banked back around behind an oak covered hillock, locked up the target and destroyed it with his last Hellfire missile. Soon thereafter he had expended the last of his other munitions and broke off and returned to the Tarawa. He was grateful to return to the ship alive and well, but sorry he didn't have an endless supply of fuel, munitions ... and wing men ... so he could constantly take the fight to the enemy. He was driven to do so, as were so many of his compatriots, because he couldn't help but see his own family and friends in the people here in Australia whose world and very lives were falling apart in fiery destruction and death right before his eyes.

To the east of the mountains, the allies maintained air-superiority, so once Billie flew his AH-1Z across the mountain range he was in relative safety. But over the advancing battlefield the enemy was employing hundreds of older technology aircraft and scores of their newer ones to good effect in preventing the allies from dominating the air. In fact, the only place the allies were able to maintain total air dominance was immediately over the coast and over the fleets. From Billy's perspective, while the enemy was losing many aircraft, they seemed more than willing to do so because it was allowing their ground forces, which were nonetheless being terribly savaged by western standards, to continue to advance without being decimated to the point of stalling.

The naval side of things was currently much better for the allies and this was what was allowing them to continue the evacuation in the face of the enemy advance. But there were some very serious issues. Indian and Chinese attack aircraft in the form of Backfire and Blinder bombers were a constant threat for cruise missile and especially LRASD, "Killer Whale", attacks. The recent arrival of the HMA White Horse was a perfect example. That ship replaced the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force Osumi class Amphibious Assault vessel, the JMSDF Motobu, when it was sunk three weeks ago by two LRASD weapons launched from a group of TU-22M Backfire bombers that penetrated the defensive zone in the western sector below Melbourne. The Japanese forces in exile were bravely taking up their part of the fight here in Australia and their sacrifices and efforts were an inspiration to all. But the sinking of one of their few remaining capital ships was a terrible blow. It had happened during the unbelievably hectic

period of time surrounding the fall of Melbourne. Several escort ships, including a U.S. Spruance class destroyer had been sunk in that same attack that day.

In addition, many "picket" destroyers and frigates were continuing to be sunk by similar attacks as the enemy continued to advance. The allies expected a mammoth air attack to accompany the final push by the enemy over the Great Divide Range. That push could occur at almost anytime. In addition, reconnaissance and intelligence reports indicated that the Chinese and Indians had increased their naval presence to the west of Melbourne and well north of Sidney. It was thought that the Chinese now had three separate task forces consisting of three Beijing Class carriers in each task force to the north and that the Indians had all four of their carriers to the west. It was apparent to everyone, that in addition to the major ground and air battle associated with the assault on Sydney, that a major sea battle was going to develop as well. Billy could only hope that he, his countrymen and his allies were prepared for it.

April 10, 2008, 21:50 EDT

Trevor Residence

Nashua, New Hampshire

Elizabeth could tell when her husband was concerned and this evening it seemed far worse than anything she had seen in years. He was moody, he was somber and he was pre-occupied . . . traits he rarely displayed when they were together at home. It had been building for days and even the Annual Conference of their Church a few days ago had not dispelled it. Something was definitely on his mind and it wasn't setting well at all.

What was even more telling was that he had not shared it with her, which meant it had to be extraordinarily bad.

Well, from long experience, whether dealing with ideas that had his mind pre-occupied, concerns over their daughter, concern over her or the occasional problem where his fretting was causing him to "go it alone", Elizabeth Trevor knew how to deftly raise the topic with him and draw him out. She also knew, from that same long experience, when to do so.

Now was the time.

"Joe," she said.

When he looked up from the papers he was intently studying, she continued.

"You know, I was told once," referring to a saying of Joe's that he had shared with her on so many occasions, "that a heavy load is more easily and more safely supported on two columns than it is on one alone."

For a moment his brow furrowed. He looked on the verge of saying that it was nothing she need concern herself over and he could handle it. Wisely, Elizabeth said no more, she just continued to look into his eyes conveying nothing more than her love for him and desire to be there for him. After a

moment, the furrow disappeared, he sighed slightly and a smile slowly spread across his face. As he held his arm out and they clasped hands between their two recliner chairs he began.

"You're right honey ... and thanks for reminding me. Sometimes the hardest advise any of us have taking is our own.

"I do need to share this with you and get your advise and council. I should have done it several days ago. I had hoped that the church conference might convey an answer to me ... but I was so preoccupied that I am afraid I didn't listen too well."

Joseph Trevor stopped speaking for a moment. The weight of what he was reflecting on bore down on him.

"How could I have been such a fool," he thought.

"How could I have been so easily taken in and taken advantage of," he continued in his mind.

Almost eight months ago Dr.Saundra Eleanor McPherson had approached him about using his own research to develop virtual modeling techniques using high speed and high capacity computers to perform the same functions he accomplished with physical data and advanced microscopies. The same techniques that had led to the discovery of the HRS that had led to his own Nobel prize. Dr. McPherson was brilliant and driven, but she and Joseph differed radically on philosophical and moral issue and he knew it. Still, in the hopes of pure scientific advancement, he had set that aside.

Last week he had discovered exactly what her intentions were with the methods he had allowed her to develop and it had hit him like a freight train.

"Honey, it's Saundra McPherson and this whole virtual modeling idea that she talked me into helping her develop."

Elizabeth didn't understand. She had traveled with Joseph regarding this. She had met Saundra and she had thought that despite the philosophical differences that an accord had been reached and that things were progressing nicely.

"I don't understand Joseph. I thought she was having great success and that it was going to lead right to where you hoped it would."

Now his shoulders slumped slightly as he responded.

"That's just it ... it is! All of that, and the success ends up to be the lure that she laid out there for me and I snapped it up and swallowed it whole. It is successful. The funding has paid off and will allow the technique to be proliferated into many fields of study."

Elizabeth listened in amazement. As Joseph explained this good fortune, his countenance continued to fall.

"Then what could possibly be the matter?" she asked.

Joe could see that he was confusing her and that the time had come to open his heart and share the thing that had him so perplexed and so distraught.

"The matter is that she is going to use this technology that I have helped her to develop to further the study of fetal tissue...directly from aborted little babies...children of God!"

Elizabeth was shocked.

"Joseph, she can't do that. It's illegal. What on earth are you talking about?"

So Joseph explained it. He shared with his wife how a colleague had called him from the west coast and discreetly informed him regarding his own concerns and presumptions regarding some of the "side" work Dr. McPherson was involved in. That friend was an alumni of Stanford where Sandra worked, was very conservative, was pro-life and also set on the advisory board at the University that oversaw dispersal and oversight of donations to the University, himself having been a frequent large donor in years gone by.

The information his friend had provided had led Joseph to ultimately discover the trade, or communication of fetal tissue data that was going on between universities and research facilities in Europe and some researchers in America, where the physical tissue could not be had. When finding that Sandra was in the middle of this, and in fact was one of the principle facilitators here in America, it had become all too clear what she intended with the virtual modeling techniques for the research processes that he, Dr. Joseph Trevor had developed.

"Honey, she is going to use those techniques...my methods...to facilitate much more thorough and detailed studies of European fetal tissue. It will create a virtual business of that study here in the United States, deftly and completely circumventing the law!"

Now Elizabeth understood and she got up from the chair and took Joseph in her arms.

"What a horrible thing for her to do," she thought realizing how Joseph was punishing himself for Sandra's decision.

"Honey, you can not hold yourself responsible. Sandra is the one making these decisions, not you. What she has done is a result of her own free will and free agency. She will ultimately be accountable for it and in the mean time, her own methods will allow for other good research to be done that otherwise could not have occurred.

"God uses everything for His purposes in the end, you know this. The scriptures tell us that there must be opposition in all things to try us and to allow us to progress. That is what this is. Please listen to me and stop punishing yourself. Please put this in God's hands.

"He also tells us that all things work for the good of them that love the Lord. Sweetheart, I know that you do and I know that it will...work for the good."

His wife's voice and reassurance was exactly the balm that Joseph needed. It was if though a healing ointment had been spread across his soul. He could recognize the confirmation in his spirit of the truth of what she was saying and he accepted it. He would let events take their course and stop brow beating himself over something that had occurred due to the manipulations of another.

Oh, he was still not happy with Dr. McPherson in the least and he was determined to call her and give he a piece of his mind and then break off his relationship with her entirely. Then, he was going to call the U.S. Attorney General's office and see if there was some loop hole or some provision in the law that could stop her from continuing with what he felt was her grizzly and bloody research.

But the course of history had already been set and there was nothing Joseph Trevor could do at this point to alter it. The research would proceed and it would produce results, consequences and a legacy in its own due time ... and it was not far off either.

April 14, 2008, 02:08 local time

145,000 ft. Over the Black Sea

145 miles off the Coast of Georgia

This would be the first combat operational use of the HAHVIC. It was a device that had been developed especially for the SR-77 Pervador for use by American special forces when two to four operatives simply had to get somewhere in the world in the quickest time possible. The device had been rigorously tested in the American west and then over areas of the Pacific Ocean off the American west coast, but it had never been used in a combat zone and it was the first time that Captain Riley Adams had ever occupied one ... and he'd been sitting in this one for well over six hours now.

"Oh well, things could be worse," he thought. The device was fully pressurized and contained its own oxygen supply. It was also outfitted with a communications package, with drinking water and with a waste pouch and it had a lumbar supported and cushioned couch to sit in. All of those were comforts that Special Forces members like himself rarely had the luxury of, so he couldn't complain too much.

But the thought of moving through space at a speed in excess of four times the speed of sound in one of these things was unnerving, especially when your speeding toward your enemy at that rate with no control except for computer calibrated trajectories. It wouldn't be until after he passed through 1000 feet that he would disembark from the capsule with his parasail and his weapons. Then the Captain would feel in control again. He knew that the Master Sergeant that was making the insertion with him felt the same way, in fact, if anything, the Master Sergeant would be even more antsy than Captain Adams. He also knew that they both would professionally do what had to be done to "Charlie Mike", or "continue the mission" in any case.

HAHVIC stood for High Altitude, Hyper-velocity Insertion Capsule. It was a small, aerodynamically shaped flying wing made entirely of composite stealth material that could hold one man and his gear. Each SR-77 could carry up to four of the devices, two in each of its large instrumentation bays if needed. In this case, two HAHVIC's were being carried in two bays while the other two bays were devoted to a normal mix of reconnaissance and electronic warfare instrumentation. Conceptually, launched from a stealth reconnaissance aircraft at extremely high altitude and gliding down to low altitude before the operative exited the capsule at less than 1000 feet, the insertion would be wholly undetectable by any enemy force.

But that concept and theory had been shot full of holes just over a week ago with the loss of Mac Mendenhall and his HR-7 Thunder Dart over Mongolia. The pilot and his RIO had been briefed along with the Captain and the Master Sergeant regarding the ramifications. Intelligence and the entire command chain was almost positive that the devices used in Mongolia were prototypes and could not possibly have been deployed yet on this side of the world.

"*Almost positive* are the operative words there," thought Riley Adams as he was informed over the communications channel that they were only sixty seconds from release.

"Of course those guys who are *almost positive* that it couldn't possibly be deployed here are not the ones strapped into this baby making the decent into Indian country.

"Oh well, that's why we get the big bucks, hah!" concluded Adams as he mentally counted down the seconds and did one final radio check with the sergeant.

"You ready Master Sergeant?"

The Master Sergeant, who was an eighteen year veteran and had been expecting one final check from his commanding officer, responded immediately.

"Yes sir, about as ready as I can be...and very ready to get down on the ground and to the task at hand, Captain."

"I roger that. Well, here we go in three, two, one ... separation!"

Both men heard and felt the *CLICK* of separation and then the almost complete quiet associated with an un-powered, faster than sound transit through the high altitude air they were released into. Neither men saw the SR-77 that had released them bank to the left and back out over the Black Sea on its way to more friendly skies. Those skies were a long way away at this stage of the conflict and there was no margin for loitering to see how the special forces personnel fared.

Captain Riley and his Master Sergeant were now two American Special Forces personnel being inserted deep into enemy territory on the highly classified and critical mission that they had been assigned personally by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Robert Ballard. They would ultimately exit their HAHVICs at low altitude and the insertion devices would then impact the water and sink beneath the waves of the Black Sea. After separation, the two operatives would parasail into the water two miles off of a remote portion of the Georgian coast. There they would use the small inflatable raft that the Master Sergeant carried and paddle the two miles to the designated spot on shore where they were scheduled to meet up with Captain Luke Hansen and his partisan force of resistance fighters.

Captain Hansen and his force had been mounting resistance efforts behind enemy lines in Turkey, the former Iraq, Armenia and now Georgia since early 2006. That was when Hansen, the commander of the security forces at the U.S. Air Force base at Incirlik, had been cut off while performing a diversion for retreating American forces when the air base had been overrun by GIR forces in January of 2006. His efforts behind enemy lines for all of this time were the things legends were made of and Riley Adams was anxious to meet and get to know the man.

"Well, I'll soon have that opportunity," thought Captain Adams as his parasail successfully deployed and he scanned the coastline and the water below him. He could see the Master Sergeant about fifty yards off to his left doing the same.

"Our orders are to take whatever time and whatever measures necessary to carry out this mission. And that's exactly what is going to happen," he thought.

"I have absolutely no doubt that Captain Hansen and his partisans are going to be a tremendous help and asset in that effort."

April 17, 2008, 09:18 MDT

Greyhound Bus Station

West Bannock Street

Boise, Idaho

Geneva watched as her two sons prepared to get on the bus. They'd be leaving in less than fifteen minutes now. She reflected back on both of their lives, their upbringing, the death of their father back in Chicago so many years ago, the feelings she had as both Leon and Greg had drifted into the gang culture and then the almost rapturous feelings that had come as her oldest, Leon, had pulled himself up out of that environment and brought the whole family with him. Those had been glorious days of new friends and new opportunities as they had moved out west here to Boise, Idaho where Leon started college with a scholarship at Boise State University. Then the war had intervened and Leon and his friend, Billy Simmons, had joined the U.S. Marines together and gone off to fight. Alan, who was benefiting from the fine example of an older brother and who, thankfully, was wise and mature enough to emulate it, had joined the local Home Guard unit and followed in his brother's footsteps.

Then had come the news of Leon's severe injury and the weeks waiting on word of his arrival back in the United States. Then the months of waiting by his bed side in San Antonio, Texas until he had finally come out of the coma to discover he was a hero who had been awarded the medal of honor.

For Geneva, the tale Leon told of meeting his father while he was in that coma would stay with her until the day she died. It reaffirmed her faith and even now, brought tears to her eyes to think about it. Leon had described physical characteristics and mannerisms about his father that Geneva believed he couldn't possibly have remembered from his youth. They had spoken of it on many occasions and she had gone reviewed it in her mind over and over again. Geneva was sure that the tale would live in the family for generations, bolstering their faith.

"The kind of faith strong families and individuals are made of," she thought as she contemplated it again.

Next to Leon's miraculous recovery itself, Geneva was certain that the story of his meeting with his father was the next most important thing to come out of Leon's whole ordeal. In fact, she was certain that his survival and the telling of that tale were fused together and, along with whatever else was in store for Leon's life, that it was a principle reason for his survival.

"Like the good Lord sending us all a message from over Jordan," she surmised.

"And it's a message I'm gonna spread ... and hold in my heart 'til I see you again, Jerome."

After Leon's release, he had been sent home with significant leave to ensure his complete recuperation and recovery. There was a promise from the military, from the President right on down that Leon would be able to stay stateside if he so desired to help in the immense and ongoing job of recruitment, and in January he had embarked on that assignment.

But he never became comfortable with it. He was bound and determined to get back into action and ultimately, despite her own misgivings, he had received his orders and now here he was shipping out to the west coast for deployment into the Pacific Theater of Operations somewhere.

... and Alan was going with him.

Leon and Alan had been thicker than thieves the last six months and as a result of that influence, Alan had decided to join the Marines and follow in the footsteps of his brother. He was now shipping out to the same Marine Recruit Training Depot in San Diego where Leon had done his basic training.

Geneva Campbell was a loving mother. She was the epitome of the great tradition of strong and loving mothers in the sub-culture that had produced her in America. Resolute, strong willed, strict and as unflinching as limestone when she had to be, but understanding and loving to her own and anyone who helped her own. No one came between Geneva Campbell and her sons ... no one. She was also a proud American and recognized the opportunity that was latent in the liberties and freedoms in America and that her traditional Christian faith and values made possible for anyone who would use those values to take advantage of the opportunity America offered.

She had passed these principles on to her sons, and like many parents, was gratified and somewhat surprised when she found that those teachings had taken root and born good fruit. Her sons had made good use of what she passed on and she was grateful beyond measure to her Maker for it ... and to her deceased husband, Jerome Campbell, even if he was not here physically to see it now. He had been a hard working, good man, husband and father.

As a result of Leon's experience, she knew that he knew ... and that he was proud of his sons.

"Oh, Jerome, we got lots to be grateful for now don't we?" she asked silently as she gave Alan a hug and gazed heavenward within his strong grasp.

"Just look at my young men!" she said out loud.

"So strong, so brave ... and headed so far away!"

"Momma, don't you worry yourself now. We're gonna be alright. Besides, those NCOs that slapped Leon around and finally made a man of him are about to find out what a real Campbell man is really made of!" Alan said to try and comfort his mother as the two of them finished their embrace.

Geneva knew that this strong talk was Alan's way of masking his apprehension. Despite his experiences on the street in Chicago, despite his experiences in the Home Guard here in Idaho, Alan had never really been away from home. As Alan stepped back to make room for his brother, Leon slugged his younger brother in the arm before putting his arms around his mother.

"Listen to the little big man would you now," he said.

"You better listen up good on this bus ride bro, and maybe, just maybe I'll tell you the secret of how to get through the mess you've gotten yourself into. You have no idea ... and I'll tell you what, the recruiter sure didn't let you in on it either," he added with a laugh.

Turning his attention to his mother, Leon leaned back a little and looked into her eyes.

"Mom, we're countin' on you to hold down the fort here ... and to keep sending those letters. Never think for a minute that they are wasted, even if we can't write back as much as we would like. Those letters are like sweet water to a man dieing of thirst. They are like gold to a pauper"

Then he squeezed her a little harder, leaned closer and whispered in her ear.

"God bless you mom. We're not nearly as tough as we let on."

Then, as Geneva waived to them both, Leon and Alan Campbell both got on the bus with the other passengers. Two minutes later, as Alan looked out the window at his waiving mother, the bus driver got into the idling bus, closed the door, and they drove away.

Chapter 5

"If you dig deeply, there is no telling what truth you might discover ... but only if your heart and mind are willing to accept it." Unknown Colonial American Pastor

April 19, 2008, 15:31 EST

WNN Corporate Office Suite

New York City, USA

David Krenshaw rapidly opened the package he had just received by special courier service from Europe. Inside he found the digital video disk he had been promised. He carefully took it out of its packaging and walked over his digital music and video center and inserted the disk into his "special" video player which was located in a second stack of equipment below the equipment normally used for executive meetings held in his office. Walking back past the grouping of plush leather chairs in front of his desk, he retrieved the remote control for this particular device from a digitally locked safe drawer in his desk. As he did so, he touched the intercom button on his desk and spoke to his administrative assistant.

"Jackie, hold all of my calls and any interruptions for the next twenty minutes please."

She responded immediately.

"But Mr. Krenshaw, the President of ABS has already scheduled a call with you at three-forty five, that's only thirteen or fourteen minutes from now."

David appreciated his assistant's reminder. She had been with him for several years and knew that he was a stickler about his scheduling, particularly about never missing anything of the slightest importance. But he also knew she could handle either stalling, or rescheduling the call, however important it seemed. He simply had to make it clear to her.

"Yes, I know Jackie, but something critical has come up and I am absolutely not to be disturbed for the next thirty minutes. See if Thomas can either hold for a few minutes (and David relished the thought of the President of ABS holding on the line for him) or reschedule."

Jackie wasted no more of her bosses time.

"Yes sir Mr. Krenshaw, I'll take care of it."

Freed from any further disturbances or encumbrances, David sat down in his favorite chair to watch the video. He used the remote control he had retrieved to activate the special set of equipment. The controller had been programmed to respond only to his right index finger activation. Once activated, David carefully entered the thirty-two digit shipping code followed by his own twelve digit PIN. He got it right on the first attempt and the disk immediately activated and began to display on his 72" flat screen monitor that was the centerpiece of David's high-tech and very expensive executive video display and conferencing center.

Twenty-five minutes later, David turned off the equipment and began copying the video disk onto standard WNN video media. As the disk copied, he used the intercom again contact Jackie.

"Jackie, cancel the rest of my afternoon and have both the National and the World-Wide News producers meet me here in my office in the next five minutes, say right at four o'clock. I have just been informed of a breaking story that simply must make tonight's national and international news.

"As they say ... stop the presses."

As Jackie made the arrangements, David leaned back and muttered to himself.

"I can just here it now ...

"Another startling breakthrough by the leader in World Wide News, WNN, and the leading news executive on the planet, David Krenshaw!

"Connections and networking ... the world turns on connections and networking and I don't mean the World-Wide-Web."

April 19, 2008, that same time

Four block away, direct line of sight

Edmonds Mercantile Center

Top Floor, FBI Observation Room

The entire leadership for the Joint Terrorism Task Force Team assigned to the WNN investigation was present as they monitored David Krenshaw's office activities this afternoon. The courier package had been monitored since it had left Hamburg, Germany and had triggered the increased interest and surveillance. The package itself had been held long enough in customs at JFK to make a complete copy of the contents, which had consisted only of the video disk, while the courier himself was held and a

replacement used for the delivery. Now, using the latest laser technology, the latest phone tap technology and the latest micro-electronics, the team was privy to almost everything David was saying, or even muttering to himself, as well as the inputs he made on his controller.

Director Andy Syke, after his tremendous success with Manuel Mendoza and the entire Hector Ortiz affair, had been transferred at the direction of the Director of the FBI to become the Agent in Charge of the Krenshaw investigation. Agent Ludlow, who had masterminded and led the Operation Alvarez portion of the Hector Gonzalez affair and who had personally taken Hector Gonzalez into custody, was serving as Director Syke's second in command of the investigation. The Director of the FBI, the Director of Homeland Security, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the President of the United States were all very pleased with this arrangement and were hopeful of rapid progress in the case involving David Krenshaw. The case, involving such a prominent individual in the media and one so politically influential due to his position with the Council on International Relations, had to be handled delicately, but efficiently. All of the National leaders who were aware of the operation felt that this team, with their success and handling of the Gonzalez affair, were just the personnel to get the job done.

Director Syke spoke up as Krenshaw was heard to be addressing the now gathered producers in his office.

"Have we gotten any further with that copy of the video. From the audio in Krenshaw's office its clearly something dealing with ongoing action in Australia?"

After conferring briefly by cell phone with one of the analysts who was working with the disk and after carefully reviewing Krenshaw's activation of the original on his equipment in his office, Ludlow responded.

"Well, we haven't broken the encryption yet, not even close. But we know that Krenshaw apparently used the shipping code as one part of the key, coupled with his own identification code to activate it. We are trying to determine what routine on the disk accepts this code so we can activate our own. The audio track we picked up from his office is going to help because we now know what the audio is supposed to sound like.

"Hopefully, that will help us figure out the encryption methodology used in the video. But its going to take time."

As Syke took this in, one of the agents who was monitoring the conversation going on in Krenshaw's office interjected.

"Director Syke, Agent Ludlow, I don't think we're going to have to worry about what the video portrays. Apparently the producers at WNN have just determined, based on Krenshaw's direction, to go with the video, unedited, on the 5 PM news. In less than an hour we'll be able to see all of it."

As Andy took this in, he turned to Ludlow.

"Gerald, you stick it out here, I'm going back to the office. On the way, I'll get the Director on the line and recommend he advise the President and his National Security team to watch this broadcast. From the sounds of that tape, it's going to be critical."

April 19, 2008, 17:01 EST

WNN Evening News

Lead Story

Special Report from Australia

On millions of television sets and computer screens around America and all over the world, a somber faced David Krenshaw appeared announcing the lead story.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, this is David Krenshaw with WNN. Tonight's news leads with events from Australia. What you are about to see is graphic and represents the continued horror of the war raging around the globe. Viewer discretion is advised.

"We present it this evening unedited and in its entirety. I have personally made this decision as the Chief Executive Officer of WNN News because it is information we at WNN believe needs to be seen and heard by all of our viewers. This news is less than 24 hours old, comes directly from Sydney, Australia and it is not information that is being communicated or shared at this time by our elected officials to the public at large.

"We therefore, at WNN have elected to share it with you now."

With that opening statement, the view faded to a view of a harbor with dense clouds of smoke billowing from fires too numerous to count in a business district on the opposite side of the harbor from the camera's location. As the camera panned to the right, a bridge came into view which was instantly recognized as the Sydney Harbor Bridge ... except that the magnificent steel arch was broken about one-third of the way across from each of the beautiful, twin-tower supports and a mass of tangled steel hung down from each side. Fully one-third of the bridge was gone, evidently lying in the water as black smoke rose from the ruined ends of the bridge on each side. Panning back to the left, across the channel, the camera focused in on the fiercely burning ruins of the Sydney Opera House where it sat on its familiar spit of land jutting out into the harbor. The familiar Government House was completely destroyed and burning in the background, whose smoke was rising into the air to join the pall of smoke rising from the countless other fires in the business and residential areas behind it..

Zooming back out, and continuing to pan to the left, an entire squadron of SU-24 Fencer attack aircraft could be seen as they screeched deafeningly overhead and turned to wheel over Darling Point before turning back toward the harbor. To the right of the point, up near what many would recognize as Centennial Park, the Australian Stock exchange lay in a smoldering ruin, bombed out and burning.

The camera quickly came around to show the inlet to the harbor and the Pacific Ocean beyond it. The bay in that direction was thick with the wakes of many small craft and several larger vessels making for the harbor entrance and the open sea. It was upon these vessels that the SU-24 Fencer squadron focused its attention. No allied aircraft were seen in the immediate vicinity. Heavy anti-aircraft fire was rising from several of the vessels and the smoke from their firing and the paths of the tracer shells could clearly be seen, the tracer fire stitching patterns in the air, reaching heavenward hoping to cross paths with the wildly twisting and turning aircraft that had just passed over. Several smoke trails, evidently left

by weapons launched from the aircraft, trailed down into the water. Five of these ended in the smoking wreckage of small to medium sized boats, blown apart upon impact. Many human bodies clad in civilian and military clothing, some of them thrashing madly in the water, could be seen around the wrecked boats. Others smoke trails, along with the expanding radius of the wash produced by dropped bombs, ended in the water where they had missed their targets.

In the center of the remaining vessels was a larger ship. Its silhouette marked it as an Oliver Hazard Perry class guided missile frigate. It was numbered 06, the HMAS Newcastle, one of six such vessels that the Australian government had bought from the United States over the years to bolster their sea power. The Newcastle was the one of two of those vessels that had been license built in Australia and launched in the early 1990's. It was the newest of its class.

The frigate was heroically trying to escort the retreating smaller vessels out to sea to rendezvous with the shrinking protection of allied fleets further off the coast that were withdrawing. While the SU-24's turned and gained altitude for another pass, and while the camera recorded the events, two Standard missiles were launched from the frigate's single-arm MK 13 Mod. 4 launcher located forward on the ship. The first missile targeted the trailing SU-24 and struck it directly between its two brightly burning engines that were clearly operating in an after-burner mode. In the resulting explosion, that aircraft came completely apart and the burning, flying wreckage fell down like hail stones into the harbor in front of the retreating ships, making many splashes on the face of an otherwise calm harbor surface. The second anti-aircraft missile launched by the Newcastle was decoyed away from its target by defensive chaff that the aircraft ejected and that missile exploded in the middle of it as the target SU-24 turned away and made good its escape.

Immediately after this occurred, approaching the frigate from the shoreline to the left and apparently launched from somewhere in the vicinity of the Observatory on the same side of the harbor, three large missiles were seen flying low to the harbor at astonishing speed. A buzzing sound was immediately heard across the water, mixed in with the other sounds of combat and a cloud of smoke arose from the aft end of the Newcastle above the helicopter hangar where the ship's single Phalanx CIWS attempted to engage the approaching missiles. On full auto mode, the CIWS engaged the lead missile ... and the stream of 20 mm depleted uranium bullets destroyed it in a blinding explosion that thundered across the harbor several hundred yards away from the vessel. The fire and debris from that explosion rained into the water in a stream of small geysers advancing on the ship, but that ended well short of it.

Like a robot, the Newcastle's CIWS mechanically jerked to a new firing position on a bearing to engage the next missile. Another buzzing noise from the ensuing firing sounded as once again a cloud of smoke erupted around it. But the other missile was too close. An instant before it reached the frigate, fire from the CIWS intercepted it and it exploded, but the missile's momentum carried the debris and explosion right into the forecastle of the ship and engulfed it with fire, causing immediate secondary explosions.

Then the third missile hit the frigate just below the 76 mm gun that was located amidships. That missile disappeared on that side of the ship, just below the gun. For a split second the audience, wrapped up in the drama, thought that perhaps the missile was somehow a dud. But that was a complete misconception. The missile penetrated into the magazine area well below the gun mount and detonated amongst the stored ammunition, causing a simultaneous catastrophic explosion that literally broke the back of the frigate. As horrified viewers watched, within seconds, the ship, amidst thick smoke and fierce fires, broke in two and the two different ends drifted rapidly apart, the momentum of the ship still carrying the larger, burning bow forward while the aft end skewed off to the starboard side.

The camera zoomed in on the bow end, where fires from the initial missile hit were raging from just forward of the missile mount all the way back past the superstructure, which was now canting off at an

angle as that portion of the ship began to list. Behind the superstructure, more fire and smoke were poring from the obscene maw of the rent in the ship where it had broken in two. The only place life was evident was well in front of the missile mount, far forward on the frigate where sailors were coming up from below decks through a hatch and rapidly diving overboard in an attempt to escape the doomed vessel. Within a few minutes, the forward two thirds of the ship rolled over and sank as the SU-24's returned and savaged the remaining smaller vessels.

As the camera zoomed back out, it focused on the horizon, well out to sea, where another, even larger drama was being played out. Well out on the horizon, half of its hull hidden by the curve of the earth, over which the rest of the large ship was visible, an American Amphibious Assault ship was fighting for its life. It was the U.S.S. Tarawa.

Apparently the cameraman had an exceptionally good telephoto lens. From a distance of well over twenty miles, the picture zoomed in to where the upper portion of the Tarawa was clearly visible on the screen along with the masts of several other ship in the background and two smaller escorting warships in front of it. Streaming towards this formation were scores of smaller vessels, filled with soldiers and civilians that had escaped Sydney Harbor just before the final advance of the enemy.

Many contrails could be seen far above the ships, twisting, turning . . . several of them ending in black puffs of smoke and black streaks from destroyed aircraft. It was impossible to determine which nationalities those aircraft were from, but it was obvious that a fierce air battle was raging above the formation of ships. As the camera recorded it, two F/A-35B Joint Strike Fighters lifted off vertically from the Tarawa and rocketed into the sky, having just reloaded their armaments and fuel to contend with CAS and GIR aircraft over the formation.

Suddenly, streaming into the foreground of the picture, and still several miles from the ships, more than thirty large jet aircraft came into view, their black exhaust trails clearly visible behind the aircraft as they approached the ships at high speed and at an altitude just feet above the wave tops. Most of the aircraft were TU-22M Backfire bombers, but several appeared to be TU-22 Blinder bombers as well. Later, close inspection of their weaving, bobbing approach would reveal them to be a mixture of Indian and Chinese naval strike aircraft.

Clearly visible underneath each aircraft were very long and very large cylindrical objects that resembled nothing short of huge torpedoes, the air launched version of the Chinese "Killer Whale" weapons. As they continued towards the ships, David Krenshaw interrupted the audio portion of the program.

"Ladies and gentlemen, what you are seeing is the first known video recording of an attack upon allied shipping by the new, air launched version of the so-called "Killer Whale" weapons that CAS and GIR forces employ. This variant has been used before, particularly in the Indian Ocean, when the U.S.S. Enterprise was attacked and sunk. Along with the other versions of these fearsome weapons, they have sunk many allied vessels, including at least three other American super aircraft carriers. Again, viewer caution and discretion is advised, what you are about witness is graphic."

From the escort ships and from the Tarawa itself a tremendous volley of Standard, Sea-Sparrow and rolling-airframe missiles rose to meet the new threat, almost completely obscuring the ships in the resulting clouds of exhaust smoke. Just as the aircraft launched their deadly payload, the wall of missiles from the defending ships reached the aircraft and more than half of them dropped into the ocean as exploding, burning masses of twisted and ruined metal. Several of those explosions also destroyed the LRASD weapons that their aircraft had just launched. But twelve of the weapons cleared their launching aircraft and quickly dropped into the sea while the aircraft themselves turned away, seeking to avoid the next volley of missiles that had already been launched by the ships.

To the astonished gaze of those viewing the evening news program on WNN, the Killer Whale weapons traversed the distance to the nearest escorting ships at unbelievable speed. The electrical circuitry, memory and micro processors in several of these weapons selected a shallow run against the escorting vessels which made their wakes clearly visible to all watching. The other weapons disappeared from view after entering the water, their circuitry having selected a deep attack profile against the Tarawa.

One of the escorting vessels was the DDG 109, U.S.S. Stump, a new Block III Arleigh Burke class AEGIS destroyer that had just recently completed its sea trials and deployed to Australia with the new aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Shanksville. The Stump carried the new SUBT CIWS and was positioned out in front of the U.S.S. Tarawa precisely for the purpose of defending her and the other ships against "Killer Whale" attacks. As the shallow running weapons, whose blinding approach remained clearly visible to the camera, came near the Stump, first one and then two more huge explosions and water spouts erupted in front of her. Then several other similar eruptions were seen off to her port and starboard sides and between her and the Tarawa as the water from the first explosions fell back into the sea and as the four SUBT CIWS turrets the Stump carried efficiently accomplished the work they were designed for.

But it wasn't enough. One of the shallow running weapons targeting the other escort vessel and another targeting the Tarawa passed out of the Stump's engagement envelope ... they passed out of range ... and continued on towards their targets. First the modern Australian Anzac Frigate, the FF 157 Perth, was struck by the weapon targeting it. To the horror of those watching, that lithe, fast and clean-cut frigate literally disappeared in the resulting explosion which was briefly seen to visibly lift the Perth's mid section out of the water where it visibly sagged and broke before being obscured by the water, smoke, debris and fire of the conflagration.

The other shallow running weapon rapidly approached the Tarawa running less than twenty feet below the surface. It was engaged by ASW helicopters that were hovering near the Tarawa for the express purpose of engaging "Killer Whale" weapons that got past the Stump or otherwise came close to the large capitol ship. The Mk-50 Barracuda torpedoes these aircraft carried had been upgraded with the latest SUBT mod software for engaging LRASD weaponry and the two SH-60 Seahawk helicopters dropped two torpedoes each to counter the oncoming weapon. The first helicopter's interception was too late and the torpedoes simply missed the fast moving threat. The second two torpedoes, dropped by the Seahawk closest to the Tarawa were more successful. One of them detonated almost directly in the path of the Chinese weapon and collapsed its cavity only one hundred and fifty yards from the ship. Traveling at a speed of 500 knots when it hit the collapsing cavity, the LRASD tore itself apart and exploded. But, its momentum still carried it forward and the larger pieces of debris from the weapon covered the distance to the Tarawa in just over a second, impacting the side of the vessel and puncturing it in several places, causing the entire ship to roll over fifteen degrees to port and starting fires below decks.

As the Tarawa righted itself, citizens of the allied nations all over the world breathed a collective sigh of relief at the apparent salvation of the big ship. But they were shocked back to reality ten seconds later after the Tarawa stabilized when the remaining three deep running weapons arrived. The defensive threat officers and sailors on the various ships in the fleet, including on board the Tarawa itself, had not suffered from any illusions regarding their safety. They had been faithfully tracking these other weapons by sonar and informing their superiors of their status as they approached the Tarawa from deep below the ship.

Just before those weapons arrived, urgent, terse orders were issued and four Marine aircraft lifted off of the flight deck of the Tarawa. One was an MV-22 Osprey transport aircraft that had only recently landed with a full load of evacuees. Another was a huge CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopter also fully

loaded with evacuees. Finally, two AZ-1H Viper attack helicopters were ordered to lift off from their launch positions on the deck in an attempt to escape the looming destruction. Before any of them got fully away, three massive explosions shot up through the ship, exploding in gouts of flame and debris right up through the flight deck. The entire ship literally "bounded" several feet up in the water and then quickly settled back, dropping noticeably deeper before a huge, three-headed mushroom cloud of dense smoke engulfed the entire ship with all of the aircraft remaining on deck, its 1100 crew members, the 1800 embarked Marines, the almost 1000 evacuees that were crowded on deck and all four of the aircraft attempting to escape.

As a stunned world-wide audience watched, the MV-22 Osprey aircraft and the CH-53D heavy lift helicopter escaping the doomed Tarawa cleared the cloud of smoke and debris one after another and haltingly wheeled off to the east. They immediately made their way away from the stricken ship and toward the Amphibious Dock Ship, the LPD 18, New Orleans, sitting five miles to the east where they would land and disembark their passengers.

Of the two Super Cobra attack helicopters attempting to escape, one of them never cleared the smoke and debris, crashing instead back to the heaving and ruined deck of the Tarawa. The other Viper cart wheeled out of the smoke cloud toward the camera and valiantly tried to right itself and counter rotate its rotor before slamming into the sea. It failed in that effort as its blades struck the ocean first causing the entire aircraft to pitch violently into the sea where the helicopter disintegrated in a shower of water and debris. It would later be confirmed that Captain Billy Simmons was piloting that last AZ-1H and he would be officially listed as Missing in Action.

April 19, 2008, 17:15 EST

Situation Room

The White House

Washington, DC

Once again, for the umpteenth time in this cataclysmic nightmare of a war, the President and his advisors sat in stunned shock. Oh, they had known about the horrific withdrawal from Sydney Harbor and the terrible losses associated with it, including the loss of the Tarawa where initial assessments indicated that as many as 2,900 lives had been lost. All of this had been reported to them the day before as the battle was occurring. All of it would later be termed, "The Battle of Sydney Harbor", and would mark a very low point in the war against the advancing GIR and CAS juggernaut.

But it had not gone all bad, despite the destruction they witnessed on the film,. What the film didn't show was that the advancing enemy forces had been punished terribly as they advanced past the Dividing Range into the city of Sydney. The film also didn't show that most of the allied military forces had escaped thanks to the monumentally heroic and tireless efforts of many commanders on the scene like those of Billy Simmons and the commander of the ill-fated Newcastle. In that sense, the withdrawal was miraculous because the rapidity of the final breakthrough had caught the allies off guard and they were forced to improvise under the harshest of conditions to complete the monumental evacuation several days

ahead of schedule. In a feat that had no equal in the history of warfare, they had achieved their own victory of sorts in retreat by preserving the large allied forces to fight again another day.

But that would now be much more difficult to appreciate, and would take more time to do so, in the face of the graphic evidence of the allied forces in full flight and the destruction and punishment that they suffered in front of a world-wide audience. No amount of words or explanation would convince anyone at the time that what they were seeing with their own eyes was anything but what it was, a terrible defeat and abject retreat of allied forces ... not to mention the terrible consequences for the million of Australian citizens who had not been able to get away.

As the conversation rose in pitch during the vivid footage of the destruction of the Tarawa and immediately following it, the President interjected.

"Okay folks, I know this is very difficult, but I don't need to remind you of the importance of staying focused."

Quickly addressing the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Weisskopf added.

"George and General Stone, make sure that copies of this get over to the analysts as soon as possible. Unless I miss my mark, there's a treasure trove of information here on the enemy's weapons systems, their tactics and their disposition ... also regarding future planning on our own part to improve our own tactics. It makes me wonder why the enemy let this footage out.

I mean, outside of the clear propaganda effort, there's just so much information contained here. What do you think got in their minds George?"

George Crowler, glad to divert his mind from the horror, responded as the view on the screen from the news report shifted back to the shoreline in Sydney harbor.

"Sir, I ... please pardon me ... I'm at a loss of words ... perhaps they feel the propaganda issue outweighs those considerations. We are going to suffer in the eyes of the world, and in our own eyes as a result of this. Or, maybe they calculated that we already knew enough about those other issues and so they had very little to lose versus what they consider to be the gains of showing our withdrawal in this manner.

"I'm just not sure what it is, but we will definitely have this footage analyzed in minute detail, particularly the "Killer Whale" attack on the Tarawa ..."

And here the Secretary of Defense again wavered as his voice broke and then paused for a moment, the graphic loss of so many of the lives of his countrymen was simply too much to take in all at once without his emotions coming to the fore. After a second, when he had finally composed himself, he continued.

"... God rest all of their souls.

"Mr. President, there is no doubt that, that portion of this footage could be very valuable in assessing the effectiveness of the SUBT CIWS and improving it. On first glance, although the single destroyer was overwhelmed, I would say the system performed very well. If we'd had two SUBT CIWS armed vessels there, the outcome would have been entirely different."

The Vice President, John Bowers, interjected at this point.

"Secretary Crowler, how long before we have enough ships that are so armed to allow us to protect every capitol ship with two vessels?"

After brief consideration, the Secretary of Defense responded.

"We have four other vessels, all of them from the Shanksville battle group, there in the Theater now. We have all four of those covering the big carriers and only spared the one for the forces off Sydney. All of the new destroyers and frigates are coming equipped with SUBT CIWS. I expect in four to six months, depending on attrition rates, that we will have all of the carriers and all of the larger amphibious ships protected."

John Bowers wanted to hurry because the WNN presentation was now focusing in on something happening on the beach next to Sydney harbor, and he certainly did not want to offend the sense of reverence that was settling over the group associated with the loss of the Tarawa ... he felt it himself and honored it. But he had to ask a final, penetrating question.

"But Admiral, just how effective is the SUBT CIWS against the type of attack profiles that actually destroyed the Tarawa?"

"From what we witnessed, the Stump and her new system performed admirably against the weapons attacking her head on, running shallow. But I believe those final weapons came from directly beneath the Tarawa which implies they dove very deep ... how does SUBT CIWS perform against that type of attack profile?"

The former Admiral knew exactly what the Vice President and former National Security Advisor was driving at. The developers knew of the deep attack profile. The one thing they agreed on was that unless another vessel armed with SUBT CIWS was in the very near vicinity of the targeted ship, that the only SUBT CIWS system capable of intercepting that attack profile by the LRASD was the SUBT CIWS located on the targeted ship itself.

... and in this case ... and for the next many months, in most cases, the capitol ships were not armed with any such weapon.

"Mr. Vice President, unless the targeted ship is armed with SUBT CIWS herself, or unless an escort that is armed with SUBT CIWS is in the immediate vicinity, it is unlikely that an intercept of that profile can be made."

April 19, 2008, 17:20 EST

WNN Evening News

Special Report from Australia

She had run out onto the beach from some sheltering scrub bush on the hillside leading up from the sand. She looked to be about five feet five inches tall, in her late twenties, shapely, and was pulling a young

boy along while carrying another even younger child. The older child appeared to be six or seven years old and was carrying a small, stuffed Panda Bear, while the smaller, younger child whom the mother was carrying could not have been more than three. Up until recently, she had probably been the housewife of some aspiring young professional in the Sydney area. Now, her husband, and her former life were nowhere to be seen. Somewhere in the background, the monotonous sound of an amplified, flat Chinese accented voice was heard repeating something over and over again in English.

From the camera's vantage point the viewers could see an overturned raft on the shore that was the object of the young woman's attention. She was running directly toward it. When she reached it she briefly let go of her older son's hand and turned the rubber raft over and pushed it into the water. It floated well, appearing to have no leaks, and she rapidly put her younger child and then the boy that she had been pulling along into the raft. Quickly climbing on board herself, she turned the front of the raft out to open water and then moved to the back of the raft and began frantically pulling a starter cord for the outboard engine that was attached there.

Apparently the young woman had waited in the brush for some time until she thought no Chinese patrols were near by, and until the horrible activity in the harbor died down. When it finally died down and the SU-24 aircraft had departed, the young woman had made her move. But she hadn't waited long enough.

As she continued to pull the cord, a patrol of eight Chinese soldiers was seen coming into the picture along the bluff overlooking the beach. All of them were armed with AK-74 assault rifles. Their officer yelled something to his men in Chinese and pointed towards the raft with the woman in it. As the camera zoomed in on them, half of the men immediately scrambled down a path that led to the shore. As they did so, the engine on the raft caught and started up. The scene was close enough to the camera that the sputtering of the outboard engine could be heard in the distance over the background noise of sporadic gun fire and the monotonous repeated message. When the engine started, the woman immediately moved the raft away from shore and began to build speed, moving as quickly out into the harbor as she could. She could be seen first urging, and then pushing her children down onto the floor of the raft, as she frantically tried to put as much distance between herself and the shore as possible.

As this was happening, the four Chinese soldiers advanced right up to the water's edge where the raft had been a few seconds earlier. Gesturing with their arms and their weapons, the microphone on the camera picked up the distant shouting of Chinese commands to stop and return to shore. The woman, unable to understand any Chinese, but comprehending exactly what the Chinese were demanding of her, leaned down lower in the raft and began weaving it back and forth as it continued out into the harbor.

Looking to their platoon leader on the bluff for guidance, the four soldiers were instructed to stop the woman immediately by whatever means possible. Turning and raising their rifles to their shoulders, all four soldiers opened fire on the woman and her two children who were now almost 75 yards offshore. Dozens of bullets hit around and in the raft, kicking up water all around it and puncturing it in several places. The woman was hit at least three times and she slumped over the side of the raft and then slowly sank into the water. The raft, rapidly losing air and having lost all forward momentum, slowly folded in two and sank beneath the surface of the water without any sign of the two children. After a few seconds a child's stuffed Panda Bear rose to the surface and floated all alone there.

After waiting and watching a little while longer, the Chinese soldiers made their way back up to the bluff and joined their comrades to continue their patrol. With the silencing of the raft's engine, and in between the continuing sound of sporadic gun fire, the words:

This has been a WNN Special News Presentation

appeared on the screen, superimposed over the picture. As they did, and as the background image slowly faded from view, for a moment the words of the monotonous Chinese accented message could be clearly understood.

"The interim Governor of New South Wales greets all citizens. We seek no further conflict, only union under the umbrella of the Three Wisdoms. Please lay down your arms. Do not resist. Do not attempt to leave. All must work together for the collective good. You are in no danger and you will not be harmed, I repeat you will not be harmed."

April 20, 2008, 23:05 EST

"Up to Date" with Melvin Baker

WNN Late Night Talk

Curt Johnson leaned into the camera as he spoke, having just received the perfect cue from the famous late-night talk show host after initial pleasantries had been exchanged.

"Mel, let me tell you, what we witnessed yesterday on that WNN Special News Report was an example of exactly what I have been talking about.

"We are embroiled in a cataclysmic war. It is going to take the collective efforts of us all to win this struggle and again see the world peace. We simply cannot expect to do that if the administration continues to withhold critical information regarding the conduct of this war from the American people.

"Under a Johnson-Crater administration the public would never have to be subject to the shock of such a revelation unless it was an equal shock to myself and my administration. That is because we would level with and inform the populace of such horrors immediately, instead of hoping to water down or somehow spin the events to our own advantage."

With practiced ease, the host of the show continued the interview. In his mind, it was noteworthy and very newsworthy that the opposition candidate was so willing to go after the popular President Weisskopf ... not to mention the clear indication that executives at WNN were very much behind the Johnson-Crater ticket.

So, irrespective of his own personal good feelings for the President and his intention to vote for him, the potential for advancement on the shirt-tails of David Krenshaw was just too much of an enticement to not go along with the scheduling of Johnson this evening, and the general outline of the interview that was giving him ample opportunity to state his case with only the most modest of tough questioning. Just the same, Baker did word the next question with more dramatic flair and more punctuation than either Johnson or the producer intended.

"Come now Curt, are you telling me that in your own capacity as the former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency that you would immediately divulge potentially panic-causing or morale-destroying information in a political effort to somehow justify full disclosure. Wouldn't there be potential public safety and national security issues you would have to take into consideration?"

Curt Johnson was surprised at the turn in the questioning and at the tone in Baker's voice. It was not supposed to go this way.

"What I would do or advise as an appointed Federal official and what I would do as an elected servant of the people may differ Mel. I would certainly take into account the advice of those close to me, but what I am saying here is that my inclination would be to be open and forthright with the people about such critical issues. I do not believe the current administration has such an inclination"

Melvin Baker thought to himself that Curt Johnson had handled that fairly well, although he felt himself that President Weisskopf had in fact been as forthcoming and as open with the people of the United States, and the world for that matter, as possible during the course of the war. But, Baker was not willing to push this issue any further than he already had, so he moved on to the next area that the producers had outlined.

"I am sure that there are those representing the current administration who might differ with that analysis, but that is the subject for another interview.

"Let me ask this. What are your views on the rumors and leaks we are hearing that the administration takes issue with WNN's decision to broadcast the information last night, and on the persistent idea that somehow WNN is obtaining information in this regard from avenues that are inappropriate or even potentially illegal?"

Curt breathed a sigh of relief. This was more like it.

"I view such reports of leaks as ridiculous and potentially dangerous. This administration has shown, through the course of the current crisis, and perhaps under cover of the crisis, a tendency to blatantly apply its own interpretation and view of the constitution to whatever situation arises. It is well known that my split occurred over just such an issue regarding the second amendment.

"Regardless of how popular it might seem at the time, regardless of how loud the chorus of cheering this administration gets from its own constituency and regardless of how willing most Americans may be to ignore such activities in the face of what they consider to be a greater threat, I believe this tendency of the current administration is reckless and dangerous in and of itself.

"Any view to silence the press at a time like this simply because you do not agree with it is something I lump in that same category."

Melvin Baker would not take issue with Johnson's comments regarding the leaks and rumors. But his comments regarding the 2nd amendment issues hit a nerve with him, so he countered.

"But Curt, the 2nd amendment issues you speak of seem to be working very well. Terrorist attacks are down. Citizen lives are being saved. Common citizens are patrolling their own streets and protecting their local infrastructure. The relief experienced by state and federal agencies have allowed them to concentrate much more on our borders and on fighting the international war. There are, as you realize, many who believe that this condition is much more consistent with how the Constitution intended things to operate.

"I must admit, in purely a ideological and technical sense, that those arguing for the President's perspective seem to have a point."

Curt's eye's flashed at this. It was a sore point for him and again Baker's tone was not what he had been led to expect. He silently cursed himself for harping on the 2nd amendment issues and allowing the interview to be sidetracked. What he really wanted to focus on was the potential conflict the administration was moving towards with WNN and his developing ally, David Krenshaw. He and his running mate, Susan Crater, felt that there was significant political capital to be exploited there, particularly with Krenshaw's growing influence on the Council for International Relations.

So, Curt decided to back down a bit, all the while vowing that he would not soon forget what he considered to be Baker's ambush.

"Mel, you certainly have a point on the effectiveness of those measures in the current environment. But that environment will not always be present. In addition, let me add this. We live in a different world than that which existed at the founding of this nation. It is a more dangerous world, it is a world where communications are faster ... I personally do not believe, and there are many who agree with me, that we can rely on the original interpretation of things to be our irrefutable guide. The Constitution in my estimation is a living document and must be considered equally in light of current circumstances, using the principles to guide us. It should be viewed that way.

"But, let's focus on the events at hand. My main contention was in answer to your original question regarding issues relating to potential suppression of the press. The current administration is barking up the wrong tree if they try and make an issue of WNN's reporting in my opinion. As horrific as the data in the news special was, it was information that the American public needed to see. It was information they had a right to see."

May 8, 2008, 11:35 local time

COSCO Headquarters Research Facility

Beijing, PRC

Lu contemplated the task before him as he listened to the summation of the current strategic picture in what was now being termed the *Historical People's Struggle*.

With the fall of Australia a balance had been reached in the region while the CAS and GIR allies consolidated their gains and strove to defend that which they had just conquered and occupied. It was a daunting task to consider on such a huge land mass and there were already many reports of armed resistance cropping up in the great Australian "outback". But Lu was certain that between the Chinese, Indonesian and Indian masses that were now immigrating to the continent, that the relative few numbers of former Australians would quickly find themselves in a completely untenable situation. The current leadership believed this would be the case in no more than twenty-four months, with a requirement for relatively large numbers of military occupation until then.

In the mean time, America and her allies were gathering more and more strength around New Zealand, apparently dedicated to an eventual liberation of Australia. To that end they continued to gather more and more troops, more and more aircraft, more and more ships and massive amounts of supplies and materiel on both Islands.

... and this is where Lu Pham's task came in.

The principle thing preventing the Americans and their allies from moving to re-establish superiority in the waters off Australia with their more capable naval vessels and naval aircraft, indeed, one of the principle things that had driven them from those waters only two weeks ago were Lu Pham's "Killer Whales" or LRASD weapons. It was critical in the overall planning for the next several months, both in the waters around New Zealand and in the even more audacious plans of the CAS high command, that this condition remain true. That the Americans be held off by the thought of great loss to themselves and their valuable capitol ships. In order to do this, the technology edge in this area would have to remain firmly on the side of China, India and the GIR.

But a new element had been introduced that could threaten that state of affairs.

As the briefing droned on, Lu revisited in his mind what he knew of the new American ship, the Arleigh Burke class destroyer caught on film, that had defended the hapless Tarawa.

"We now know that that single ship successfully intercepted six devices, all of which were running in the shallow, terminal attack configuration. All of them moving through the water on full rocket power. All of them destroyed before they could reach either that ship, or the Tarawa beyond it.

"Very impressive, much more so than most of our leaders care to contemplate at this point."

Lu Pham knew that the deeper attack profiles had passed under or around the American defensive ship. But he also knew that this vessel had been too far away from the Tarawa to defend her in the terminal phase of those devices' attack, when they were coming up from directly beneath the target. Lu Pham surmised that had the American defensive ship been very close to the Tarawa, or had the Tarawa employed the same defensive weapon system carried on that destroyer, that the outcome may have been vastly different.

Lu knew also that the Americans would be aware of this as well.

"Which opens up the possibility that in the near future, all outcomes may be entirely different from those we have enjoyed to date," Lu thought.

So this then defined the task at hand for Lu and his engineering team back in Tianjin. They simply must determine the nature of the new American defensive system and then develop the technology, the hardware and the procedures to defeat it.

As Lu stood to leave the briefing that had just finished and break for lunch before his next set of meetings, he was certain that he knew the basic nature of the American defensive system. Nothing else could explain its ability to intercept those fast moving Killer Whales with such efficiency. It had to be the initial production version of a system that he knew the Americans began developing back in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

"So now they have their own super-cavitating technology deployed," Lu thought to himself as he walked out into the cool spring air.

"And they have fine tuned it to destroy our Killer Whales."

Later that day in technical sessions addressing just these types of concerns, and then that night as he continued to theorize, calculate and formulate a strategy, Lu developed the kernel of a plan to counter the new American technology. In so doing, and in the days and weeks ahead, he would have to depend on others to estimate the American production capabilities in deploying these new weapons. Timing and numbers would be critical to the successful countering of these systems in combat environments.

It was an estimate that the Chinese would significantly under-rate. That miscalculation would ultimately make a difference in a number of yet-to-be-fought sea battles. Battles that would be critical for America and her allies in their plans for the southwest Pacific and later for the central Pacific. But in the tradition and teachings of Sun Tsu, those battles would conform to the Chinese strategy best described by the statement, "*all warfare is deception*" and would only be feints, as large and pivotal as they might otherwise seem.

In the critical, truly pivotal issues defined by the overall, audacious plan established by Jien Zenim for the latter phases of Hung-Lu-Dung, the difference, one way or another, would come from a wholly unexpected and unplanned for direction that would catch both adversaries by surprise.

May 8, 2008, that same time

Politburo Luncheon

New Politburo Facilities

Beijing, PRC

The new hardened site for the Politburo facility was host to the executive council of that body today. The Chinese President was addressing the small, central leadership group for the entire Chinese politburo. The ten individuals sitting before him were all extremely capable, fiercely dedicated and they had all been handpicked by Zenim. Compromises that had been earlier forced upon him through alliances with various faction within the overall Chinese communist system had been overcome as a result of the success of his plans leading up to the current conflict and the unprecedented successes since the outbreak of hostilities with America. The influence, prestige and power that Jien personally accumulated as a result of those successes had ensured that there would be no more compromises.

"Mao himself never exerted such complete domination," Jien thought to himself as he prepared for the next part of his presentation.

"... or such accurate and successful foresight"

Jien Zenim did not think these thoughts in a boastful or vain glorious attempt to bolster confidence in himself. From his perspective, it was simply a statement of fact... facts he felt that history was already punctuating for him. Unlike most highly intelligent, charismatic, confident, manipulative, absolute tyrants,

Jien knew he could and would make mistakes. He also felt certain that he had garnered more than enough political and ideological capital within the system he knew so well, to weather the turmoil from any conceivable mistakes he might make at this stage of his planning. Even though he recognized that he might make the occasional mistake... he was just like all the other highly intelligent, charismatic, confident, manipulative, absolute tyrants in believing that ultimately, there was absolutely no possible way that he could fail in his overall designs.

Now addressing the gathered eight men and two women before him as they ate lunch in the very well apportioned and adorned executive luncheon suite over one hundred feet beneath the ground surface, Jien began speaking.

"My friends, my purpose in addressing you this afternoon is simply to apprise you of the status of the current situation as regards operational plans for Hung-Lu-Dung.

"As you know, the first Phase of that plan was implemented last year on the anniversary of the start of our overall operations against America and her allies. Phase one unleashed our clandestine operatives throughout America in concert with our allies, who had already been weakening and undermining our enemy's ability to ramp their war mobilization to a full war-time footing.

"The first phase was, as you know, extremely successful and elements of that initial phase continue through today.

"Phase two was the military expansion of our sphere of influence well out into the central Pacific ocean and to cover all of the Australia continent. As you know, we successfully completed this portion of the operation just two weeks ago with the final expulsion of hostile forces from the Sydney area. We and our allies are now in the process of consolidating those gains and continuing to settle our loyal citizens in those vast new lands.

"We started Phase Three of the plan with the liberation of Siberia and her vast economic resources

"Soon we will embark on the most important portion of Phase Three of the plan. It is the most ambitious portion and is what we all will bring the quickest end to the current hostilities. Although we have achieved all of our tactical goals that will allow for the long term viability of our system here in Asia, until we force the Americans to the negotiating table and until they recognize and accept the new world order brought about by the acceptance of the Three Wisdoms by the greater people's of Asia and those of the Mid East and Africa as well, there can be no peace. Simply stated, without such acceptance on their part, the Americans and many of their South American and European allies will perpetually remain a threat to our long term viability. Therefore the importance of dealing with them now, while we are fully mobilized to do so. Therefore the importance of Phase Three of Hung-Lu-Dung."

As Jien Zenim continued with his presentation, he could see that all members of this elite, central group were in full agreement with what he had just said. He had little doubt that it would be any other way, but Jen had learned over several decades of hard experience to constantly place before his compatriots the focal issues of their cause and then read their reactions to it. In this case, as he had anticipated, there was 100% agreement and complete dedication. Jien knew it would have to be this way. What lay before them was not only capable of producing the most ambitious gains, it also held the risk for the severest loss.

"When has it ever been any different throughout history?" Jien asked himself.

Answering himself he thought,

"It has never been any different."

He then continued his presentation.

"Our forces are now on the move in Siberia and are approaching the frontier separating the new nation from Russia proper. The Russian forces have not been able to adequately regroup or reinforce themselves to hope to stop our three pronged advance.

"There is a growing danger that the Russians will attempt to use their nuclear weapons to halt our advance either at the border or as those forces approach the Ural mountains. In an effort to forestall and prevent this, we have arranged both a communiqué and a demonstration. It will be a demonstration that will not be lost on the United States or their other allies.

"Our forces are also on the move elsewhere in Siberia to consolidate the rest of that nation and territories all the way to the Bearing Sea. In conjunction with those efforts, we are moving several large army groups to the east and several large naval task forces are moving along the coast in support..

"In the central Pacific our forces are also on the move. We have the largest naval forces ever assembled by the People's Republic of China departing as we speak from the Yellow and Japan Sea to advance on the Central Pacific island of Midway. This force is significantly larger than that force holding the Americans at bay off of Australia and we believe that our enemies are wholly unaware of its composition or even presence. We have redoubled our anti-satellite efforts in support of this and are screening well in advance of the force for American submarines with picket vessels carrying our Killer Whale weapons.

"As you all know, these efforts in the Pacific, aimed at New Zealand and at Midway Island, in conjunction with our efforts in eastern Siberia, are all aimed at one central, overriding goal. That goal is the ..."

May 10, 2008, 04:35 local time

Personal Quarters

Outside of Central Command Headquarters

Tel Aviv, Israel

The incessant buzzing brought him to a state of almost instant wakefulness, despite the deep sleep he had been experiencing. In an environment where all out war was possible at any time, and where feinting and skirmishing was going on continually, hesitation regarding ones readiness to fight was simply not an option if one had any hope or plan of survival.

Colonel Jess Simmons picked up the phone and answered.

"Simmons."

On the other end of the line, Jess instantly recognized the voice of his commanding officer here in Israel.

"Jess, this is Donovan. Why don't you come over to my quarters pronto, I just received some news on that issue you've been wondering about."

CLICK

Jess hung up the phone. He didn't want to go. He could tell from the tenseness in his log time friend and mentor's voice that the news was not good, and he didn't think he could bear to hear it. But he had a duty, a duty to his wife and son to both hear it and to pass it on. It was a duty, like the one he owed this nation that he would not and could not shirk.

Three minutes later, after he had knocked on the door, the General let him in and asked him to take a seat.

Jess refused the seat.

"I prefer to hear this standing General. What have you heard."

General Donovan did not relish his own duty in this affair. He had known Jess for over fifteen years and knew his family well. His own son was a design engineer for Loral and was currently working on advanced guidance research and development. Although not in the armed forces, his plant had been the target of a terrorist attack eight months ago and the General remembered well his own anxieties waiting to hear word regarding his son. In that case the word had been positive. That wasn't the case here. He did not relish passing on the information he had come by, but like Colonel Simmons, the General understood his duty to his friend despite the difficulty of it.

"Jess, I just got a flash message from my friend and contact on Admiral Ryan's staff. He's been reviewing the reports from the Tarawa and talked to a number of eye witnesses. The official word on Billy is in, he's officially MIA, but it doesn't look very good.

"Apparently Billy was on deck at the time of the attack and was ordered to take off just before the explosions. I know you have seen the films. From everything we can gather, that last helicopter that went into the ocean was piloted by Billy. I'm sorry Jess ... I don't know what to say. Our forces were not able to remain in the area for long ... but the SAR team did not find him ... there were hundreds in the water ... they did everything they could."

Jess had expected this, but that expectation and his altogether weak and ineffectual efforts to prepare for it were eclipsed by the stone cold knowledge he was being presented with. He had somehow known it his gut when he viewed the film ... despite his assurances to Cindy to the contrary. His calls home had been necessarily brief, but given the circumstances General Donovan had arranged it ... now he would have to arrange one more.

Haltingly, with tears welling up in his eyes as he reflected on his son's last moments ... as he reflected on his son's entire life ... Jess made his request.

"General, I need to call some family back in Texas and then I need to call Cindy. I don't want her to find out about this in the normal fashion."

The General had already anticipated this.

"I've already made sure that the Marines will hold off until they get the word. I've also already gotten approval for the call Jess. You can make it whenever you're ready."

Jess looked at his watch. It read 04:45.

"Give me a little while alone back in my quarters General. I'm going to need to somehow get myself together for this and there's only one person I can talk to right now to have a hope of doing that ... if I ever can. I'll meet you at oh six hundred and start calling. I want to speak to Cindy sometime later this morning. ... I pray that God will help me say what needs to be said."

General Donovan put his arm around his friend's shoulder and held him briefly. His heart and soul went out to him, but he knew Jess Simmons and he knew he would do what was necessary, both for his family and for his nation. Then, he followed him out of the room and patted his shoulder as Jess slowly made his way up the hall.

"God bless you and yours Colonel Jess Simmons in your grief," he said to himself as Jess turned the corner.

"My prayer is that you get back to see your wife yourself ... I believe it is going to require His help in making that possible for any of us."

May 14, 2008, 19:16 PST

Personal Study

Pacific Heights Subdivision

Palo Alto, California

Finally, she was going to make use of what her own wits, good fortune, dedication and commitment had afforded her. Dr. Saundra Eleanor McPherson had finally received the attachment and downloaded it to her own workstation. It had taken her an additional four weeks to do so, four weeks of living hell with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S Commerce Department. Four weeks where everything ... her position at the University, her reputation, her livelihood and her very freedom had been in jeopardy. But now all of that was over.

All of those difficulties had not come as any surprise. After that last holier-than-thou, self-righteous call from Dr. Trevor, it was plain there would be serious trouble. He had as much as promised her to do all in his power to stop what she was doing and to contact whatever government officials necessary to do so. And he had.

The next day she had gotten two relevant calls, first from the Dean, and then from the Chancellor. Both of them expressed to her in no uncertain terms their shock and dismay over the calls they had received from governmental officials detailing the nature of Saundra's true work. Things had gone badly that day

and well into the next with the school officials until her Department Head and mentor had been brought into the picture and he had defended her. But that did not clear up the issue or help her begin her new line of research, and it certainly did not help allay the governmental agencies that had suddenly taken an interest in what she was doing.

Her email access had been completely blocked as well as any internet access. Sandra did not know how it was accomplished, but that block had extended beyond her own university terminal and her personal computer at home. None of the access accounts, even the anonymous ones she had set up, would work from any terminal, on or off campus. It was frustrating and maddening. The government indicated it was only in effect until they had completed their investigation and determined what charges to file. Even if they never filed charges, Sandra knew that an investigation like this could be drawn out almost indefinitely.

Ultimately, as a result of the influence of her Department Head and in the face of what they viewed as the abject censorship of her internet access, the leadership at the University had sided with her and brought to bear their significant legal resource to fight for her. Their efforts on her behalf brought increasing support as word spread to other Universities and as the ACLU became involved.

But the government tenaciously held its ground. Apparently Dr. Trevor's world view on this issue was shared by the appointed governmental officials at the Department of Justice and the Department of Commerce, as well as the Federal Communications Commission that all became involved. They blocked every effort, even local and state court orders to restore her access, even after it became clear to all involved that Sandra had exploited a clear loop hole in the law and that her efforts in this regard were perfectly "legal".

The issue was a fast burner, even drawing the attention of the Democratic Presidential ticket of Johnson and Crater. Senator Susan Crater was particularly helpful to Sandra in getting fast track visibility to the issue at the Federal level. Finally, a Judge in the 9thCircuit, which circuit had historically been very favorable to all abortion rights issues, issued an order ordering the governmental agencies to restore email and internet access and to allow the relevant attachments to go through. That court order was affirmed by a committee of judges on the 9thCircuit. The government agencies backed down, but promised to appeal the ruling to the supreme court as soon as possible.

Upon hearing the good news of the court decision only two days ago, Sandra had made contact with her research friends in Europe and asked them to send copies of the data she required through several avenues, not trusting the government to completely step out of the picture and let the data get to her. It proved necessary that she do so.

As she suspected, the three emails sent directly to her with the attachments all had difficulties. One was stopped by a Federal server indicating that some form of a malicious virus had infected it and that the attachment had to be quarantined and deleted. Another of the three emails simply never arrived. The third was the worst. It apparently arrived safely with the attachment which Sandra immediately accessed to download over her home network to her research workstation. As she was doing so, the computer screen on both her home computer and the research station went completely blue, flashed three times and then displayed the message,

"All your data and disk drives are belong to us. You are infected with a series virus."

Sandra immediately tried to turn off her machine. She tried to use the "Begin Menu" to shut down and then she tried to apply the "control-alt-delete" keys to force a shut down. But nothing worked. Finally, in frustration, she simply pulled the power cord out of the wall and the computers turned off. But then they

would not boot up again. She called a University technician who came and looked at the machines and determined that a new virus, which they immediately reported to the anti-virus vendors, the maker of the operating system and to the Federal Government, had infected her machines through the email. They informed her that they would have to reformat both machines before she could use them, and it was likely that the Federal government would block US access for the email account that had sent the offending email.

Saundra had been devastated, and she was angry. She called the head of her department to inform him of what happened and to request his help in explaining this to their lawyer and filing suit against the government. But that's when her fortunes changed. She found that the additional measures she had taken to have the attachments delivered had worked. At least one of them had. One of the people, to whom she had requested her friends in Europe send the attachment, was the department head himself. When she called him, and before she could go into detail regarding her troubles, he informed her that he had just that afternoon received the attachment and had the data downloaded to his own workstation and burned onto one of the new high capacity DVD disks.

Now, here she was with the data downloaded to her workstation and the virtual modeling software loaded and prepared to accept the data and analyze it.

As she prepared to launch the program, she reflected on all that had transpired. It seemed her entire life had been preparing her for this moment. Her childhood and upbringing. Her activism and schooling. Her love for Stephen and the heartbreak of losing him. Her commitment to AIDS research and the use of fetal tissue to advance that research. Her development of virtual modeling and her involvement with Dr. Trevor, irrespective of the hard feelings and bad ending to that involvement. To Saundra, all of that was secondary to the reality of her work and what she now felt was the very real prospect of a breakthrough that would save lives ... perhaps millions of lives while bringing to Saundra the gratification and recognition she craved.

She was honest enough with herself to recognize those cravings and needs. Still, she also honestly felt that she had them for the right reasons, a realistic chance to help so many others.

May 14, 2008, that same time

Master Bedroom

Trevor Residence

Nashua, New Hampshire

It was after 10:00 PM and the Trevors were preparing to retire for the evening. Elizabeth had had a particularly grueling day at work and Joseph, despite extremely good progress at the lab, was continuing to fret and worry over his involvement with Saundra McPherson's research. Even though it had been her manipulations and her ideas that had led to it, and even though they had already discussed this and resolved it, Joseph just couldn't square himself with or accept the fact that his own research was providing her the opportunity to make progress in the field of fetal tissue research.

As was their habit and in keeping with their religious convictions, they knelt down beside their bed and prayed together every evening. They took turns vocalizing their prayers and tonight was Elizabeth's turn. Despite her own fatigue, she sensed the continued apprehension in her husband. It had not helped that yesterday they had found out that with all legal avenues exhausted, the federal government had abandoned all efforts to block Dr. McPherson's access to her email and the internet and that the fetal data was again flowing. Elizabeth knew that this was what was troubling Joseph the most, because they both knew that Dr. McPherson would soon apply the fruits of her efforts with Joseph to that very data ... perhaps as early as this very night. With all of this in mind, she bowed her head as she held her husband's hand and began to pray out loud.

"Father in Heaven, Joseph and I approach Thee this evening on bended knee with gratitude in our hearts for our continued blessings. We are grateful in this time of turmoil and conflict for our safety and for that of our daughter. We are grateful for our health and for the relative peace we enjoy in this land despite the conflicts raging all around us and despite those instances of violence and conflict amongst us. Preserve us Dear God, through Thy Hand.

"Father, we thank Thee for our knowledge of Thee and Thy Plan for our salvation through Thy Son Jesus Christ. We thank Thee most especially for His sacrifice and the principles He taught that have guided us through our lives.

"We come before Thee now, seeking Thy continued blessings. Bless our leaders, the leaders of our nation in these terrible times, and the leaders of our church, to have Thy Spirit to guide and direct them. Bless us, if it be Thy will with continued freedom and liberty and with the strength to live our lives deserving of such blessings.

"Finally, Father, I ask Thee, in all humility, and on his behalf, to bless my husband Joseph. Please, please ease His mind over the issue of the research being conducted by Dr. McPherson wherein she obtained the knowledge and methods that Thou imparted to Joseph that led to such great discoveries regarding our physical nature and its tie to what we believe are our intellect, our spirit and our soul. We know that this knowledge came from Thee Father, and we pray now that Thou wilt use it for good, even in the hands of such an one as Dr. McPherson.

"Bless her Father, to see the Light of Truth, that this knowledge from Thee will somehow guide her to Thee and Thy Truth. Bless Joseph to trust in Thy Arm over this issue so his mind might be eased, so he can place this burden on the capable shoulders of Thy Son and so he can continue his own work. Now, bless us to sleep well, safely and soundly if it by Thy will, in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ ... Amen."

As Elizabeth finished the prayer and lifted her eyes to look over to her husband, she saw that he continued to bow his head for a few seconds. The feeling of peace and assurance that filled the room was almost palatable, it was a feeling that for a brief moment, surpassed all understanding.

When Joseph looked up, tears were streaming down his face. He reached over and hugged his wife as he whispered into her ear.

"Thank you Liz, thank you so much for your faith...I believe I will sleep well tonight."

May 14, 2008, 19:22 PST

Personal Study

Pacific Heights Subdivision

Palo Alto, California

Saundra pressed the "PROCESS" button.

The 10 Ghz processor had to labor hard over this full size, real data set for somewhat longer than any of the tests that Saundra had performed before. Instead of a mere thirty seconds, the computer labored through her algorithms for a full ninety-six seconds before flashing a PROCESSING COMPLETE message on the screen.

Barely able to contain herself, Saundra pressed the DISPLAY RESULTS button, requesting that the computer ANIMATE those results on her flat screen monitor.

And then, within a few more seconds, displayed in a detail never before beheld by the human eye, was an enhanced, atomic microscope of the fetal tissue samples she had received from Europe.

Saundra was amazed at the richness and the detail. She could already tell that her research efforts would be enhanced by orders of magnitude. There were the nerve paths and synaptic tissue of this particular sample that she had hoped would be revealed. She could already see a clear, new anomaly all along those synaptic paths and she picked a command with her stylus to enhance and zoom in on one of them.

What she saw briefly confused her. There, teaming in their numbers by the thousands ... perhaps by the tens of thousands ... were unknown and apparently now dormant constructs of some type or another. Something clearly biological in nature but something entirely new to her fetal tissue research.

"Could it happen this fast?" she thought, "just like that?"

As thoughts of the magnificent breakthrough she had hoped for tumbled through her mind, she noticed that there was something vaguely familiar about these structures. For the moment it alluded her, but no, she was sure she had seen them before. They were somehow familiar to her, just not something she had ever considered or contemplated seeing here.

Then it hit her. It hit her deep in the pit of her stomach like a ton of bricks. A sickening feeling rose up in her esophagus until she could almost taste it and she felt she would retch from the poignancy of it. It constricted her throat and made it difficult for her to breath, it dried out her mouth and made it almost impossible to speak.

"It's not possible," she feebly thought to herself.

Quickly checking the attachment she had received for its date and time stamp she reviewed the data four different times. It was clearly marked. It all checked out, over and over again. It had been sent from Germany and was the early neural tissue from a fetus just a few weeks old, just as she had requested.

Almost in a panic now, she picked up her phone and had it speed dial an international number. It was a

direct number to the personal residence of one of the research team leaders she worked with in Germany. It was the team leader who had prepared and sent the data sample that she had requested after the lifting of the block on her email.

The phone rang once, twice, three times. She was afraid the answering machine would pick up when finally a sleepy voice came on the line.

"Hallo, Franz heir ... Wer ist da?"

For a second or two Sandra could still not speak, the shock of the recognition was still too fresh and she could not find the words.

"Hallo? Wer ist denn da?"

"Wass ist los mit Ihnen denn, wissen Sie nicht wie Frueh es ist?"

Only the obvious consternation and frustration in Franz's voice and the sure knowledge that he was about to attribute the call as some kind of a crank call and hang up finally loosened Sandra's tongue and allowed her to speak.

"Franz ... this is ... this is Sandra in the, the United States."

Upon hearing Sandra's voice and its uncertain quality, Franz was filled with apprehension. He immediately slipped into English.

"Sandra? Dr. McPherson? What on earth has you calling at this hour for? Is everything alright? You certainly don't sound yourself"

As Sandra continued to recover her voice, she assured Franz that she was alright and explained away her voice quality as a result of simply being tired. She certainly didn't want to prematurely reveal to Franz what she had seen, or cause him any undue concern. She then proceeded to confirm with him his sending of the data and its specific labeling.

Everything checked out, but Sandra was still not satisfied.

"Franz I know this is going to sound strange, but can you send the sample again? ... like tonight?"

"Send it right now to my personal email addresses and please encode into the header something that only the two of us would know. Say, for example the name of that Gasthaus in Karlsruhe where we ate so many times three years ago and my favorite dish on their menu."

Franz was befuddled by the request but assumed that it had to have something to do with Sandra's difficulties with her own government. He assured her that he would immediately get up, encode and encrypt the file and then send it as she had requested.

Twenty minutes later a tone from Sandra's computer indicated that new email had been received. Sandra immediately checked her inbox and found the email from Franz, along with the attachment. She opened it and decoded it to find the name of Weinerwald in the header as the Gasthaus in Karlsruhe and the name of Haenchen Tirole as the cuisine that she had acquired such a taste for. She then loaded the data across her network onto her workstation and reprocessed the data.

Before the night was through, she had reprocessed that data and the data from the earlier email seven different times and viewed them and compared them from every magnification and from every angle possible. She also applied all of the filters and enhancements she had built into the software to analyze the virtual microscopies she would be receiving. All of them, every one, indicated the same results and told her the same thing.

"It simply cannot be," she thought as she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes briefly in exhaustion.

No sooner had she closed them, than those eyes flew open again, her mind not willing to accept the implications of what she had seen. It was physically causing her to shake now, and mentally causing her entire world view and her position in her universe to falter and collapse around her.

Although at one level, the level where she was comfortable in her universe, she could not conceive of what she had experienced ... at a deeper level, where Sandra's ultimately pragmatic and honest core resided, she could also not deny what her own eyes, and more importantly, what her own creation had told her.

No matter how she arranged it. No matter how she analyzed it. No matter what filters she applied and what spin she tried to arrange ... she knew that what she was seeing could not be faked and had not been tampered with, as much as she would prefer that to be the case. It would have simply not been possible. She was the only one she knew of with this particular expertise and she had guarded the capability well.

No, every time the sample data from the fetal tissue was run through the tool of her own creation, the painstakingly developed and tested virtual modeling system, the results were the same. There, in their tens of thousands all up and down the synaptic paths of the neural fetal tissue were dormant but very real Human Reasoning Structures. The same structures that Joseph Trevor had discovered the year before. The very structures that had been proven to provide humans with the very essence of their humanity, their reasoning ability, and the very structures that now told her that the same capability had resided in this fetus before it had been turned into a research sample.

That sight and her sure knowledge of it seared into the very essence of her consciousness like a white-hot knife. That fiercely burning sensation, along with the exhaustion from the all-night research, caused Sandra to finally step back from her computer terminal and drop onto her couch in a fitful, wracking and soul searching sleep.

Despite all else, Sandra McPherson, in her heart and soul, was an honest person who was committed to the truth as she saw it. She had now seen a truth, with her own eyes, that she had never taken seriously before. As a result, given her own personal integrity, she would have no choice but to take that truth just as seriously and to pursue it just as rigorously as she had pursued the opposite position before her new revelation.

That is why, when Sandra McPherson awakened from the sleep which the truth and its impact had caused to come upon her, she would awaken a changed person, a person with a new mission in life.

Chapter 6

"... and their hosts were as the sands on the sea shore." Biblical Prophet

June 12, 2008, 03:18 local time

Central Pacific Ocean

**925 kilometers West Southwest of Midway,
Island**

Flag Bridge, PLAN 004 Sun Tsu

Admiral Yao Hsu was once again steaming towards a violent confrontation with the U.S. Navy. As the overall task force commander for this critical phase of operation Hung-Lu-Dong, the Admiral knew full well that it called for an all out frontal attack against the strength of the U.S Navy around the island of Midway. It was an island that his superiors expected him to occupy, a task that the Admiral was expected to accomplish using the largest naval force that the People's Republic of China had committed to the seas in its history.

"... and once again, my major action is but a feint in the overall scheme of things, regardless of the size of the force committed," thought the Admiral as he gazed out the window through the darkness and the sheets of rain sweeping across the deck of the big carrier from the squall they were currently passing through.

Midway Island was an position of obvious strategic importance to both sides. As an actual extension of the Hawaiian Islands situated midway between the North American and the Asian continents, for the Americans, the island was a strategically important, central Pacific logistics and defense point that guarded the approaches to Hawaii and ultimately to the west coast of the United States itself. To the Chinese, it was a position from which attacks could be staged and planned against Hawaii, and from which the approaches towards the Asian mainland far back to the west could also be protected.

The attack on Midway Island was planned to be a two-pronged, joint CAS affair. From the west, Admiral Yao was advancing with the largest element that included two of China's larger carriers, including the latest, the Sun Tsu, where he maintained his task force command staff. Hsu's main assault task force also included three of the smaller, Beijing class conversion carriers, six of China's tactical assault vessels, ten of the large amphibious assault ships, eight Haizhou class destroyers, eight LSM carriers and forty other destroyer and frigate escort vessels. Two hundred and fifty kilometers behind the main assault group was a large provisioning group consisting of two more Beijing class carriers, eight destroyer and frigates, and twenty-four oilers, ammunition ships, cargo and various other supply ships necessary for the ultimate occupation of Midway Island.

Admiral Yao was commanding over one hundred and ten PLAN vessels in his main Task Force and he was bringing over one hundred thousand Chinese troops crammed into the amphibious vessels and transports he had with him, not to mention the tens of thousands of Chinese sailors and aviators manning the ships. It was his intent to engage the Americans first, head-on and destroy them. Both their naval vessels and their forces on Midway.

Coming from the due south of Midway Island was the other prong of the CAS attack. Four more

carriers, two Chinese and two Indian, were advancing with twenty Indian and Chinese escort vessels and another contingent of amphibious and transport ships. Most of the war vessels had been pulled away from duty around Australia as newly commissioned and shaken down vessels arrived from China and India to take their place. As planned, this southern task force was drawing off a large component of the American forces defending New Zealand who had to make sure that their bases and supplies on New Zealand were not flanked.

"A well thought out and executed plan," thought Hsu.

"If this task force can engage and defeat the American forces in place around Midway, we will then turn south and drive a pincer onto the advancing American task force from New Zealand ... and then on to New Zealand itself!" concluded the Admiral as he set his jaw, nodded his head and turned to make his way to the combat information center.

When the Admiral and his aide entered the CIC and were recognized, he instructed everyone to carry on while he stopped briefly to contemplate the cool efficiency with which the personnel here went about their business. They did so in a very modern and sophisticated environment. From the operators sitting in front of their Multi-Function Displays monitoring the myriad varieties of sensing devices and weapons systems, to the duty officers standing behind them, observing and helping, to the higher ranking officers observing the overall large plasma screen war board which depicted the current disposition of forces. All of the equipment was the latest, most advanced technology. It was all shock hardened for combat and backed up in quintuplet to ensure battle efficiency and survival. All of the personnel were exquisitely trained and utterly committed to their nation's cause.

Not only did this equipment allow for the command and control of the 60,000 ton carrier, Sun Tsu, and its weapons systems ... it was also data linked to all of the other vessels in the task force capable of advanced, digital control. Those vessels included all of the Mao and Beijing class carriers, all of the Amphibious and Tactical Assault ships and all of the Haizhou and newer Luhai II and III class destroyers. That control extended to acquisition and targeting functions for virtually all of those ships' weapons systems, with digital control capable of being switched to a single designated lead vessel, or to a network of multiple vessels using sophisticated algorithms to establish primary, secondary and auxiliary lead or command control. All of this took into account numerous battle conditions including weather, threat level, threat axis and damage assessment. Many Chinese officers felt that their system was the equal, and in fact superior, to the vaunted American AEGIS system. A good number of those officer had personally seen the AEGIS system in action in training exercises the Americans had so foolishly allowed them to be a part of on those very AEGIS vessels themselves back in the 1990's and early 2000's. Much had been observed, much had been learned. All of it had been put to good use and had gone into the innovation and technical progress that had resulted in China over the years. But in the last two years of all out war, it had advanced at a fevered pitch.

"And it had done so at great cost," thought the Admiral as he watched the personnel on the Sun Tsu go through their assigned tasks with a professionalism and coolness that belied the nature of the conditions they would soon be facing.

Those costs had included the initial large deck Chinese carrier, the PLAN Mao, which Admiral Yao had commanded and which had been destroyed in the Battle of the Southwest Pacific in July of 2006. There, as here, the Admiral's part had been of secondary consequence to the overall goals established by the party leaders and military high command back in Beijing. Despite the loss of the Mao, the Shanghai and most of their escorts in that battle, those goals had been achieved and the Americans had been driven back 1500 kilometers as a result of the losses they sustained in and around Guam at that time.

"So much equipment, so many men lost to the sea," thought the Admiral.

But the production capability of the People's Republic, and now the entire Coalition of Asian states, was outstripping the losses. Chinese and allied factories, already newer than most of their western counterparts and originally developed to feed the material desires of the west, had been quickly transformed into full war time mobilization. Many, many more such factories had been and were being built . . . all over Asia and the sub-continent, and in the island chains. They were now also being built in Western Australia and would soon be built in the newly vanquished eastern Australian provinces as well.

For air operations, SU-35 fighter/bombers, J-10 fighters, improved versions of the TU-22M bomber, KS-2+ and the newer, anti-ballistic capable KS-3 missile systems and anti-satellite weaponry were being produced in tremendous quantities. For ground action new main battle tanks, multiple rocket launchers, trucks, vehicles and all of the varieties of weapons and ammunition were being produced by factories that only three years ago produced teddy bears, tennis shoes, automobiles and pick-up trucks for the people who were now the very object of the weaponry.

Perhaps most telling of all was the naval production which was allowing China and the CAS to project their rapidly developing power. The transformation of COCSO and now the Korean, Japanese and other commercial shipbuilding operations throughout Asia was allowing for the manufacture of naval vessels and their weaponry at astonishing rates. Beijing class carriers were sliding off the ways now at a rate of two every three months. The newer, big-deck carriers like the Sun Tsu upon which the Admiral now stood, were coming out at the rate of one every four months. The Amphibious Assault and Tactical Assault vessels were both being produced now at a rate of one every month, and the newer class destroyers, including the Haizhou class, were being produced at a rate that exceeded one a month, usually three every two months.

As impressive as those figures were regarding the production rate of the vessels themselves, the key to the CAS and the GIR success remained the production rate and the innovation of the LRASD weaponry, and now the newer KS-3 anti-ballistic missiles and *ta shih* detectors for acquiring and targeting America's stealth aircraft. All of the Admiral's major combatants carried the LRASD, Killer Whales. Several of the newer ships, including both Mao class carriers, two of the new Haizhou destroyers and two of his Tactical assault vessels had been equipped with the latest KS-3 missiles and the *ta shih* system before they departed on this mission. The Admiral was hoping that the additional protection afforded by these systems would be enough to counter what he was sure would be massive American air attacks aimed at thwarting his mission and destroying his command.

But, as innovative and important as these last two systems were (the ABM missiles and the anti-stealth systems), the largest single contributor to the current and ongoing success in this war remained the LRASD weaponry. In that regard, Admiral Yao Hsu had met Admiral Lu Pham on numerous occasions. Although Lu Pham, in keeping with his Vietnamese heritage, was a slight man, there was an intensity in his eyes that could not be missed or ignored. Yao knew that the success that China and her allies had experienced must be credited to that man's genius. Nothing else that the Admiral could think of, and he had spent many long months and years contemplating it, would have allowed his nation's forces to meet and turn back the prowess of the U.S. Navy as they had done thus far.

"It's amazing that Pham and his comrades at COSTIND are keeping out in front of the Americans," thought the Admiral as he considered the technological battle that had been raging over those very weapons. Particularly as he considered the new variant that his vessels carried on this mission that even now allowed him to know much more about his enemy than he could otherwise have known. The reconnaissance variant that was coated in sonar absorbing material, dove deeper than any other LRASD or American submarine available. It carried advanced ELF and VLF technology for communications and

traded all of its rocket fuel for conventional fuel to enhance its range and loitering capabilities. Several of these devices were already out around Midway Island, communicating the size and disposition of American warships in the area back to the Admiral as they found them.

"No, it is little wonder that Lu Pham and COSTIND stay ahead of the Americans. We have planned and prepared for these events for many years, even decades ... and the Americans have only in the last two years recognized their vulnerability ... and they are having a difficult time coming to terms with it," surmised the Admiral as he finally walked down into the CIC towards the knot of officers which included the Captain of the Sun Tsu.

"Perhaps they will come to terms with it, and with us, after we take Midway Island from them and after the other, even more ambitious goals of Hung-Lu-Dong are realized further to the north."

June 13, 2008, 16:18 local time

GIR 1stArmy Group

65 Kilometers South of Kharkov

The Russian Federation

General Talabari reviewed in his mind the current planning and operations for the 1stand 3rdGIR army groups in Europe. This group, now numbering close to one million men, would continue moving north towards Kharkov and eventually Moscow. That movement would ultimately form a great pincer in conjunction with the larger Indian and Chinese forces now approaching the Ural mountains from the east. The Indians, numbering over one and one-half million near Magnitogorsk to the south and a growing Chinese force swelling to two million men approaching Tagil to the north.

In the end, it was planned that over six million GIR, Indian and Chinese men and all of their implements of war would converge on Moscow late this fall, just before the winter set in. The General believed that it could be done, but he, along with all of the other commanders on both sides of the conflict were waiting for what they all believed would be the inevitable use of nuclear weapons by the Russians as they continued to lose ground. The general actually had expected it to occur earlier, but clearly, first the terse messages from Tehran, New Delhi and Beijing to the effect that any use by Russia would be countered by all three nations, and then the demonstration that the Chinese had arranged had forestalled their use to date.

That demonstration had been ingenious and the General was still trying to discover how the Chinese had arranged it. Apparently, Chinese operatives had infiltrated, or more likely, bought their way into the Russian strategic force structure to the point of actually controlling some of the silos. Almost a month ago, immediately after the communiqué that Beijing had sent to Moscow regarding retaliation for the use of nuclear weapons, the Chinese had sent a second, back-channel message to both Moscow and Washington informing them to make sure they had reconnaissance and surveillance assets observing the Russian airspace at a particular time and place.

Twenty-two hours later, the Chinese operatives inside Russia seized one of the silos they had worked at for several years had launched two strategic missiles at the advancing Chinese forces still three hundred kilometers to the east of Tagil at the time. The missiles arced into their ballistic trajectories, the warheads at their apogee reaching the fringes of space. Then, as each warhead released four re-entry vehicles (or RV's as they were referred to) separately targeting different portions of the Chinese advance, thirty-two anti-ballistic missiles (ABMs) had soared from the Chinese forces and successfully shot down all eight warheads, destroying them before those nuclear warheads could reach their targets and unleash the hell of nuclear fire upon them.

Washington and Moscow, who had indeed gotten surveillance and reconnaissance assets in place to observe the exchange, had been shocked into silence, even as they stood down from their highest levels of nuclear alert and readiness. In addition, within a few short hours WNN had also somehow received stunning images of the intercepts and broadcast them world-wide. The impact on public thinking and on planning within the military circles of the allied nations was still being felt. Talabari still wondered, as he was sure the Americans and Russians did, whether or not the warheads had been active, and whether or not the ABMs had been given data that would allow them to more easily intercept the incoming missiles.

"One thing was for sure," thought the General. "Those missile's trajectories, speed and separation had not been *faked* and yet each of them had been successfully intercepted."

It was a fact that was not lost on anyone and it made the General all the more glad that each of his own advancing divisions included several batteries of the new Chinese KS-3 missiles and their launchers, as did all of the Indian and the Chinese forces. Given their performance over the Ural mountains last month, the General was satisfied that even when the Russians did go nuclear out of desperation, that most of his own forces and those of his allies would survive to finish the struggle.

"What I wouldn't have given to be a fly on the wall in the American's vaunted situation room underneath their White House," mused the General as the topic of the briefing turned to the 2ndGIR Army group that had defeated both Albania and Bulgaria and was now advancing further into Serbia and attacking Romania.

As that discussion progressed, the General couldn't help but think of the young man he had promoted to Colonel in May and transferred out of Russia and into Bulgaria to command one of the spearhead battalions as it entered Romania. Abduhl Selim had first come to the General's direct attention when he had reviewed and approved the young Captain's award for the Order of the Imam for his role in quelling that nasty Russian riot almost a year ago. The young man had almost single handedly kept a bad situation from turning into a disaster that could have resulted in drastic impacts to the overall war plan. If the Russians had closed their borders and asked the transiting GIR forces to leave at that time, the entire current set of events would have been drastically altered, and not in favor of the GIR or its allies.

After the presentation of the medal, the General's staff had done a thorough study of the young man's exploits throughout the war. It had been a fascinating tale, one that the General felt was only exceeded by the story of the Imam's military exploits themselves. Such an individual as this young Selim deserved the chance for promotion. The fighting men would love it . . . in fact they did love it because most of them saw in the Selim a regular individual like themselves who was making good. On top of that, his accomplishments under fire and his willingness to sacrifice for his own men made him a natural leader, one the common soldiers were more than willing to follow, and an individual, if he survived, whom Talabari would be proud to promote and mentor.

"Well, that will take whatever course Allah wills," thought the General as his attention turned back to other matters. Perhaps soon, the General would take the young Colonel on a trip to meet the Imam

himself, just before Talabari returned to the 4th and 7th GIR Army groups and their Chinese, Algerian and Libyan allies surrounding Israel for preparations for the final push to the sea there.

In the mean time, the memory of the successful Chinese intercept of the Russian ballistic missiles and the likely reaction of Americans to it, once again filled his mind.

"The Americans, who thought they were so far ahead in ABM technology, and who must have been secure in their thinking that when the time came they could rely on their own missiles reaching targets while they themselves erected a shield against the missiles of others, must have literally soiled their pants! ... or at the least almost burst a capillary or two when they realized what had happened"

... and they very nearly had.

June 15, 2008, 21:45 CST

Ferguson Ranch

Bowie, TX

Cindy Simmons sat in her parents living room contemplating her life. She had asked for and received time off from work down at the aircraft plant so she could just get away. Her foreman and several layers of management above her sympathized with and understood her loss. They were more than willing to grant, and even to encourage her request. A couple of them knew first hand what she was going through. Although Billy was still officially listed as MIA, both Jess and those officers who had come to talk to her personally had made it clear that he was presumed dead.

Cindy did not want to believe it. She could not get out of her mind how proud she had been, or how good it had been when Billy had visited her prior to shipping out ... for the last time. He had come to Ft. Worth and visited her at her apartment near the plant. He had asked all about her work and told her how proud he was of her for what she was doing to support the war effort and in particular how much her specific efforts on the JSF meant to the Marines with whom he served. It had seemed like such a short visit at the time and it really had not been that very long ago.

Now he was gone, most probably to never return again.

"Oh," she thought, "if only we somehow knew for sure. If only we could lay him to rest here near to home."

She and Billy had spent one weekend up on the ranch near Montague and they had walked along Clear Creek where Billy had grown up hunting squirrels and rabbits with his dog. She could still almost here his answer, echoing faintly from far off in the woods along the creek, as she would call him home to dinner or to accomplish some chore. He had always come as quickly as he could, not wanting his mother to worry or have to wait needlessly. If only she could simply call him home now. If only he could hear her, surely he would hurry back again.

"But he sure loved that place," she continued in her mind. "Just like his father."

Now Cindy was here alone, at her parents ranch near Bowie, Texas, almost twenty miles from their own ranch over southeast of Montague. Her parents had gone into Bowie earlier in the evening and asked her to come along, but she had politely refused, preferring to be at her own childhood home, by herself. They understood and knew she needed more time alone so they did not press the issue. They would probably be back about 11 PM and so she still had another hour and fifteen minutes or so to reflect and to continue her grieving process.

As much as she wanted to hold out hope for her son's return, Jess had been painfully honest and direct in his last phone call...and she knew that it agonized him greatly to do so ... to have to recognize and communicate to her something that he himself did not want to be true. She loved Jess for that, and she was so frightened that she would some day receive similar word about him. Right now she did not know how she could ever handle that ... she was still not sure how she was going to handle or get past Billy's loss. But she knew that it was something she had to come to terms with ... and it meant she was going to have to reach deep down into her faith, a faith in God she had come by early in life within the walls of this very house. That was a big part of the reason she would be spending the next two weeks here. She wanted to reaffirm and punctuate her faith in the face of Billy's tragedy and to be prepared in case another one followed.

One thing she knew, America's enemies were still on the advance and the war was far from over. So much ground had been lost, and was still being lost. Somehow it would all have to be made up, somehow it would have to be turned around. Cindy knew that the currency for turning it around were going to be great quantities of faith, hard work, commitment ... and ultimately lives. Lives like Billy's...and perhaps...no she didn't want to contemplate that right now.

There had already been so much horror...so many men and women in the service of the nation who would not be coming home...so many other men and women who had been killed or maimed right here in the United States by their enemies. The more she thought on this, the more her spirits were buttressed concerning her own need to strengthen herself and move forward ... and the more firm her conviction was that sacrifices like Billy's were something that were a dreadful necessity, however painful. There would be many more such sacrifices by countless other young men and women and by countless other families before all of their safety, liberty and way of life was once more secure. As this thought took hold, she realized that she would some day be proud of Billy's sacrifice, even if the pain never completely went away. She also realized that her commitment to helping in the effort to protect, defend and preserve their liberties was unflinching, it simply had to be.

Then the phone rang.

June 15, 2008, that same time

Trevor Residence

Nashua, NH

Brrrrrrrr

The muted sound of the phone ringing on the other end of the line sounded for the second time in Elizabeth's ear. She was sure she had dialed the number that her friend Cindy had given her correctly. She hoped there had not been some mistake.

Brrrrrrrrr

"Come on, Cindy, pick it up," she said to herself

Brrr ...

In the middle of that fourth ring, Elizabeth heard the voice of her friend.

"Ferguson residence."

Elizabeth breathed a sigh of relief and answered.

"Cindy, this is Liz, it sounds like you got to your parents alright. I just wanted to call and make sure you were there safe and check up on you."

Elizabeth Trevor could still hear the pain in her friend's voice as she responded, but she could also detect a note of gratitude to be talking to a close friend.

"Thanks Liz.

"Yes, I got here alright and am finding comfort visiting with my folks. They are out right now so I've had some time alone ... and that's good too. It's been letting me reflect ...

Elizabeth knew what her friend was reflecting on and decided to try and lead the conversation to get Cindy's mind on other things, and to find a way to share with her the news of her own, in the hopes it would lift her spirits.

"Cindy, don't you worry. You take all the time you need. Just know that Joe and I are with you in spirit and are here for you no matter what. Anything you need, just ask it.

"My plans for travel are the same. I'll be flying out next Saturday and renting a car in Dallas for the drive over. Are you sure it's going to be alright with your parents?"

"Are you sure you're okay with it?"

Elizabeth hoped that Cindy was still comfortable with the plans they had made last week after Cindy had informed her that she would be staying with her folks. She felt Cindy could use the company of a friend as she grieved her son, and Elizabeth had convinced Joe that it was the right thing to do.

Not that it had taken much convincing. Joe was as shocked and saddened by the news of Billy's apparent death as Elizabeth was. It was hard to believe that that tow-headed boy was gone. He had always been the apple of both of his parents' eye and there had been a few years, when the Trevors still lived in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area that they had held out hopes that Billy and their own daughter would some day get together.

Despite the fact that the former condition had never materialized, both families had remained close, especially Cindy and Elizabeth. For all of these reasons, Joe was quick to support his wife's plans for

helping and comforting their old friends 100%.

"Liz, my folks are very comfortable with it and we are all looking forward to your visit. I am particularly looking forward to it and thank you and God for it. You are a true friend Liz, a girl couldn't find a better one."

Elizabeth rejoiced within herself at those words. That was exactly the sentiment she was hoping for, and it allowed her to gently move the conversation in the direction she had hoped.

"Oh, Cindy, thank you so much for that sentiment ... but I'm the one who should be grateful for such a good friend.

"... and I have some news I wanted to share with you.

"Do you remember our discussions about the essence of Joe's Nobel Prize and the Human Reasoning Structures he was led to discover and research?"

Cindy didn't need to even think, of course she knew.

"Of course Liz, the entire country, the entire free world knows about that."

Elizabeth continued.

"Well, do you also remember the deal Joe struck with the researcher from California to develop a method to virtually model his research methodologies and the trepidation he felt when he discovered that she was using his work in her fetal tissue studies?"

Cindy had to think a moment on that one. In the midst of her own circumstances, it was not something she had at the very front of her mind. On reflection though, she did recall Elizabeth speaking of this and she remembered Elizabeth's and her own sorrow and disgust at Joe's research being used in such a way.

"Yes, Liz. I remember it. How could she lead Joe on like that and use his methods to advance such research?

"But I also remember your faith in that matter and your willingness, once it had happened to leave it in God's hands. I know that must have been almost impossible for Joe, but it was a great example to me, I will tell you."

Elizabeth, wasted no time in continuing. She felt like she was literally bursting at the seams to share what had recently happened, and she could think of no better person to share it with than Cindy. Joe had felt the same and agreed to it.

"Exactly Cindy.

"Well you will never guess what has happened ..."

From there Elizabeth Trevor brought her good friend, the sorrowing Cindy Simmons in on the amazing set of circumstances that had been developing since Sandra McPherson's discovery of the Human Reasoning Structure within the fetal tissue she had examined on May 14th.

The next day, May 15th, exactly one month ago, Sandra had placed a telephone call to an at-first

reluctant and distrustful Joseph Trevor. It had taken a second phone call and a transmission, first by email, and then a large set of data by file transfer protocol (FTP) before Joe's reluctance and distrust turned first to astonishment and then to utter excitement.

For the last four weeks, Joseph and Sandra, with help from Elizabeth, had worked many, many extra hours researching and detailing the existence of HRS within fetal tissue of all types. The samples came from Europe and Sandra processed them through her virtual modeling algorithms. It was a difficult task for Joseph, knowing what those physical samples in Europe represented, and wanting to end once and for all their harvest. But both he and Elizabeth saw the real potential in achieving just that as they established beyond doubt the humanity and reasoning capability of the child in the womb.

Sandra did most of the actual set-up and detailing, while Joseph analyzed the results and put together the logical thesis that would establish the premise, that the human embryo, even at the earliest cellular stages of development, contained the human reasoning structures underlying the DNA, which formed the basis for comprehension and awareness with increasing levels of intelligence. A level of intelligence that was clearly far beyond what modern social and medical science had ever been previously willing to accept.

Cindy recognized the implications immediately.

"Dear Lord, Liz, do you know what this has to mean?"

Elizabeth Trevor, her husband and even Sandra McPherson ... perhaps it was better said, especially Sandra McPherson, knew exactly what it meant. They had been laboring for the last several weeks to punctuate it and announce it to an unsuspecting world.

"We do Cindy, and you hit the nail on the head. It is Dear Lord. He has opened a door here and done it through a miraculous means that none of us could have ever foreseen or suspected.

"We plan to present detailed proof of all of this to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Medical Association and the entire world within the next three to four weeks. Isn't it just amazing how God's Hand works in all things?"

Cindy could see it clearly, not only in this astounding story, but also in what she and Jess were experiencing. It was amazing how God worked in people's lives ... even her own. Throughout this discussion, and even in her thoughts preceding Elizabeth's phone call, she could see, despite her pain and anxiety that would never really go away, that God had not forsaken her, that His hand was in the events of the day, all the way from the earth-shattering world-wide events, down to her very own, very personal ones. It was a knowledge and an understanding ... an entire way of thinking, that was about to be revitalized throughout much of America and the free world. It was an understanding and moral re-awakening they were all going to need to see them through the coming events.

June 16, 2008, 19:31 local time

Forward Observation Post

Allied Lines

Near Chiriqui Grande, Panama

Hernando Rodriguez watched the sloping ground to his front. Using his special thermal vision equipment here in the hot and moist environment of central America, Hernando had finally grown use to the humidity and learned to ignore the sweat dripping from his face as he carried out his duties.

"At least the lenses on these optics don't sweat like we humans do," thought the Corporal as he observed several individuals moving up a trail towards the town he knew was over the rise to his front and left.

"I've got three individuals, range five hundred and fifty yards, moving up the small trail to our left towards town," Hernando reported to his platoon leader.

"They look like civilians, one young boy and two girls. I have a positive ID on non-combatants"

This evening, Hernando's duties included keeping watch well in advance of the new American position near the Panamanian coast here south and west of Chiriqui Grande.

Hernando knew he was living out one of the few positive campaigns of this war to date as American and allied forces pushed the joint Chinese and Panamanian forces south out of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. A decisive battle had been fought south of Managua in which the Chinese were finally stopped in their northward advance. As those large forces were held in place and as they wore themselves out on the well entrenched allied defenses that stretched from Granada on the north end of Lago de Nicaragua to the Pacific Ocean, a strong American force consisting of three infantry and two armored divisions had used the relatively safe waters of the Caribbean Sea to land near Colorado, Costa Rica and the mouth of the San Juan River.

That amphibious assault had been executed perfectly and without substantial sea or land based loss. Those forces, assisted by several air borne reserve battalions deploying directly from the United States, had pushed rapidly up the San Juan River to the southern end of Lago de Nicaragua, sweeping aside enemy garrison and defense units as they came. The Chinese and Panamanian main thrust on Managua, driving up the west coast of Nicaragua, had been enveloped by the movement.

Hernando remembered well the general order for attack when the encircling forces had finally gotten into position.

"How could anyone ever forget such an experience," he wondered. He knew he would never forget it.

The enemy force had still been very substantial, numerically larger than the combined attacking allied forces. But they had been caught out of position, with many logistical supplies and support units mauled in their rear by the advancing American armor in that quarter. In addition, the Chinese units in particular were only supported by what provisions had been brought in-theater by a long and exposed supply line across the entire Pacific. Though the LRASD Killer Whale weaponry still made interdiction of that supply line difficult far out at sea, once that supply line approached closer in to Central America, things changed substantially in favor of the allies.

A growing number of American and other allied patrol and strike aircraft were being positioned at bases

throughout El Salvador and Nicaragua for precisely this purpose. P-3C and specially configured B-1B bombers, operating in a maritime strike role, were finding and sinking more and more Chinese shipping in the eastern Pacific. Those aircraft were rolling off newly constructed American manufacturing lines, which were less and less hampered by terror attacks within the continental United States itself. As more and more of these aircraft, and the shorter range but more numerous F-15E and Joint Strike Aircraft were positioned in El Salvador and Nicaragua, the flow of supplies originating out of the far east was reduced to a trickle.

Hernando remembered many occasions witnessing the outbound and return flights of these aircraft, particularly the sleek B-1B bombers carrying so many ALCMs (Air Launched Cruise Missiles) underneath their fuselage on the outbound trips. On the return trips, if they had been successful, the pilots would wag their wings at friendly positions as they flew over. There were many occasions where a lot of "wing wagging" was going on, to the exultant cheers of the troops on the ground.

All of this had played into that general, encircling attack on the enemy main thrust into Nicaragua.

The enemy had fought hard. Hernando counted it as major miracle that he had come through that battle, and the many other skirmishes and major battles that had followed, when so many men he had known had either been wounded or killed. Ultimately as air superiority and then air dominance was achieved, and as American M1-A2 Abrams tanks (themselves recently coming off new production lines in Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and Arizona) overcame enemy armor, a route and then a slaughter had ensued. Although many of the Panamanians surrendered, most of the Chinese would not. As their perimeter shrank, being aggressively pushed by allied forces on both sides, a large remaining contingent of over 10,000 Chinese soldiers had made a last-ditch, all-out suicide attack on the east side of the allied lines in an effort to break out of the trap.

Although Hernando's unit had been on the peripheral of that attack, he had witnessed first-hand its ferocity and horror. The enemy push had carried through allied lines for over ten miles, over-running several positions where American and allied troops were butchered where they lay. The doomed Chinese counter attack broke through the first ring of encircling allied infantry and cavalry forces. But in so doing, the Chinese advance sealed its own fate as it was flanked by units like Hernando's that closed the gap behind it while advancing Armor units met it head-on and swarming aircraft rained down fire on top of it. In the end, less than 200 Chinese troops were captured alive, all of them wounded.

Thus was the northward advance of Chinese power in Central America stopped and thrown back.

Now, for the last three months, allied forces, principally American, had advanced through Costa Rica, retaking the capitol of San Jose in mid-May and reaching the Panamanian border just two weeks later near the first of June. At that point, Chinese and Panamanian reserve units had arrived in force and blunted the allied advance and ultimately halted it in a bloody stalemate on either sides of the slopes of Volcan Baru near the border of Panama and Costa Rica.

As that was occurring, Hernando and large numbers of veteran troops who had been given some R&R (Rest and Relaxation) were moved from their rear areas over to the east coast on the Caribbean Sea near Limon, Costa Rica. There a large armada of allied amphibious shipping met them, including two of the new Hampton Roads Class Sea Control Carriers that were now coming off American shipbuilding yards, several Aegis class destroyers, the large Brazilian carrier, the Sao Paulo, and her escorts. The troops had embarked on the numerous amphibious ships and sailed south where a forced landing had been made three days ago at Chiriqui Grande here in Panama.

It had not been an easy landing. Here, nearer to more Chinese and Panamanian assets and supplies, the

air battle had been fierce and opposing fire had been heavy as the ships came closer to the harbor. As American aircraft from the carriers, and land based aircraft out of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the United States pounded the enemy, the enemy countered with surprises of its own.

Over one dozen land launched Killer Whales were sent out towards the fleet from concealed mobile launchers along the coast. Escorting vessels, particular Halsey class frigates, that carried the reactive defenses against LRASD weaponry, were caught out of position. They had been stationed to the seaward side of the armada, particularly on the southern side, to protect against expected air launched and ship launched varieties of the weapon. Only two of these devices were successfully interdicted. Those particular two sensed and targeted the Sao Paulo which was further out to sea and in a position where her American and Brazilian escort's reactive defenses could work as designed. But, closer in to shore, three large amphibious assault vessels, three destroyers and one of the new Sea Control carriers were violently and suddenly sunk with a tremendous loss of life, in excess of nine thousand five hundred personnel.

It had been a critical and harsh blow, but not a fatal one to the allied landing plans as they pressed home the assault and as American aircraft used precision-guided weaponry to take out the land-based LRASD launchers. The actual shore-based defense fortification that the Chinese and Panamanians had prepared were incomplete and though the landing was opposed and the fighting fierce, allied forces ultimately defeated the defenders and established a significant beachhead that first day.

Now, two days later, Hernando was with his platoon near the Panamanian town of Bajo Boquete. That town would be his Division's objective at first light tomorrow morning after a night of scouting and surveillance. Intelligence, according to their company commander, indicated that enemy forces in strength, positioned in front of allied forces further to the north and west, were reacting quickly to this new force in their rear. They were expected to wheel around and try and break out of the developing trap to avoid another situation like what the enemy had experienced in Nicaragua. In addition, more enemy troops, including two divisions of Venezuelan regulars, were reported to be advancing from the south in the vicinity of the Panamanian town of David.

It looked like all of these forces would converge in the vicinity of Bajo Boquete late tomorrow. Allied air would punish all of the enemy units as they progressed, but as Hernando had experienced over the last two days, this far south air dominance was not a guarantee and so the enemy could be expected to arrive in force. In addition, American armor would be pressing the enemy forces expected to retreat from the Volcan Baru area from their flanks and hopefully reducing their numbers and effectiveness appreciably. But in any case, the allied forces Hernando was a part of would be acting as the anvil in the hammer-anvil scenario that was developing, just as they had planned to do.

So, as he watched, Hernando prepared himself emotionally for what he expected to be a terrible battle the next day. As he did so he prayed that he might survive to see his wife and young son back in Florida ... and that if not, that his parents and Maria's parents would take good care of his small family and teach his son, Felipe about him.

Unknown to Hernando, his prayer would be answered much sooner than he expected, in fact this very night, although not in a way he anticipated. As he was watching and praying in his forward position, a runner from his company commander was already hurrying toward him with new orders.

Corporal Hernando Rodriguez, soon to be Sergeant Hernando Rodriguez, was being urgently recalled to the United States in answer to his recent application to Army Ranger training. But those orders also had to do with the preparation for a specific new American campaign. It was to be a campaign that would require as many Cuban-born American soldiers as could be readily assembled, and Hernando

was to be one of them.

June 19, 2008, 09:15 local time

Joint Session, Brazilian Parliament

Brasilia, Brazil

President Alfonzo Hermosa, who was now being called the "Panther of Brazil" in the press and by his own countrymen, looked into the hundreds of assembled face as he sat in his cushioned chair and prepared to deliver this special, state of the nation address.

It had been over two years ago that he had stood at this same podium and urged the lawmakers sitting before him to declare war on the People's Republic of China after the horrific impact of a large portion of the International Space Station in Rio de Janeiro. That impact had killed tens of thousands of Brazilians and had been the result of Red China's deliberate targeting of the civilian space station in its war with America. It had been something that President Hermosa could not stand back and explain away in an effort to avoid conflict. It had been something the Brazilian people would never forget ... or ever forgive, and something for which they demanded retribution.

Now, over two years later, he was invoking a special session of the parliament to update them on the overall strategic picture and on recent developments.

Many of those developments were good here locally. In addition to the success against Panamanian, Venezuelan and Chinese troops in Panama, the President could report that the Argentines spearhead which had broken through Brazilian defenses in March had finally been thrown back in southern Brazil. The Argentines had clearly been pushing towards Porto Alegre on the Atlantic coast to open up another COSAS base on the eastern coast of South America to compliment their efforts out of Venezuela. But that advance had been stopped 75 kilometers to the east of Santa Maria and had been thrown back at great cost to the west of Santa Maria all the way to the Argentine border. That had been over four weeks earlier.

Now, the President could report that Brazilian forces had broken through the Argentine defenses in two critical places. While large Brazilian forces had held down the center of the line at Sao Borja, large reserve forces near Posadas to the north and at de los Libres to the south had attacked and broken through. They were now in the process of enveloping the defending Argentine forces who were retreating in a route back towards Corrientes on the Parana River in Argentina.

Efforts in Venezuela had also progressed well, although without the major gains and breakthroughs. Brazilian and American special forces were making steady headway down the upper Orinoco River along the Columbian border towards Puerto Ayacucho where large Venezuelan forces were massing to try and cut them off. As this was occurring, a successful amphibious operation had been conducted just south of Trinidad and seven divisions of regular Brazilian forces augmented by Canadian and exiled Australian forces were now advancing up the lower Orinoco River towards Ciudad Guayana. The President was confident that the allied forces would ultimately join up and there and cut off all of southern Venezuela and its natural recourses from enemy use.

But that was where any good news ended.

In Columbia itself, the capitol of Bogata had fallen and now COSAS and CAS forces controlled a line that extended along the northern Andes mountains, entering southern Columbia and becoming the Cordillera and Riental ranges extending north and east into Venezuela, circling up to the Caribbean Sea to the south of Caracas, Venezuela through San Juan and to the coast at Barcelona, Venezuela. Everything to the north and west of that line up into Panama was now firmly in the hands of the enemy. In the fighting that had resulted in those boundaries, over 3,000 American and 20,000 Brazilian troops had been cut off and captured. Intelligence, what little there was, indicated that their fate was not good.

As in North Korea and elsewhere in the warfare, soldiers and officers who were thought to have any useful intelligence were led away and never heard from again. The rest of the troops were pressed into forced labor operations that few survived. The few escapees that made it out painted the same grim picture all over the world, and it was no different here in South America. Of course, the fate of any female troops who were captured was markedly worse.

Further abroad, two major disasters had occurred. The first had been in Australia where American, Canadian, Australian, English and Brazilian forces had been driven from that continent. The outcome could have been much worse but for the heroic and miraculous evacuation that had saved the bulk of remaining force to fight another day. Almost 100,000 Brazilian troops, out of an original force of over 150,000, were now being re-provisioned and trained in New Zealand for the defense of that Island fortress and an eventual offensive back into Australia.

The second had been the failure of the Brazilian expeditionary forces originating out of Nigeria in Africa to advance north and eastward far enough to put the desired pressure on GIR and Chinese forces continuing to besiege Israel. Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and Gabon had all entered the war firmly on the side of the allies and offered their ports and their forces to ensure continued freedom and self determination in Africa. This was a welcome counter to the juggernaut of GIR nations, bolstered by hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops, that stretched from Morocco through Algeria to Tunisia, Libya, Chad, Sudan and Ethiopia.

To stand against those millions, the better part of them now gathering in Egypt to assault Israel, the allies had been able to field a mixed force of over 500,000 that had staged in Nigeria and then advanced into Chad near lake Chad. That force had included almost 200,000 Brazilian troops, 150,000 Nigerian troops and 50,000 troops from each of the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Gabon nations. Those forces had crossed Nigeria unopposed and entered Chad near Lake Chad, crossing the Chari River and attacking the capitol of Chad, N'Djamena. That city had fallen quickly and the force had advanced north and eastward quickly across the relatively flat savanna.

But as the force approached the more mountainous north eastern regions of the country in late April, they had been met by a combined GIR and Chinese force of over 750,000 troops that had been detached to halt their advance. The resulting battles between those two forces continued to this day. On two separate occasions, the flanks of the allied expeditionary force had been badly mauled, causing them to fall back. At the current time, American, English and Canadian forces numbering 200,000 were reinforcing the beleaguered expeditionary force and were preparing a counter-attack from their prepared positions around Abeche, Chad.

"So, to a certain extent, they have accomplished their mission because three quarters of a million troops had to be detached to stop them," thought the President as his introduction ended and as he stepped up to the podium.

"But we need those forces to break through and advance on the rear areas of those larger enemy forces surrounding American, English and Israeli forces in Israel for them to have had the overall desired effect."

As President Alfonzo Hermosa placed his hands on either side of the podium and leaned into the microphone, he began to speak.

"My fellow countrymen. My fellow elected leaders. Today I bring you a report on the state of our nation in these trying times. They are times of war, war like we have never known before, and despite two former world wars, war like this earth has never known before.

"God grant that it will soon end in victory for liberty. But, as it has not, it falls to me to report on the state of current events as they relate to our nation and to our people. Let me start by announcing some very good news ..."

As the President spoke, little did he realize that over 2000 miles away, events were unfolding that would directly and permanently impact his life and the life of every member of parliament listening to him... events that would also introduce another new and dangerous escalation to the overall conflict.

June 19, 2008, that same time

30° East Latitude, 15° South Longitude

South Atlantic Ocean

94 Class, PLAN 603 Ying

The third of the new Chinese ballistic missile submarines maintained a quiet, steady depth of 100 meters in the South Atlantic ocean with no headway, over 1600 kilometers off the Brazilian coast and over 3200 kilometers to the east of Brasilia, where President Hermosa was just starting his address. The first in the class, the PLAN 601 Zenim, had been destroyed by an American attack submarine during its sea trials in the South China Sea over a year ago. The second in class, PLAN 602, was currently operating in conjunction with the large CAS forces advancing on Midway Island.

Captain Xian Qian knew that his vessel, the Ying, was on as critical and as far reaching a mission as its sister ship. Here in the command spaces, he was going through the final launch sequence for ten of his twenty-four JS-3 intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Captain Xian knew that he had to "shoot and scoot", as the Americans would say, because the ballistic tracks of those missiles would lead any enemy acquisition radars or satellites, if the Americans had any up ... which the Captain had been assured they would not ... right back to this launch point. The Captain was sure, that with a successful fulfillment of his mission, that there would be an immediate and wide ranging search for his vessel.

This launch position had been chosen as the best trade off for distance to target and expected enemy

response time. On one hand, the Chinese did not want the Brazilians to have sufficient warning time to be able to avoid the impact of the missiles. On the other hand, they wanted to provide Captain Xian with every reasonable opportunity to make good his escape with his highly trained crew and very critical military asset in the Ying.

"5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Launch One, Launch One, Launch One," the missile launch officer announced loudly, but with professionalism.

The shudder of the resulting launch could be felt throughout the boat as the modified JL-3 missile cleared the vessels and rocketed towards the surface.

Within fifteen seconds a second missile was launched, then a third and fourth and so on until all ten had been launched and were in the air within two and a half minutes of the first launch.

"Make your depth 300 meters, course 78 degrees, all ahead full," ordered the Captain after the final missile had cleared the vessel.

As the Ying turned away and dove deeper into the depths of the Atlantic, the Captain held tightly to the stabilizing bar to either side of his Captain's chair and began counting off the seconds to himself and mentally tracking the progress of the missiles.

June 19, 2008, 09:20 local time

Joint Session, Brazilian Parliament

Brasilia, Brazil

With no warning, the head of President Hermosa's security detail rushed into the Parliament chambers and grabbed the President by the arm and began pulling him un-ceremoniously towards the exit as more security personnel fanned out around him, guns drawn.

There was immediate pandemonium in the chamber as the President's speech was so dramatically cut short and as elected officials stood and looked around them, wondering what was going on. Some began to shout questions as others began streaming towards the exits themselves. All of it was caught on film.

Just as the President's security detail reached the entrance immediately below and to the right of the podium, there was an immense shudder, followed by a tremendous explosion. Debris and smoke blasted into the chamber, blowing the doors from the opposite side of the room into the chamber along with the bodies and body parts of those who had been escaping in that direction. The pandemonium became terror as surviving legislators, their aides and officials scrambled away from the growing fire on that side of the building.

Ten seconds later, before the President's detail could get him out of the building, another blast occurred, this one not one hundred feet from the President himself. The resulting blast knocked down and dazed the entire detail, with several presidential aides and security personnel pinned under debris. The President himself was down and semi-conscious. He was just coming to his senses, trying to order his thought

regarding the source and extent of the attack when the third missile struck only twenty feet from where he lay. The last thing President Hermosa saw in life was the rapid, almost instantaneous advance of a firewall resulting from the missile strike whose concussion had just exploded his ear drums. None of the President's detail survived.

For the next two minutes, every ten seconds, more blasts occurred in and all around the parliament building, laying the entire structure and surrounding buildings to waste. Combined with the 500 kilogram warhead of high explosives, the immense speed of the warheads created, through kinetic energy, a literal hell on earth that washed over the entire area.

In the end, only fifty survivors emerged from the complex, where only a few minutes earlier over 1000 legislators, military leaders, newsmen, administrative personnel and security personnel had been gathered to hear the state of the nation address.

June 19, 2008, 19:30 EST

Nation-Wide Address

From the Oval Office of the White House

Washington, DC

"My fellow Americans, it is with great sadness that I address you this evening.

"Tonight we mark another causality in the terrible war that we are engaged in. It is a war against the most vile tyranny perhaps ever witnessed on the face of the earth. With velvet words our enemies attempt to hide and cover their horrid deeds where hundreds of millions are being robbed of their belongings, starved, enslaved and killed.

"Earlier today, our enemies struck again.

"During a speech to a joint session of his parliament, President Alfonso Hermosa was killed by an enemy missile attack on the Brazilian capitol of Brasilia. The attack targeted specifically the parliament complex during his speech. This was no coincidence or accident.

"The missiles were intercontinental ballistic missiles launched from an enemy submarine some 1000 miles off of Brazil's coast. All of us went through some very tense moment until those missiles impacted and revealed that they were conventional warheads of high explosive materiel. For a few moments, we had to presume that we were under nuclear attack. It was a very close thing and this is something I want to emphasize to each of our citizens and to the entire free world. Our enemies do not care the risks they take to inflict their tyranny on us all. It is something for which we must all be prepared and aware of in our continued fight.

"President Alfonso Hermosa was a patriot to his country and a friend to ours. He was a friend to liberty loving people everywhere and he will be sorely missed."

After the address, the President went immediately to the situation room where his entire national security team was gathered, short the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense and the head of FEMA. The executive leadership of the United States in all three branches was taking great pains to never be gathered in one place at one time. There were always enough leadership from the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Supreme Court and the Executive branch dispersed so they could pick up the pieces and continue should a decapitation strike like that executed against Brazil penetrate their defenses and succeed.

As the President sat down at the table, flanked on either side by close advisors, he opened the meeting, turning to his Secretary of State.

"Fred, give us brief rundown on conditions in Brazil."

Secretary of State Reissinger, who had been in touch with the American Ambassador to Brazil throughout the day, immediately proceeded.

"Mr. President, it is only by a miracle of circumstances that Ambassador Charles was not at the Brazilian parliament and himself a casualty. He indicates that the Vice President of Brazil, Henrietta Maldenado, has already been sworn in and is meeting with the military leadership this evening.

"For anyone not knowing this stalwart lady, the name Margaret Thatcher will probably inspire the closest match as to her capabilities and her demeanor. The CAS and GIR have not done themselves any favors here. Brazil, if anything will be more committed and tenacious after this attack."

The President replied.

"Okay, thanks Fred, please set up and schedule a conference call between myself and President Maldenado as soon as possible. I'll want to pass on my personal, and the nation's condolences, and commit our unwavering support.

"Now, as to other issues, despite the advances and success we have had in Central America, here and here on our own shores with our counter terrorism efforts...and in apparently holding the GIR at arms length around Israel, we continue to face mountains of bad news, not the least of which was today's loss in Brasilia.

"General, please, once more, let's confirm these facts. We no longer have an advantage with stealth, we no longer have the advantage of having the only viable ballistic missile defense, our naval power continues to be largely negated and our advantage in space with satellites and surveillance remains virtually negated. Am I missing anything here?"

General Stone, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, paused briefly as he prepared to answer his commander in chief. The Chinese, with the massive infusion of cash and technology during the 1990's and early 2000's, and with the massive resources now available to them as a result of their conquests, had accomplished what no one would have believed possible only a few short years ago. They had caught up to the United States in several critical areas, areas critical for the United States force projection and ability to bring advanced technological weapons systems to bear against the massive numbers of the People's Liberation Army.

"Mr. President, what you have stated is essentially true.

"The Chinese have developed a stealth acquisition and targeting capability and are deploying it around their critical infrastructure. We must assume, as they produce more of the devices and technology, that they will put them in the field and export them to their allies. We were made aware of the potential of this sort of thing from one of our most valuable human intelligence assets just before the device went operational. Director Ballard has already briefed us on all of that. Since that time, in several operations into the PRC with our stealth aircraft, we have lost several of them to this new system. One of our most capable HR-7, Thunder Darts conducting surveillance over the research facility itself, and two B-2 bombers a few days later trying to destroy that same facility.

"There is no doubt that they have an operational capability that is anti-stealth. We know from earlier efforts on their part and our experiences with it, that they have been pursuing this for some years.

"As to their anti-ballistic missile capabilities, the demonstration that the Chinese provided to the Russians, which we all monitored, speaks for itself. The Chinese ballistic missile defense rivals our own. In one key area they are ahead of us. Our platforms are sea-borne and stationary. There's are mobile with their ground forces. We must also assume that they either already have, or soon will have these systems available on their capitol ships.

"Finally, today's attack on Brazil punctuates the parity the Chinese have gained in space. Their ability to knock down our satellites, with the exception of two newer gyro-synchronous units watching the CONUS, were apt demonstrations of what they can do when we can't watch.

"In this case, even if we had watched, short of two or three AEGIS TBM units around Brasilia, we would not have been able to prevent it."

As General Stone said this, the National Security Advisor, Bill Hendrickson, interjected.

"Well, General, we would have at least given President Hermosa more time to exit the facility if we had been able to monitor the Atlantic with satellite surveillance, and why not put two or three TBM units there. We have considered offering it to the Russians, why not to all of our allies?"

Bill said this as he turned to the Secretary of State, Fred Reissinger, addressing the last point to him. That resulted in a fifteen minute discussion by the Security Council regarding this very point. In the end, it was decided to do exactly that. Every allied capitol that desired one would receive three AEGIS TBM ground units, manned by American personnel, where immediate facility security would be provided by US forces and overall security would be provided by and coordinated by the host nation. In light of the new threat, they decided to offer the same thing to the defense of Moscow, reversing an earlier decision.

After reaching this decision, the President turned back to his NSA.

"Bill, what do we make of the Chinese use of conventional ballistic missiles from their submarines. How long do we believe they can sustain such operations and will they do so with their land based weapons."

This question had provided Bill Hendrickson with a quandary. He had thought about it, analyzed it, talked it up amongst the military war college people, the think tanks and the NRO personnel all day.

"Mr. President, it was a surprise ... another surprise from the Chinese. We of course have converted and put to good use several of our own SSBNs, turning four older Ohio Class SSBNs into SSGNs using an insert that holds four cruise missiles for each former nuclear missile.

"This gives us an enormous amount of cruise missile from each vessel, but the cruise missiles are much

slower and have less range than these ICBM's.

"What the Chinese have done is convert actual ICBM's into conventional attack missiles ... missiles with very long range, with very high accuracy and with hypersonic speeds. We have not considered this because of cost, and particularly now with the PRC TBM capability.

"Apparently the Chinese do not have the same concerns. We must assume that if they will do it with their submarine launched missiles, that they will do the same with their land launched ones. They are clearly attempting to use their assets to maximum effect with playing to our strength, which is of course our nuclear capability."

As the President contemplated this reply, an aide entered the room and whispered something to the Director of Homeland Security, Stewart Langstrom, who in turn had a brief conversation with the Attorney General of the United States, Dean Byron Hull.

As they finished, Stewart addressed the group.

"The visit to WNN is being conducted as we speak, David Krenshaw will be taken into custody within the hour."

A somber group of faces greeted this news. All of them were happy to hear it. All of them were also concerned at how the news might be used by the political opposition at a time that was increasingly desperate for American and allied forces. All of them knew, from their briefings, that it had to be done. David Krenshaw was considered by this group as one of the most dangerous, most damaging and highly placed traitors in the history of the nation. Now that his personal connections to the Red Chinese were confirmed, his slant on the news and efforts in the CIR on behalf of his mentors in Red China had caused untold damage to the allied cause, and cost untold lives.

The President had ordered that the indictments against Krenshaw be unsealed, but that any actual evidence remain sealed until the trial itself. Many here at the table had opposed this because the indictment itself would reveal too much on how the data had been gathered, both technologically and from a human intelligence standpoint. But the President had been firm, sensing the political firestorm that might ensue if such a high profile figure, one who was courting very powerful national and international figures both politically and on the vaunted Council on International Relations, was whisked away and held essentially incognito under the various national security and counter terrorism acts currently in place, without any indication as to the charges and evidence against him.

Those acts allowed the President to arrest and hold any suspected terrorist or anyone who was viewed as a risk to national security in just such a fashion...and only the prosecutors and the judge were required to be privy to the charges and the testimony and the evidence. Not even the defendant's defense attorney, if the defendant could even obtain one, were allowed access under those special circumstances.

President Weisskopf did not agree with those provisions of those Acts of Congress. They had been passed before his time in the wake of the 9-11 attacks and during the War on Terrorism that had followed. They were still in place, and although he had carried much influence in advancing legislation that was rooted in traditional American values and intent, he had not been able to dislodge those particular provisions of those acts. He had to admit, as much as he hated it, he had also found it necessary to approve their use against such enemies as Manuel Mendoza and Hector Ortiz. But those had been foreigners, living in this country. What the President considered spies who should be summarily executed ... and if the President had his way, they would be.

"But I'll be damned if I will approve all of those measures against U.S. citizens under anything but martial law conditions, even one so brazen as this Krenshaw" thought the President.

"We'll hold him and we'll apply a lot of the provisions that are appropriate. But release the grand jury indictments and allow his defense council some access."

After looking around the room, he continued.

"This is great news and we should all stay up to date and informed. Dean and Stewart, are you going ahead with the press conference regarding this tonight?"

The Attorney General and Director of the Department of Homeland Security both indicated that they were scheduled to be on the air at 10:30 PM Eastern Time, in time for the late local news from the Central to the Pacific Time Zones and in a broadcast that would be carried live on every major network, including WNN. Dean Byron Hull responded.

"All of the other network CEO's are appalled at the overwhelming evidence in the indictment we have shown them and are cooperating to the max. The WNN executives were very standoffish at first, but after seeing the indictment they have reluctantly come around. We will lay out a lot of the overview of the case in our press conference."

Norm Weisskopf was satisfied. His one concern had been that WNN would continue to spin things after Krenshaw was taken into custody, that Krenshaw had somehow built up an entire team of enemy sympathizers within the network. Hopefully, it was turning out that this was not the case.

"Great. Get Mr. Krenshaw arraigned and held without bail as soon as possible. I want the government to go for the maximum penalty in this. David Krenshaw needs to be made an example of, justice calls for it and our enemies must see what becomes of their efforts in this regard."

The maximum penalty under the anti-terror laws for the crimes of treason, abetting enemies and conspiracy during a time of war that Krenshaw was charged with was death.

"Now, General Stone, before we close and give Stewart time to complete his preparations for this evening's press conference, please lay out for everyone the current timing and disposition of our upcoming operations in the Caribbean ..."

June 22, 2008, 23:52 local time

PLAN Amphibious Assault Ship Chongqing

800 kilometers West of Midway Island

Central Pacific Ocean

Kao Pham once more prepared himself mentally and physically for combat. This would be his third

major engagement, the first two having occurred off of Taiwan and off of Australia. Each of those experiences had been a mad house of adrenaline rush, performing his duty like a robot, fear, and the wonder and terror at the unbelievable rapidity at which death and destruction rained down in modern combat. Each wave of an enemy attack produced the same results and Kao was amazed and thankful that he had survived to date. He had witnessed many of his comrades die in those engagements as other ships were ravaged and sunk right before his eyes.

Kao was now a senior NCO and the team leader for an entire battery of KS-2+ AAW missiles onboard the Amphibious Assault ship to which he was assigned. The KS-2+ was a significant improvement over the original KS-2 missiles that his vessel had carried upon her commissioning and initial combat. But as significant and as advanced as those new KS-2+ missiles were, he was even more excited about the training he would receive and the alterations that would be made to the Chongqing when they next visited port. The ship would be receiving both the new anti-stealth, *ta shih*, acquisition and targeting systems, and the new KS-3 missiles and the associated electronics to control them. A full section of their AAW missiles, one fourth of the total, would now be the KS-3 ABM variety. This was great news as far as Kao was concerned and he could hardly wait to learn how to use and maintain the new technology.

"Besides, that visit will be in the Tianjin shipyards and perhaps I will have some liberty to visit Dad and Mom," he thought as he monitored the activities of the four personnel under his direction.

Kao knew that several of the capitol vessels in this fleet already carried *theta shih* detectors and KS-3 missiles. He knew specifically that both of the large deck carriers had been outfitted with the provisions for them during their construction, the COSTIND developers being far enough along with each at the time to include them during the initial build.

Kao was anxious to see them in operation and particularly thankful for the added protection they would offer the entire fleet. He had seen what American technology was capable of and he wanted as much defense standing between his vessel and that destructive power as possible. These new systems offered a significant boost to what stood between him, his ship and his comrades and the weapons of the enemy vessels and aircraft.

"And we will not have long to wait until the Americans start targeting all of that destruction on us," thought Kao.

"In just a short time now, it will start," he thought as he glanced at his watch and prepared for the beginning of the Chinese assault.

It was 23:59:53. Zero hour for the commencement of the attack was 00:00:00.

Chapter 7

The Battle for Midway Island and the Invasion of Alaska

June 23, 2008, 00:12 local time

Midway Island

Bomb Shelter Facility Z-23B

7th Marine Division

Leon had just settled into his position in the bomb shelter facility when the impacts began. They had received very little notice, only three or four minutes just before the attack. He knew that there were many personnel who probably didn't get to their shelters in time and then there were those who were on duty in their prepared positions who had to weather the storm there.

Patriot missile batteries and the single land-based TBM Aegis site on the island provided a measure of relief, acting as a second line of defense behind the two TBM provisioned Aegis cruisers that were stationed with the fleet protecting the Island. Still, with the hundreds of missiles the Chinese had launched, more than 50% of them got through ... and the follow-on second wave of missiles were barely touched by the few remain missiles in the TBM and Aegis vertical launch cells.

The pounding went on for what seemed like an eternity. Leon could hear the explosions above him, he could *feel* the impacts through the structures around him. On numerous occasions he felt the impact through his feet, the reverberations seeming to bounce off the rock beneath him to reflect back up into the facility. What Leon didn't know at the time was that those impacts were coming from numerous ICBM missiles that had been converted to conventional munitions that were raining down with the other ballistic and cruise missile assault on the island.

Those missiles had specifically targeted the older bunkers that the Americans had built on the island in years past. Tonight, there were very few Americans taking refuge in those bunkers. Leon didn't know it yet, but the efforts ordered by General Atkins that so many of the Marines and GI's had literally cursed while they fulfilled them, had saved hundreds of lives ... perhaps thousands. The General, already a veteran of several other campaigns in the Pacific and recently promoted to command the land based defenses of Midway, had learned his lessons well. He knew that the Chinese had already "zeroed in" the location of most American facilities over the years leading up to the war. He had no intention of letting them take advantage of that information.

Upon taking command, he had ordered the entire contingent of thirty thousand ground based combat troops (a very tight fit on the island) to immediately put in motion his plans for constructing new bomb shelters, command and control and even storage facilities for the entire island. Although not all of them had been completed, and quite a few personnel had been forced to take refuge in, or fulfill their assignments in older facilities ... enough had been completed to house the majority of off duty personnel in new facilities where they would be preserved to help defend the Midway should the Chinese get through the sea and air defenses surrounding the island.

Later that morning they would all see how effective the General's foresight had been in the twisted and smoldering wreckage of those older facilities, and in the high casualty rates coming out of them. The remarks and attitude regarding General Atkins, from his lowliest foot soldiers through to his entire command staff, would forever be elevated to a level of profound respect, almost reverence, by those soldiers fighting on Midway Island ... regardless of what exact words were used in expressing it.

But not all facilities could be relocated or rebuilt. The airfield, many of the above ground facilities that serviced it and most of the defensive positions, were well known to the Chinese, irrespective of earlier intelligence. Bunker busting ICBM warheads made of hardened metal and very little physical explosive

were raining down on the airfield and those positions. Their impact were like miniature meteorites and the resulting energy transfers as those warheads penetrated rock, concrete and steel, were massive. From the horrendous sound to the massive reverberations that were being transferred through the walls of the facilities where other personnel had taken refuge, and being transferred through the ground itself, everyone knew that Midway Island was taking a beating.

"Well, I can sure see the difference between the Indians and the Chinese on how they assault an Island," Leon thought as he sat there with his comrades.

"The Indians took their time over weeks to build up to the assault, where the Chinese are definitely into shock warfare," he concluded.

And he was right.

The Chinese had timed their assault to allow for the massive missile attack leading up through the very early morning hours. There was a planned thirty minute respite or lull in the bombardment at 0300 hours in the hopes of drawing the American repair crews and new shifts out to repair the damage, and it worked perfectly. The resulting death and destruction of the next barrage would make significant inroads into the saved lives that General Atkins construction efforts had produced. Many personnel were caught in the open as both Chinese missiles and aircraft broke through American defenses in that follow-on attack.

June 23, 2008, 02:58 local time

58 Miles off Midway Island

Combat Information Center

U.S.S. George Washington

Admiral Larsen was the commander of all naval forces tasked with the defense of Midway Island. He commanded a formidable task force, but he knew he also faced a very formidable enemy, as this morning was already demonstrating.

"One thing we can thank our lucky stars for," thought the Admiral, "is the SUBT CIWS that have been deployed in this task force."

The U.S.S. George Washington was the first carrier to be retrofitted with the system. Similarly, the U.S.S. Bataan was the first Amphibious assault ship to be so retrofitted. Along with the George Washington and the Bataan, the Admiral also had several Aegis class destroyers that mounted the SUBT CIWS. All told, the Admiral had a total of seven vessels mounting the new weapons system and he hoped and prayed it would be enough.

Along with the U.S.S. George Washington battle group, the Admiral had the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt battle group and two Amphibious assault ships that had been converted to the role of Sea

Control carriers. One of these was the U.S.S. Bataan and the other was the U.S.S. Wasp. Each of his large carriers were carrying an air wing that was comprised of a slightly different mix than those on the carriers that were defending New Zealand. His air wings consisted of a higher number of FA-18/F aircraft capable of either air superiority or attack and maritime strike roles. The Admiral expected to apply them with extreme prejudice if he got the chance...and he would get that chance.

The sea control carriers on the other hand, carried more aircraft with which to defend the fleet, and the admiral planned to use them in that principle role, providing CAPs close in as part of the inner ring. Comprising air wings of 4 AV-22 Osprey, 2 of the new E22B Osprey AEW aircraft and 18 A/F-35B VTOL Joint Strike Fighters, each, the Admiral felt he could maintain very strong inner ring CAPs of between fifteen and twenty aircraft at any one time. The larger carriers would provide any barrier CAP missions necessary.

All told, when combined with the ASW helicopters deployed on many of his escorts, the Admiral's order of battle consisted of over 172 combat aircraft suitable for air defense and strike roles and over 75 aircraft for support and ASW warfare. In addition, he was supported by the over 200 U.S. Air Force aircraft on Midway Island itself. There, he had a mixture of F-22, F-15C, F-15E, F-35A and Air Force AEW, ECM and refueling aircraft.

The large displays in the CIC were being fed by both the Navy's multiple E-2C Hawkeye and the new vertical takeoff E22B AEW aircraft. The Air Force's E-3 Sentry aircraft currently monitoring the air space over and around Midway Island was also feeding into the system. These aircraft were directing the air defenses which were now alert and up in the air over the battle groups and the island, and that were stationed out along the principle threat axis represented by the missile tracks that had been coming in for the last three hours.

"I hope and pray it is enough," the Admiral thought as he watched the threat "board" displayed on the largest screen at the front of the room. There, he could plainly see the diminishing number of vampire returns emanating from off to their west. Although many of the lower speed and lower level cruise missiles had come in from several directions, and although the ICBM tracks were clearly from greater distances, the shorter range ballistic missiles were easily tracked, with fair precision, back to their launch points. Those points were clustered in two principle areas a good four hundred miles further to their west and southwest. His air defense aircraft were up along both of those lines. His strike packages were just launching now to seek them out. But he knew he could very likely expect company of his own behind these missile barrages.

Turning to address the commander of the George Washington, the Admiral said, "Captain Bastian, what is the latest on the operational status of the SUBT CIWS on the George Washington?"

"Green board, ready for action sir," the Captain replied.

"Good," the Admiral said, and then continued.

"Between the George Washington, the Bataan and the Burke's, we're going to have to be ready to ward off a heavy Killer Whale attack at some point. The tide of this entire battle, and perhaps the war is going to turn on that."

As the Admiral watched the radar returns begin to indicate many new bogeys approaching from the west behind the last missiles, the Admiral was not aware yet that he was entirely correct in his assumptions regarding the battle for Midway, but incorrect regarding the overall war effort.

The overall war would hinge on other, even more significant developments taking shape well over two thousand miles to his north.

June 23, 2008, that same time

100 Kilometers Northeast of Uelkat

Eastern Siberia near the Bering Strait

"The weather in this forsaken country is cold even in the middle of summer," thought General Wu Tsing as he entered the command facility that had been set up here near a small inlet along the Gulf of Anadyr. With a howling wind of over 40 knots, a temperature in the mid thirties and thick cloud cover that was spitting sleet and snow, the current weather system was exactly what the operation needed to help cover it. The forecasters were expecting heavier snow showers later that day that would continue through the next several days, both here and moving east over the Bering Strait and into western Alaska.

"The cold, clouds and snow may be uncomfortable, but it is exactly what we have hoped for . . . and as cold as it may get, it cannot begin to cool the fire that is burning within our forces now," General Wu concluded to himself as his intelligence officer started the meeting.

The General and his forces were poised in eastern Siberia to strike to their east. They were there as a direct result of the Siberian Economic Development Treaty that the Russian Federation had signed with the Coalition of Asian States in April of 2005, well over three years earlier. As a result of that treaty, hundreds of thousands of Indian and Chinese workers had streamed into Siberia to help develop the vast resources that were still untapped in that remote, mountainous and evergreen wilderness.

One of the largest Chinese work sites had turned out to be a rich deposit of Coal and Iron Ore just to the west of Markovo in a remote area of eastern Siberia. The deposits were huge, but access was extremely limited. Russian and Chinese engineers devised a plan to build a large railway and superhighway directly to the area to allow for the rapid and heavy traffic into the site required to transport the materiel away from the facility and back to China in the quantities envisioned.

It had been a difficult project from the start.

The plans called for a four lane highway and a two line railway to run from the port facilities at Magadan eastward to Yamsk and then northward along the Kolyma Mountains to Gizhiga on the Gulf of Shelekhov. From there the road would make its way through the extremely rugged wilderness around the Omolon and Fenskina Rivers, using tunnels, steep grades, and huge excavations to reach the final destination of Markovo.

It had also been an ambitious project.

When complete, it would be one of the longest superhighways in the world. It would definitely be the most remote. Over 1000 miles in all, through steep mountains, deep forests, rugged coasts and along wild rivers that experienced some of the coldest winter weather on the planet. Over twenty thousand Chinese workers were brought in to complete the work which the Russians estimated would take well

over five years.

When the war with the United States began in March of 2006, only a year after work had begun, progress on the project had been made halfway up the rugged Siberian coast to Gizhiga, further than anyone would have estimated. By the time Siberia declared its independence in March of this year and fighting broke out in the western part of the country between Russian and Chinese forces, the Chinese workers had surprised everyone by being within 80 kilometers of Markovo.

There had been some set backs during the recent fighting. Russian units operating off of the Kamchatka peninsula had destroyed a number of bridges and tunnels along the roadway in late April before Chinese forces defeated the Russian forces at Petropavlovsk. With that defeat, and the elimination of any further Russian resistance in eastern portions of Siberia, the repairs had quickly been made and the road completed to the work site. There Iron Ore and Coal production was increased immediately to full capacity and tremendous volumes of the raw resources began to be trucked and trained back to the port at Magadan. From there it was loaded onto COSCO cargo ships and transported across the Sea of Okhotsk to Manchuria and the Chinese mainland.

But the railway and highway that now made all of that possible had never been intended for natural resources. It had been a nice bonus to actually find a rich deposit of Ore and Coal there in the eastern Siberian wilderness, a bonus the Chinese were exploiting to the max. But, some form of deposit would have been announced in any case to warrant building the roadway that was to serve an even more critical purpose in the overall Chinese war plans. . .the movement of large military forces into far eastern Siberia. . .right up against the Bering Strait for their ultimate mission.

That mission was the invasion of the United States of America through Alaska, and more particularly, the capture or destruction of the vast American oil reserves in the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge and at Prudhoe Bay.

This is what made the General so confident and bolstered the morale of the large forces under his command. They had followed their high command's instructions precisely according to the direction of the Politburo and Jien Zenim. They had completed the railway and highway and had painstakingly and secretly moved men and materiel in tremendous quantities to Markovo. They had staged them there in large, deep granite caves in the mountains which had been excavated during the mining operations as the roadway was being built.

Although the initial mining operations and the road building had been closely watched by the United States, the military buildup that followed had gone entirely unobserved as a result of the successful satellite warfare the Chinese waged against the Americans beginning in the late Spring of 2006. The few satellites that were launched now had very short lives and they were directed at immediate or impending military operational situations.

As a result of this, the most critical time for maintaining the operational security for the Chinese had come after the initial staging at Markovo was finished, when it came time for moving the massive numbers of men and their equipment further to the east towards Alaska. The closer they came to the Bering Strait, the more danger there was for discovery by American aircraft that ventured out over the Straits patrolling the far eastern portions of Siberia to ensure there was no danger to the continental United States lurking there.

In order to make sure the Americans did not discover the very type of plan that they were patrolling against, the Chinese had to implement the last portion of their grand strategy extremely carefully and with significant deception. The road and railway had been extended down the Anadyr River and over to the

northeast of Uelkat onto the Chukchi Peninsula to the very location where the General and his command staff now met.

During that extension and the troop movements that had followed, there had been many air raid warnings as American aircraft extended their patrols from both Elmendorf Air Force base near Anchorage and Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks out across the Bering Straits and over the Chukchi Peninsula in Siberia. As a result of careful Chinese planning and deceptions, none of those patrols had ventured far enough to the west to discover the large forces massing near Uelkat.

This was accomplished through well planned engagements and feints as more Chinese fighter aircraft were moved into the area. These aircraft began to challenge the American incursions. But they did it with patience and in a manner that matched what their intelligence had informed them was what the Americans expected to see. Intelligence wanted to ensure that the intercepts were carefully scripted as a back-water, non-important area of operations. That intelligence had been accurate. The Chinese showed the Americans exactly what they expected to see and no more.

In the ensuing engagements, all of the more modern SU-33 and J-10 aircraft were held well back. The Chinese used only the older, vintage J-7 and F-1 aircraft to intercept the Americans. The engagements almost invariably resulted in lopsided American victories with the Chinese aircraft scurrying further back to the west out of fuel range of the Americans, as they were expected to do. The Americans duly noted the increased Chinese air patrols, but reported that there was no need for concern because of the tactics of the enemy and because they invariably "*whipped them good*" whenever they encountered them

But all of that was changing this morning. Here and along the roadway back towards Markovo over 750,000 Chinese troops and their equipment were now poised, along with over six hundred high performance combat aircraft and five hundred transport aircraft. They were finally prepared to thrust across the Bering Strait onto the continental United States...a feat no invading army had been able to accomplish in the almost 200 years since the British had burned the capitol of Washington, including the original White House, in the War of 1812.

Tsing contemplated all of this in the first few moments of the briefing as he watched the threat displays in his command center facility fifty feet below the ground near Uelkat. What those boards showed him was an advancing line of over one hundred high performance SU-33, J-10 and F-5 aircraft now engaging an American patrol of six F-15 aircraft over the Bering Strait, well to the west of Nome, Alaska. The Americans were being swept aside.

Six more American aircraft that had escaped the ballistic missile barrage that pounded Eielson Air Base were advancing rapidly towards the scene of the lopsided fight. But as the personnel in the command facility watched, they began to turn away and vector to the south and east before engaging. Pointing to the clear indication of this on the display, the General got everyone's attention.

"Do you see how the follow-on American aircraft are turning away comrades?"

"They see the futility of trying to prevent what is currently happening and they are wisely trying to save those resources to fight us later, when they can better consolidate their efforts."

As the personnel nodded and the intelligence officer continued the briefing, their attention was turned to the rapid advance of the next wave of ballistic missile tracks now well in front of the fighter sweep. That second ballistic missile barrage, like the one currently going on against Midway Island, was a mixture of hundreds of shorter range ballistic missile mixed in with over two dozen conventionally armed ICBM's fired from their bases in Mongolia and Tibet. Those missiles were targeting the runways and infrastructure

at both Elmendorf and Eielson Air Force bases, and all of the major infrastructure and airfields around Nome and the Seward Peninsula.

Behind the initial fighter sweep were over two hundred attack aircraft making their way toward military and infrastructure targets in Nome and all along the Seward Peninsula and the western Alaskan coast as far east as the Yukon River where its flow turned from west to south near Koyukuk. Behind these attack aircraft and escorted by yet more Chinese fighter aircraft, were over four hundred transport aircraft and helicopters of all types progressing towards their landing zones. The largest portion of these would be landing in and around Nome. But a sizable portion would be landing at Koyuk on the coast of the Norton Sound and then making their way by helicopter to Koyukuk to secure that position on the Yukon River. All in all over fifty thousand Chinese troops were involved in the initial assault.

At this point, the sound of the intelligence officer's voice interrupted the General's thoughts.

"General, all current intelligence indicates that the Americans have been caught totally by surprise.

"Their civilian leadership and their military leadership, right down to the theater commanders, are apparently focusing on our advance and assault on Midway Island.

"Local forces in western Alaska are clearly unaware of and unprepared for the extent of our assault. We expect to achieve all of today's objectives on or ahead of schedule."

June 23, 2008, 03:25 local time

Alt Command Facility, Elmendorf Air Force Base

Anchorage, Alaska

The American Air Force General slammed his hand down on the table with a resounding *WHAM* .

Putting his face within inches of the face of the Captain in charge of the surviving communications facilities, he raised his voice several decibel levels.

"I don't care what you have to do, Captain. You get me a communication link back to the world and you *DO IT NOW!* Set up a relay if you have to with the remaining aircraft we have in the air...or use the commercial aircraft out of the Anchorage. I don't care how you do it, but I want to be talking directly to NORCOMM CINC inside of the next thirty minutes.

"*DO YOU UNDERTSAND ME?*"

Lt. General Paul Stokes was emotionally involved...in fact, he was *very* emotionally involved. He knew it, his gathering staff knew it and he didn't have the time or the inclination to eliminate the emotion from his voice and demeanor at the moment. There was simply too much happening and too much at stake

The 11th Air Force command was a shambles. Every runway had been holed...several times. Most critical facilities had been hit, some of them, like the Headquarters facility, had been completely destroyed in an instant, and many aircraft had been destroyed in place. The Major General who was the overall commander of the 11th Air Force was dead, along with many of the Air Wing commanders and other leadership. Lt. General Stokes, the deputy commander was now in charge and he simply had to get word of the full extent of the tragedy back to the NORCOMM and the Pentagon.

"Oh, they'll be figuring it out for themselves from those initial reports that went out before communications were cut off," he thought.

"But they have no idea of the full extent of things."

General Stokes, however, did have a good idea of the full extent of things.

The four ready alert birds that had gotten off the ground before the airfield had been shut down were now flying a beefed up escort for the single E-3 Sentry early warning radar and communications aircraft that was in the air. That Sentry had made a quick retreat back towards Anchorage when it was clear how overwhelming the attack coming out of Siberia was. The ballistic tracks had heralded the attack, but they were followed very quickly by the many, many bandits that the Sentry had observed coming in behind them, thirty of which had been vectoring directly towards the Sentry itself.

All six of the F-15 patrol aircraft the E-3 had been controlling over the Bering Strait had been shot down in the first five minutes of the battle as they valiantly placed themselves between the attacking enemy and the E-3 aircraft in order to buy the time for the E-3 to retreat back to the east. Their heroic fight had resulted in a good accounting for themselves as they shot down eleven of the enemy aircraft, but they had all sacrificed themselves in the process. The Sentry had not picked up any chutes or emergency transponders from any of those six aircraft.

The follow-on six F-16 aircraft out of Eielson Air Base near Fairbanks had turned away when they were ordered to provide cover for the E-3. Those six aircraft, along with the four ready alert F-15's that had gotten off the aircraft from Elmendorf attempted to create a strong barrier CAP between the Sentry and the Chinese who were going about their business all along the western coast and along the Seward Peninsula.

Whenever the E-3 tried to push its radar coverage further west, to get a better look at the Nome area, the enemy immediately dispatched twenty or more aircraft to intercept and a lopsided dogfight ensued. That had happened twice and each time the Sentry and its escorts had been forced to retreat, not being able to afford the loss of more fighters which would risk the loss of the E-3 itself. Already two of the F-16 aircraft and one of the F-15's had been lost.

Now, following Lt. General Stokes' orders, the E-3 was holding station halfway between Anchorage and Nome with its seven remaining escorts positioned between itself and the enemy at what was thought to be the extent of the enemy's fuel range. For now, General Stokes was content with allowing the E-3 to provide a good picture of the enemy's furthest line of advance. But he knew that as soon as the Chinese could land and refuel aircraft on this side of the Straits, that they would push their own air coverage ever further towards Anchorage.

The two attempts that the Sentry and its accompanying fighters had made to get a closer look at Nome had been sufficient to show the General that the Chinese were embarked on a full scale invasion of western Alaska. The many fast moving aircraft and the hundreds of larger, slower moving transport aircraft could only mean one thing, a huge air assault was occurring with thousands of Chinese troops,

perhaps tens of thousands, who were landing and occupying American soil.

The General had already spoken briefly with the commanding General of all ground forces in Alaska and with the Governor. A full mobilization of the entire Alaskan National Guard and every able-bodied individual had been ordered and was being announced on the Emergency Broadcast System, along with a complete military emergency declaration for the entire state. The Governor and the land force commander were trying to contact their Canadian counterparts over in the Yukon and Northwest Territory provinces of Canada to appraise them of the situation and to try and begin planning some form of joint, coordinated mobilization, but that would take time.

The U.S. Army had a total of two divisions of regular Army and National Guard troops in Alaska most of them deployed in a position to protect the oil reserves. But General Stokes, based on what he had seen, was convinced that it was going to take many, many more divisions to halt the Chinese incursion and then throw it back across the Bering Straits into Siberia. The Alaskan Governor had ultimately arranged a conference call to Washington using an un-secure land line so General Stokes could report his assessment, but before it could go through, the line had gone dead.

Now General Stokes and the Governor and other high ranking political and military leaders in Alaska were left with trying to patch something together so the word could go out. Stokes had convinced them all that this was the first phase in an even larger invasion across the Bering Strait and that it was going to take a massive mobilization here in Alaska and throughout the United States and Canada to contain it. The complete report of those conclusions simply had to get back to NORCOMM, the Pentagon and to the White House as quickly as possible.

June 23, 2008, that same time

Urkut Residence

Nome, Alaska

Unknown to Lt. General Stokes and the other 11th Air Force officers struggling to rebuild communications in Anchorage, a very complete and compelling report of what was happening in western Alaska had already been viewed by hundreds of thousands of Americans in the lower forty-eight states, and it had been viewed in real time. It would ultimately be viewed by millions and it would have the very effect that Stokes was hoping to create on the political and military leadership of the United States, and upon the people.

Stacey Urkut was a fifty-seven year old widow living outside of Nome on social security and on the savings she and her late husband had been able to stash away from twenty-five years of married life and his career in fishing. It wasn't much, but it allowed her to live comfortably here in her native homeland in a cabin located high on a mountainside on the Seward peninsula near Nome.

At a little after midnight, Stacey had been jolted awake by a terrible rattling of her entire house. At first she had thought that there had been an earthquake and she had immediately gotten out of bed and frantically thrown on some clothing to escape outside. While she was in the process of doing that, there was a tremendous explosion outside in the distance, followed in quick succession by three more.

"What on earth?" she had asked herself as she went to the window and pulled up the heavy winter shades and looked outside.

What greeted her eyes was a cloudy, very early morning in the land of the midnight sun. The cloud ceiling was fairly low, but looking towards the coast she could see a tremendous fire and pillar of black smoke rising into those clouds from the petroleum storage facilities on the outskirts of Nome. As she watched, she saw a brief streak of light in the clouds and a trail of smoke plummeting out of the clouds at blinding speed. The smoke trail pointed like an arrow into the center of town in the vicinity of town hall. It hit with a bright flash and she first saw ... and then heard and felt the resulting explosion as its concussion was transferred to her through the air, and through the ground.

While she continued watching in horror, other streaks flashed in the clouds and trails of smoke rained down on and around Nome, each resulting in a similar bright flash and explosion. Soon the sound was like continuous claps of thunder, building to a rolling wave of rumblings, punctuated by the tremendous crashes and rattling of hits closer to her home.

Stacey wasted no more time. She had a feeling she knew exactly what was happening. She went and got her digital camera and began to take pictures through her window of what she was witnessing. While she did so, she turned her personal computer on and waited for it to boot up. When it did, she quickly went through the practiced motions of dialing up to the internet and then logging on to her favorite site on the web, the Independent Republic.

On Independent Republic, which was a conservative news and discussion forum site, Stacey was known as Orka107. She had been a member of the web site for over seven years and had followed every major news story that had been reported on it. The discussions, or "threads" as they were known, allowed users of the forum to look at, analyze and discuss breaking news and the events of the day from every conceivable angle, posting their thoughts and comments individually to each thread. With over 200,000 registered users on the Independent Republic by 2008, all of whom were eager to read and analyze the breaking news of the day, the site had developed into a literal information treasure trove whose members kept a window to Independent Republic active on their computer at their homes, in their offices and on their laptops virtually all day long.

As a result of so many registered users and the even greater numbers of unregistered users (called "lurkers" on Independent Republic) all being online at any one time, a good number of the breaking news stories on the forum were in essence eyewitness, live accounts of events as they occurred. Many of these eyewitness reports were often posted before the major news services were even aware of their existence.

Stacey remembered several threads that she had personally been involved with where Independent Republic users had been on hand when very notable events had occurred, reporting on them as they happened. She remembered how caught up she and tens of thousands of others had been when reading about the Klamath Basin Water Crisis throughout the summer of 2001, or the horrific eyewitness accounts of the horrible attacks on the morning of September, 11th of 2001, or the many eyewitness accounts of the attacks on America in March of 2006 and the terror attacks within America that had occurred since. All of these, and many more, had been reported as they happened by users of Independent Republic. Stacey had never imagined that she would one day be making such a report herself, but today was the day and she was being thrust into that role by events beyond her control. But she knew from those other experiences exactly what she needed to do.

JT Sampson, the respected conservative editor and owner of the online SierraLines news service, also

knew what he had to do as he read the initial accounts being posted by the user named Orka107. He had good relations with many of the users of Independent Republic, and had used their eyewitness reports on many occasions to develop his own breaking news. The courtesy extended both ways as many of JT's subscribers, who were also registered users of Independent Republic, or "IR" as it was known by its users, would post JT's editorials and breaking stories back on Independent Republic for analysis and discussion. Upon reading Orka107's first thread, he called for all of his workers to hold the presses (so to speak) and began reformatting the main page to his SierraLines site.

As that happened, Stacey Urkut continued to do exactly what she had seen done in the past. She continued making the eyewitness accounts that JT and so many others were already reading. They were vivid and emotional on-scene reports, complete with color pictures that she was uploading from her digital camera, of what she saw...and those reports continued to flow from her keyboard as the very early morning hours progressed in Alaska.

Her reports would ultimately do more to arouse the American populace against the Chinese invasion than any other effort the American government or press would make. For over three hours, as the land line she was using miraculously held, her threads were picked up in the Breaking News section of the Independent Republic and viewed by thousands. Those thousands became first tens of thousands and then hundreds of thousands as the vivid JPEG images and riveting written accounts that accompanied them were emailed to the entire address books of everyone who was seeing them. The major media outlets began picking up the story but were unable to use their normal means to make reports. Their only alternative was to use the material being posted on the Independent Republic and then commenting on it.

Ultimately the number of direct viewers of the story on Independent Republic climbed into the millions and the event would be recorded as the single most watched story in the history of American internet media, so quickly did word of it travel by email and by phone that summer morning.

Stacey recorded the massive missile barrage directed at Nome and its infrastructure, the hundreds of missile impacts and the resulting damage and fierce fires. From her vantage point well up on one the mountain overlooking Nome, she also recorded the follow-on, high performance attack aircraft as they swooped in unopposed at low altitude to bomb and strafe Nome's small airport, the police station and many other facilities. The obvious carnage and destruction was appalling, but it was also engrossing and compelling and few of those watching could turn it off.

Users of Independent Republic discussed the lack of air cover over the Bering Strait and how this could have occurred. Immediately, many theories sprung up in the ad-hoc think tank that the Independent Republic had become over the years. These theories were always wide ranging...and in this case they ranged from a world-wide plot involving the American government to allow the United States to be over-run, to reports of perceived ineptitude of the current administration supposedly witnessed by the continuing string of military set backs, to the actual truth that a normally sufficient combat air patrol had been overcome by the overwhelming numbers of a massive Chinese surprise attack which had been masked by the lack of satellite coverage and the weather.

Whatever the reasons, more and more Americans were turning off the initial reports of the attack that were appearing on network TV and the radio, and turning on their computers as the emails and phone calls raced around the nation. There, on their computer screens, they watched in real time the horrific, world-shattering events unfold as Orka107 reported it on the Independent Republic web site the fateful morning of June 23rd...America was being invaded, everything had changed again!

The owner of Independent Republic, Rob Jamison, himself having seen the initial reports on his forum-and himself a veteran-recognized immediately the significance of the reports and spent the morning

valiantly working to ensure that the site could keep up with the tremendous growth in volume without crashing. He also answered the many phone calls coming in from news services asking him to share copyright or at least allow reprints of the data appearing on the Independent Republic. Within thirty minutes, Jamison had to stop answering the phone because the calls became too numerous and because his servers were in danger of overloading. He simply had to devote his full time and energies to keeping his system up and running.

Ultimately only one set of threads was allowed to run on Independent Republic that morning. All other stories, all other threads, all other services were put on hold and all traffic and resources were routed entirely to the several threads that Orka107 posted. It allowed the site to weather the bandwidth storm and it ultimately allowed the literally millions of Americans to watch the destruction and then the invasion of Nome, Alaska by the Chinese as it happened.

JT Sampson, having completely revamped his main page within the first fifteen minutes, mirrored all of the reports onto his news service site as the exclusive front page story, crediting Orka107 and the Independent Republic. Hundreds of thousands of more viewers saw the story there and they too passed it on to their friends and relatives who in turn passed it on to their friends and relatives in a cyber chain that spanned the continent ... and ultimately the free world.

Finally, towards 3 AM in Nome, the final comments from Orka107 were posted that morning. The last pictures she uploaded showed hundreds and hundreds of parachutes dropping out of the clouds into and around Nome. ... some of them landing uncomfortably close to Stacey's own cabin. Seeing this, many individuals posting on IR frantically told her to hurry and make her escape.

Those last images also showed dozens and dozens of transport helicopters hovering over and landing in the town and many attack helicopters, some of them strafing groups of individuals who were firing rifles at them, others launching massive multiple rocket attacks on unseen targets. As these last images of actual fighting between American citizens and Chinese invaders appeared in the final thread that she posted that morning, Orka107's last comments accompanied them.

"Well my fellow cybIR friends, this will be my last thread and last post. There's no time for more and as you can see, I have to be going.

It's really happened. As you can see from all of my pictures and comments this morning, and against all odds, the United States of America has been invaded. Tears are streaming down my cheeks as I write this. There are no words to adequately describe how this feels.

Just for the record, let me say this so my friends here on IR can all know who I really am. At times like these, pseudo-names aren't important anymore. My real name is Stacey Urkut. I am a native American woman who is 57 years old. The area around Nome has been home to me and my family for my entire life and for generations before me.

I may be older ... I may be a woman ... but I was taught by my father a long time ago about freedom and about faith ... the same freedom so many have taken for granted for so long ... the same faith that so many have lost. Perhaps I took those teachings for granted myself ... I don't really know and there's no sense fretting over it now.

You see, the time for talking is past. The time for senseless squabbling and worrying over meaningless issues like which mindless sitcom is the best or whose fashion reflects the best "look" of the current day ... all of that is past. For us here in Alaska, all that is left is to fight ... for our lives, for our homes and for our liberty.

You know, there was something else I was taught by my father and uncles ... and that was how to shoot. Several of you have known me here on IR for years. You have heard my talk in the past on the 2nd amendment threads of the old Winchester Model 1892 44-40 that my father left me and my dear husband, Tony, some time ago when my father died. Well, Tony is gone now too and I guess it's time to get that old 44-40 down from its place over the fireplace, get the shells Tony stored in the closet and step outside and try to make my way over to my nephew's trapping cabin. Please pray for me and don't hold it against me if along the way I use my Winchester to engage in very brief, very animated and very direct conversations with any of these Chinese visitors I happen to run across along the way.

Farewell my friends, remember us all in your thoughts and prayers!"

June 23, 2008, 8:32 EST

Situation Room, The White House

Washington, DC

President Weisskopf and his staff were silent as they too read the last comments Stacey Urkut posted on the Independent Republic that morning. The President's Chief of Staff had been contacted by his own wife one hour into the crisis while the technicians at the White House and the Pentagon were trying to re-establish communications with the 11th Air Force in Anchorage. Apparently the Chief of Staff's wife had gotten an email from her mother, who had received a phone call from a close friend who had in turn received a bulk email from a brother. And so it went.

The result had been that the Chief of Staff had entered the Situation Room and quickly displayed the appropriate thread on the screen. For the last two hours, interspersed with continuing situation reports regarding both the Midway and Alaska situations from his military, National Security and Homeland Security advisors, the President and much of his cabinet had watched and read the reports coming directly from Nome over the internet.

"That is one courageous American woman," the President commented after a few seconds.

"Whatever else happens, I want to make sure she is awarded a Medal of Freedom for her reports and actions this day ... and God willing, I'd like to meet her after this is all over and find out how those *conversations* went.

"But, my God! How did the Chinese pull this off without our knowing something! Admiral Crowler, what is going on up there with the 11th Air Force?"

Secretary of Defense Crowler looked down for a moment, and then responded.

"Mr. President, without satellite coverage and with the new Chinese capabilities regarding our stealth aircraft, we have had to pick and choose very carefully where and when we utilize those very expensive and very important resources. It doesn't help one iota in the current circumstances ... but you it is still the truth.

"General Layton maintained what we all perceived as a very strong CAP up over the Bering Strait twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Clearly, the Chinese have hidden a massive build-up in eastern Siberia from us, one we did not expect given all of their other offensives, particularly the one currently directed at Midway Island.

"When they came, we weren't ready for it.

"Now, General Layton is dead, the CAP was swept from the sky and Lt. General Stokes has got his hands full. That's the best I can report now of the cuff, Mr. President."

The President was sobered by those comments. He had not known until this moment that General Layton had been confirmed dead.

"Thanks, George, I was not aware that General Layton's death had been confirmed. Please pass my personal condolences on to his wife and family. We've been caught with our pants down and we're going to have to be more vigilant and maintain stronger security everywhere."

Turning his attention to the entire group, the President then continued.

"Alright folks, we have these two new monumental threats to face and we are going to have to quickly find a way to contain them and then turn them around. Let's start with the latest information that we have from the commanders in the field. Secretary Crowler, General Stone, what else do we have?"

The Secretary of Defense looked over briefly and expectantly to General Jeremy Stone, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who quickly nodded back to him.

"Mr. President, I'll let Jeremy fill us in on the latest communications. General Stone, go ahead."

The General placed both of his hands on the surface in front of him and then looked around the table. When coming to and meeting the President's gaze, he took a deep breath and began.

"Well, the action is continuing as we sit here in both places. We have now been able to get relayed transmissions from Alaska, and we are in direct communication with Midway Island.

"The Chinese are making two major offensive pushes to the east. As you know, one of them is at Midway Island that we have been expecting for some time. The other in western Alaska, as Secretary Crowler just mentioned, has taken us by surprise.

"Both represent critical threats to us strategically and directly. Midway would give the Chinese a strong position to defend against our approaches towards the massive consolidation they are building throughout the Pacific and Asia. It also would give them an ideal place from which to attack and perhaps invade Hawaii.

"Alaska is an even greater threat if what we believe is happening is actually occurring. From the pictures and reports from this woman in Nome, and based on the initial assessment from General Stokes in Anchorage, I believe we are facing that greater threat . . . a massive invasion of Alaska that can have but one aim, and that is the capture or destruction of our oil reserves in the Arctic."

With this statement, several of the cabinet members moaned or otherwise made disconcerting noises around the table. As the General continued to pause, discussions began to pick up amongst the various

cabinet members. The President interrupted it all by raising his hand, palm forward, and indicating that everyone should give him their attention.

Turning to his Chief of Staff, the President said, "Talbot, get the Secretary of Energy over here as quickly as possible."

Then, turning back to the General, the President continued.

"I am not sure of the exact numbers as of today, but in our efforts over the last three and one half years to become energy independent, I believe that the North Slope Reserves in the ANWR and around Prudhoe Bay make up about 20% of our current oil production. We've been able to lower the totals because of the increases we have made elsewhere, like in the new oil production off of the Pacific Coast and in our substantial increases in domestic Nuclear Power as a result of the Nuclear Regulatory legislation we got passed.

"Talbot, make sure that Secretary Collier brings those figures with him along with a complete estimate of production rates, forecasts and any other data related to overall production and consumption rates of oil.

"Okay General, please continue, we'll review the specifics of our oil situation when Secretary Collier gets here."

The General continued, going into detail regarding the current force structure in Alaska and around Midway Island. From the latest reports, the assault on Midway was continuing. An initial cruise missile attack launched by Chinese strike aircraft against Admiral Larsen's combined naval task force off Midway had succeeded in sinking two frigates, one Burke destroyer and damaging the U.S.S. Wasp, one of the Sea Control carriers operating in conjunction with the Admiral's Task Force.

"The hot on the Wasp was not mortal, but it produced many casualties and its flight operations are currently on hold until repairs can be made...but she is not in danger of sinking and they feel she will hold station just fine and be flight operational within ten to twelve hours."

The U.S. counter strike sent out against the Chinese task force had not fared well. The Chinese had apparently held back the majority of their air superiority fighters and met the U.S. Naval aircraft over 100 miles to the east of the Chinese main force. The resulting dog fight had caused many of the A/F-18F aircraft to eject their attack stores into the sea so they could defend themselves. As a result, the attack had not been able to be pressed home against the Chinese fleet. Fifteen American aircraft had been lost in the fighting along with over thirty Chinese fighters. As of last report, the two forces were continuing to probe for each other's exact location so they could launch more effective strikes.

In Alaska, not much more could be said than what they had already seen. General Stokes was requesting immediate reinforcement, both for his air forces and his ground security forces. Fighter wings and bomber wings from Seattle, Idaho, Montana and from North Dakota were already in the air over Canada en route to Elmendorf and Eielson Air Bases. Military and commercial air transport aircraft were already staging to fly reserve troops up to Alaska based on the major call ups that the President had just signed in the last hour.

The President would be making a national address to the nation at noon and there would be more call ups announced then, along with a clear explanation of the gravity of the situation.

At the conclusion of General Stone's remarks, the President asked.

"Jeremy, straight up...in Alaska...can we stop them?"

The General, as the President knew he would, responded directly, forthrightly and to the point.

"Stop them? Yes, Mr. President, we can stop them, and we will stop them.

"...but my guess is that it will be somewhere around Fairbanks, or perhaps even Anchorage. Depending on how well the enemy has planned and what type of transport he is bringing into Alaska, I think there is little chance that we can amass enough forces in time to save Prudhoe Bay or the ANWR oil facilities.

"Personally, I do not think we can count on this enemy not planning all of this very well in advance. I believe now that our oil is, and always has been, their main goal. They just masked it from us extremely well. We will do everything in our power to protect that oil and its production facilities, or to deny it to the enemy"

June 23, 2008, 12:37 local time

TU-22M Reconnaissance Regiment

250 miles Southwest of Midway Island

Colonel Win Chang checked his instrumentation and his heading. He was the commander of this entire regiment of TU-22M Backfire strike aircraft...except today they had no weapons whatsoever to *strike* with. Particularly no LRASD devices.

Each of his thirty-six aircraft had been loaded up with the most advanced detection and ECM equipment his nation had to offer and they had also been loaded up with extra fuel. In place of real weapons, they had all carried extra fuel stores which they had ejected from their aircraft as they passed the general area of the two Chinese fleets. They also carried very convincing decoy Yakhont missiles that would draw American missile fire.

Then, only a few minutes earlier, one of the aircraft in the northern most formation had detected the telltale signs of American transmissions and Aegis radar signatures. The Colonel had communicated to the entire Regiment what their orders would be for the final phase of today's mission. The entire Regiment turned to the north. Based on the triangulation he had received from the surveillance version of the LRASD devices that had been seeded in the waters around Midway by the Chinese fleet, the Colonel had a fair idea where the main American formations had to be located. He knew this by where that formation was not located, and based on the location of several small groups of American ships acting as pickets for the main force that the surveillance devices had located.

The Colonel had already rejected two earlier Aegis radar detections by his aircraft as decoys based on this same strategy. He was convinced that those two readings were nothing more than the Americans trying to draw him and his comrades into attacking smaller Surface Action Groups (SAG) that the surveillance units had already located. But the Colonel was committed to not wasting their LRASD devices and remaining Yakhont missiles on decoys today.

"No my American friends, that hole in the water to the north where we are getting the least Aegis signature is where I believe you are, and now we are going to put that premise to the test."

The Colonel's plan called for thirty of his thirty-six aircraft to delay for fifteen minutes before going to afterburner and attaining their top speed of just under Mach-2. They would then approach the potential location of the American fleet at high altitude and with all of their countermeasures active. With full counter measures and with their high speed, the Colonel was hoping that some of his aircraft would find the Americans and be able to conclusively report their position back to the Chinese fleet and to those other six aircraft that would not be taking part in the mock frontal assault on the Americans. At the same time, when he found the Americans all thirty of his aircraft would launch their decoys, thereby capturing the full attention of the American task force.

It was time to go to full afterburner ... now!

While all of this was happening, the other six aircraft had already gone to extremely low altitude, less than 100 feet above the waves, and were circling the perceived American position towards specific coordinates on their digital terrain maps.

June 23, 2008, five minute later

CIC, U.S.S. George Washington

100 miles West of Midway Island

"I have multiple bandits to our south approaching at high speed and high altitude. They just went active with counter measures. Vectoring Reaper Flights One and Two to intercept."

Upon hearing the report from the AEW defensive officer on the E-2C aircraft to the south, the Captain of the George Washington took it in calmly, but the calm was an outward expression born of long experience and years of training. He and the entire Task Force had been expecting the attack at any time ... but nothing punched you in the stomach or wrenched your gut like the hard cold reality of having it happen.

"Launch the ready alert birds.

"CAG, get me more birds on the deck and ready to go.

"Commander, inform Admiral Larsen and ask him join us here."

As Captain Bastian was issuing these orders, the defensive operator in the E-2C spoke again through the speakers.

"I have multiple separations, I repeat, multiple separations from the bandits.

"Vampire, vampire, vampire! Count now up to thirty-seven and climbing."

Bastian, who had been a consummate student of the after action reports of the other engagements with the Chinese throughout the war, quickly issued more orders.

"Overseer-3, continue to vector Reaper One and Two at the enemy aircraft. I repeat, have them go to afterburner and engage those aircraft and drop as many of them as possible. Have both outer ring and inner ring missile defenses go to auto and free fire.

"Stay on your toes people, this is where they normally start throwing those Killer Whales at us. Make sure every threat axis is covered by Doppler radar right down to the waves. I don't want any other aircraft penetrating at low levels anywhere close to this task force!"

The Captain was wise in his preparations and he was correct in his assumptions. This was the time that the Chinese normally pressed home their LRASD attacks with either low flying aircraft or with surface units that had launched an earlier, coordinated attack.

But today, there were no low flying aircraft. The TU-22M simply did not have the range to carry the heavy LRASD all the way to Midway Island, perform an attack and then return to base, the nearest of which was far to the west at Wake, Island. The Chinese also did not have the precise location of the main American task force so there was also no coordinated attack coming in, at the moment.

Just the same, Captain Bastian was right. This *was* the time the Chinese always pressed home their LRASD attacks on American fleets...and today would be no different.

June 23, 2008, 12:37 that same time

TU-22M Reconnaissance Aircraft

150 miles west of Midway Island

As soon as Colonel Chang's aircraft had picked up definite readings indicating the American main task force, they communicated the location of that grouping to the six lower altitude aircraft by digital, encrypted data link. They also communicated it back to the main Chinese fleet.

The six lower level aircraft were anywhere from fifty to seventy five miles out from the outer ring of escort vessels that were protecting the main American task force. Each one had come within one to two miles of the specific coordinates they had been ordered to proceed towards. After receiving the location of the American task force, each aircraft's electronics officer quickly programmed that location into a special encryption and translation algorithm that communicated the information to three small devices each aircraft was carrying under its fuselage. Once the information was downloaded into these devices, each device was released from the aircraft at three second intervals as the aircraft circled the position they had been sent to. After this was accomplished, the aircraft turned away to return to base.

Each device dropped by the aircraft deployed a small parachute and quickly dropped the 100 feet into the water. Upon landing in the water, each deployed a ten meter long, thin antennae into the ocean and transmitted the coordinates of the American task force in a low power transmission that was detectable no further than three miles from the transmitting device.

In each of the six positions where these TU-22M aircraft had dropped transmission devices, eight loitering LRASD devices picked up the transmissions, processed the data and turned on their conventional propulsion. They then dove to a five hundred meter depth and proceeded toward the projected intercept points for the American task force between fifty and seventy-five miles away. Quickly reaching their cruising speed of fifty knots, forty-eight LRASD devices were inbound to the American task force.

June 23, 2008, ten minutes later

CIC, U.S.S. George Washington

100 miles West of Midway Island

Admiral Larsen was perplexed by the seemingly ineffective and disjointed nature of the Chinese attack. Something just wasn't right. Turning to the Captain of the George Washington, he motioned for him to follow and they stepped outside of the CIC

"Ken, let's talk for just a minute.

"What do you make of what we just witnessed over the last ten minutes?"

Ken Bastian, relieved that none of the sixty cruise missiles that the enemy had launched had reached his ship, and particularly relieved that there had been no coordinated Killer Whale attack, took a minute to digest the Admiral's question.

"Well, Admiral, I believe it was an attack that was poorly executed by the enemy. I kept waiting for the other shoe to fall ... but it never did."

Nodding, the Admiral responded.

"Exactly Ken, the other shoe never did fall. Why?"

"When have you known, or read in the course of this war of the Chinese conducting such a miserable attack? Do you honestly believe that in the midst of an operation like this they would be so inept?"

The Captain, who had read every after action report of every sea battle during the course of the war knew the answer.

"The answer is that they never have Admiral. I can't explain it.

"All of those cruise missiles they fired were duds ... every one. They did not travel more than ten miles before each and every one of them dropped into the ocean and those Backfires turned tail and ran... and I am glad they did. We downed sixteen of those TU-22M's without loss.

"So, although I can't explain it, I'm grateful it turned out that way."

The Admiral appreciated the Captain's relief, but he sensed ... no, *heknew* that something was wrong. Then it started to come to him.

"But Ken, what if that was exactly what was supposed to happen?"

"What if those were not real cruise missiles and that whole thing was not a real attack... what then? What does that tell you?"

Both men stared at each other for a second with dawning realization.

"Well, it would mean that they meant for our attention to be focused on those TU-22Ms and the missiles they were launching at us, while they ..."

... and then the Captain rushed back into the CIC with the Admiral hard on his heels.

As they came into the room, the Admiral began issuing orders.

"Captain, Commander, I want all of the SUBT CIWS capable vessels to quickly close up tight around the George Washington, the Wasp, the Roosevelt and the Bataan. Formation Charlie. Get the Perry's and the S-3's in position. We can expect a Killer Whale attack at any time."

"Maintain General quarters and threat condition Zebra on all vessels."

June 23, 2008, twenty-five minutes later

U.S. Naval Task Force

100 miles West of Midway Island

It took a good twenty-five minutes for the SUBT CIWS capable Burke destroyers in the formations to dash over to the capitol ships and surround them according to their new orders. Within that circle of capitol ships, the Washington and the Bataan, with their own SUBT CIWS were on the major threat axis while the Roosevelt and the Wasp were shielded by them and two "goal tender" SUBT CIWS capable Burke destroyers also positioned within the inner circle. The four capitol ships were all running approximately one quarter of a mile apart while the ring of destroyers set up another half mile beyond that. Outside of that, the four Halsey frigates in the formation were setting up to run along both of the major threat axis and evenly spaced between the two. S-3B Viking aircraft roamed the area out near the Halsey frigates, some flying close to the waves, others at higher altitudes watching the surface of the Ocean for the signs of the approach of rocket powered LRASD weapons.

Just as the formation was completing its moves, the threat rang out from the co-pilot of an S-3 aircraft not six miles outside of the circle of defending Burke destroyers.

"Contact, contact, contact. Fast mover coming in at 273 degrees, speed accelerating past 200 knots! ... Now another ... and another."

Suddenly, throughout the combat information centers on board all of the ships in the task force, the same dreaded sounds, the same clear indication became apparent, Killer Whale devices were coming at the ships from six separate azimuths, and they were coming hard.

Many of the S-3 aircraft were not in a position to intercept the rapidly accelerating Chinese weapons. Three of the aircraft did make successful intercept with their specially configured and reprogrammed Mk-50 torpedoes. In one tragic engagement, the S-3 swooped fairly low and dropped its weapon directly in front of a Killer Whale that was running fairly close to the surface. Upon impact of the Mk-50 with the water, somehow the mammoth warhead on the Chinese weapon exploded and the blast and rising water reached out and impacted the tail of the S-3 before it could completely clear the blast radius. The impact damaged the tail severely and the aircraft flew on for several hundred yards with the entire tail assembly canted at a slight but noticeable angle to the left of the aircraft. Then the tail simply fell off the stricken S-3 and the aircraft plunged into the ocean, killing all on board.

Now, forty-five Chinese weapons were penetrating the ring of four Halsey Class frigates surrounding the task force. Only two were in a position to intercept any of the devices, and only one of those had its towed, reactive explosive system fully deployed. That frigate was positioned in front of half of one of the Chinese LRASD groups and exploded four of the weapons in a awesome cascade of four powerful explosions that severed the remainder of the towed defensive cable. The second FFG in position to intercept any devices was able to detonate two more Killer Whales before being struck itself by a third, which hit it forward, directly under its missile launcher. The impact detonated the missile magazine and the entire forward portion of the FFG was blown off causing the frigate to immediately slow in the water and settle quickly by what as now a jagged and ruined bow. Within ten minutes that vessel would sink with the loss of over 150 personnel.

A this point, throughout the task force, cries of "Vampire, vampire, vampire" rang out from controllers in AEW aircraft, from fighters in the CAP and from the Combat Information Centers of the various ships. Upon determining the American task force position, the Chinese had executed another cruise missiles attack and now over eighty Yahkont and Sunburn missiles were approaching the American position.

But thirty-nine LRASD weapons also remained and were now approaching the inner circle of escorts, and this is where the latest advances in American technology paid off.

Five of the escorts in the inner ring were Arleigh Burke destroyers that had been retrofitted over the past several months to the latest Block III designation, which, among other things, included the new SUBT CIWS system. Three of these vessels had been evenly distributed about the circle, particularly running in a line to protect the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt and the damaged U.S.S. Wasp, both of which did not themselves have the SUBT CIWS system. Within the inner circle itself, the Roosevelt was running abreast of the Bataan (which did have the system) and the Wasp was running abreast of the George Washington. In between both was another of the Block III Burkes, serving as a "goal tender".

As the devices approached the inner circle, they had already chosen their targets. Twenty-four of the remaining devices had sensed and chosen the larger ships in the inner circle to attack. Eight each on the larger carriers and four each on the smaller, Sea Control carriers. All of these had already gone deep to their attack depth of 800 meters from which they would rise at a steep angles to attack the capitol ships from underneath. The other fifteen devices chose various escorts running in the inner ring.

At the command of Admiral Larsen, the AEGIS system which could now control all of the standard anti-aircraft missiles on the various ships as well as the newer SUBT CIWS systems, was turned on to full-automatic, free-fire mode ... or "God" mode as it was known in the fleet. As the missiles screamed in

at low level and as the Killer Whales thundered towards their targets from beneath the surface, the AEGIS system began to methodically pick off missiles and Killer Whales.

The robotic like firings of the SUBT CIWS began to take effect on the advancing sub surface weapons while entire magazines of vertical launch cells were emptied at oncoming missiles. First one, then two, three, four, and five Killer Whales were destroyed with deadly precision and with telling, tremendous, geyser-like detonations that raised tons of water into the air around and through the inner circle. At the same time, first a Spruance class destroyer and then an Aegis cruiser were impacted by Chinese sub-surface weapons, breaking both of their backs and dooming both ships.

The Aegis cruiser, having just emptied more than half of its AAW missiles at approaching cruise missiles, was much more top-heavy than the Spruance destroyer. Its ends severed cleanly and they both folded high into the air and then slipped beneath the waves in a matter of only fifty seconds. Over 300 sailors were lost. The Spruance destroyer did not break entirely apart but it settled into the water and took twenty-five minutes to sink with a loss of 125 personnel

With six Aegis destroyers and two remaining Aegis cruisers, the American task force still had over 900 missiles to fire at the approaching Chinese cruise missiles, not to mention the total of 64 Sea Sparrow and 128 RAM missiles on the carriers. Nonetheless, the Russian engineers that had designed the Yakhont and Sunburn missiles, and the Chinese developers who had license built them and improved them, had built every conceivable bit of technology into them to avoid the capabilities of the American Aegis system. From low level, supersonic flight, to the latest ECM technology to high speed "jinks" in their flight pattern as they approached the American ships, these missiles were sophisticated and hard to hit and were designed specifically to penetrate Aegis defenses and hit American carriers. And they were designed well.

Still, the overwhelming number of anti-aircraft missiles the U.S. warships were able to launch, and the fact that the Americans had "bunched" their ships fairly close together for this engagement, told on the outcome. Only twelve of eighty missiles got through the Aegis ring. Seven of these were downed by a combination of Phalanx CIWS and RAM missile systems on the targeted ships. Five missiles did impact on U.S. ships in the heat of the battle. Another Halsey FFG was hit and went dead in the water, smoke pouring from a large rent right at the waterline amidships that killed sixty-three. The single Block IIA Burke Destroyer in the formation was hit by two missiles above the water line on the deck of the ship rendering its bridge a mass of tangled, smoldering and ruined steel and its helicopter hanger blown into a worthless pile of fiercely burning wreckage. Ninety-five more personnel were killed.

The last two missiles penetrated the inner ring and impacted on the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt. One missile punching a hole in the side of the big carrier just forward of and below the starboard, forward elevator and the other penetrating the flight deck and exploding in the hangar spaces toward the aft portion of the ship. Smoke billowed out of the penetrations as secondary explosions went off, particularly in the hangar spaces where several aircraft were being worked on. Large fire containment doors already in place as a result of the Zebra condition contained the fires in the hangar and the carrier continued on, losing no headway but having to shut down all air operations. The explosions and resulting fires snuffed out the lives of over two hundred American sailors.

As this was happening, the last seven LRASD weapons targeting escorts were destroyed and the capitol ships inside of the ring began to deal with the twenty-four devices rising from the deep. The sixteen available SUBT CIWS turrets available on the two carriers and the two destroyers performed perfectly. Very quickly, sixteen of the twenty-four weapons were destroyed without causing any damage to any of the vessels. But eight weapons barreled on. Four of these were destroyed as they targeted the Washington and the Roosevelt. One of those targeting the Roosevelt was destroyed a mere one hundred

feet short of the stern of the vessel. The resulting explosion did not penetrate the thick steel underneath the ship, but it did buckle several of the large, lower plates on the carrier, and it did warp one of her propeller shafts. She began taking on significant amounts of water and was slowed as a result.

Three more devices were destroyed by the U.S.S. Bataan and its "goal keeper" as they rose in a terminal attack phase against the big Amphibious ship turned Sea Control Carrier. Significant damage was reported as the last weapon, knocked off course by the detonation of the two in front of it, veered off course and actually broached the surface of the water seventy-five feet off the starboard side of the ship and exploded there. The blast killed ten men on deck and caused a secondary explosion in the hangar spaces through the elevator opening on that side. That fire burned for over an hour, destroying three F-35C aircraft and two helicopters and killing twenty personnel.

The very last device came up beneath the already damaged Wasp. Despite all efforts, this device was not intercepted and punched right through the stern docking well and exploded there. The aft portion of the hangar deck was destroyed and the aft flight deck was actually lifted and broken by the force of the explosion. Luckily, because the majority of the force of the explosion was expended in the already open and floodable docking well, the ship was in no immediate danger of sinking. But large fires burned out of control and there was a significant loss of life, over 400 all told.

June 23, 2008, 14:00 local time

CIC, U.S.S. George Washington

100 miles West of Midway Island

The attack was over. No more enemy units or devices were being reported., Time to count the cost and move on.

"Time to *Charlie Mike* as the grunts say ... Continue the Mission," thought Admiral Larsen as he rolled over in his mind the reports that were still pouting in.

The United States Navy had lost three escort ships, one of them a very critical Aegis cruiser. They had suffered severe damage to a Sea Control carrier another frigate and an Aegis destroyer, and suffered moderate damage to the Theodore Roosevelt. Significant losses to be sure, but far removed from the horrendous catastrophes that such large Killer Whale attacks had produced in the past.

With over 1350 personnel known killed at the present time, the positive aspects of the engagement were hard to see at the moment for most individuals, but Admiral Larsen was one who grasped them immediately, and saw that his ability to strike back had not been significantly compromised. He still had two super carriers that would be capable of launching full strike packages within the hour, he still had several destroyers and two cruisers capable of launching major cruise missile attacks and he had an island full of aircraft capable of attacking the Chinese as well.

Of great import was another recent development. During the battle, one of the Global Surveyor surveillance aircraft had located the Chinese fleet and communicated its exact position back to American forces on Midway and here in the waters west of the island. It was still shadowing the force and had not

been detected. The Admiral was anxious to take advantage of that information.

He had already ordered a large strike at sea package to be prepared on board both the George Washington and the Roosevelt and he ordered those strike packages to be launched as soon as possible. In addition, his staff had coordinated with the Air Force commander on Midway and a large strike force had already launched from the island. Over 200 American aircraft were going to be visiting the Chinese and they would be accompanied by a cruise missile strike from his ships that would number close to two hundred missiles as well.

"The Chinese have no idea what they have created here today with the losses they have inflicted on us," thought the Admiral as he monitored the preparation of the strike.

"But they're going to find out, they are surely going to find out."

June 23, 2008, 15:52 local time

Admiral's Cabin, PLAN Sun Tsu

500 miles West Southwest of Midway Island

Yao Hsu read the reports on his computer screen as he took a few moments to wash his face and try and freshen up. He had been up for over thirty-six hours straight and was very tired. He hoped to be able to catch a few hours sleep now as surveillance revealed to them the damages they had inflicted on the Americans and as they prepared for their next attack.

Over the last hour, four aircraft had attempted to penetrate the American Task Force defenses which had turned to the northeast trailing heavy smoke. Although none of those aircraft had gotten near enough to positively identify the remaining American ships and thus discover their current disposition and capabilities, the Admiral was convinced from the digital images he had seen that his attack had damaged them severely. He believed this because of the number of LRASD weapons he had been able to maneuver close enough to attack them, and because of the amount of smoke they were trailing and that still hung in the air at the site of the attack.

Nonetheless, that the Americans were still capable of continuing operations was clear due to the fact that none of his surveillance aircraft had been able to get close enough to make a positive count. The Americans still had far too many patrol and defensive aircraft in the air. Three of his surveillance aircraft would not be returning. This left enough doubt in Yao's mind to keep him very wary. He would not underestimate the Americans...except that he already had.

With his UNREP group approaching, Hsu had given orders much earlier in the day to split his forces and send one group after the remaining American vessels and have the larger group now focus on the island itself. He was in the group that would track down and kill the remaining American naval vessels. He was bringing the Sun Tsu, three of the Beijing Class carriers, four Tactical Assault ships, six destroyers and eight frigates with him. The other large deck carrier, the Zenim, and the other two Beijing class carriers

would proceed on with the bulk of the fleet including the rest of the Tactical Assault ships, the escorts, the many Amphibious ships and the provisioning vessels towards a major assault on Midway Island tomorrow morning.

The Admiral hoped to catch the American vessels before that, perhaps late today if things went as he hoped. He had a large CAP consisting of over thirty SU-33 aircraft up at all times, his LRASD devices had been reloaded on the decks of each ship and he knew where his enemy was. He was just ready to track them down and eliminate them. The strike packages were being prepared on all four carriers and as soon as it was complete he would be called to order the launch. In the mean time, he was hoping to get some sleep.

It was a hope the Admiral would not realize.

June 23, 2008, 15:58 local time

Admiral's Cabin, PLAN Sun Tsu

500 miles West Southwest of Midway Island

Admiral Hsu had no sooner closed his eyes and fallen into a deep sleep than the electronic buzzer went off next to his bed and the simulated klaxon sound began sounding throughout the ship calling the personnel to battle stations.

The Admiral jerked up in his bunk to a sitting position, grabbed the hand set and spoke.

"The is Admiral Yao, what is it?"

His chief of staff immediately answered.

"Admiral, I am on the bridge. One of our CAP aircraft just shot down one of the American high-flying, prop driven surveillance aircraft twenty-three miles to our northwest. We are also detecting many approaching aircraft and missiles.

"The Captain has ordered the entire fleet to the highest threat condition and asks if you will please come to the bridge immediately."

As the Admiral rapidly got up and made his way towards the bridge, American aircraft and missiles rapidly made their way towards his formation.

The thirty SU-33 aircraft that were flying a formidable CAP for the Chinese task force were met by a joint command of over fifty American air superiority fighters, F-18E and F-15C aircraft, loaded with AMRAAM and AIM-9X missiles. As that large melee of a dogfight developed, another one hundred and fifty American aircraft approached and began launching missiles from altitudes between seven thousand and fifteen thousand feet. Far below them, nearly two hundred ship and air-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles approached on the deck, a mere fifty feet above the water.

The first missiles launched were the American HARM, high speed, anti-radar missiles. These approached at speeds in excess of Mach-2 and began impacting before the Admiral ever reached the bridge. Although the impacts were not huge explosions, the Admiral could still feel the four impacts that hit his flagship ... and he knew full well what those impacts meant.

"Report," he ordered as he stepped onto the bridge.

The Captain of the Sun Tsu, who had vehemently disagreed with the Admiral's decision to split the force earlier in the day, and who was just preparing to make his way to the Combat Center on the ship, indicated that the duty officer should deliver the report to the Admiral.

"Sir, the Americans are approaching in force. Our CAP is engaging a much larger contingent of American aircraft and they are currently involved in a major dogfight well to our east.

"More American attack aircraft have continued and launched high speed missiles at us. Over 100 missiles were launched and we successfully downed sixty-eight of them. The other thirty-two have impacted our vessels and severely hampered our radar acquisition and guidance. We have reverted to back-up systems, but another eighty-five American missiles were just launched. These are slower, cruise missiles."

The duty officer stopped for just a moment and listened to the earphone lodged in his ear.

"Hold on one moment Admiral," he said, and then continued.

"Sir, we are now picking up many more missiles, approaching at very low levels twenty-five miles to our southeast. They appear to be more American cruise missiles. The count is now up to over ninety in that group."

The Admiral took all of this in and knew that they were in a very desperate situation. He glanced over at the Captain and saw the accusatory fire burning in his eyes. He noted that something would have to be done about this man's clear impertinence after the engagement, but it would clearly have to wait.

"Very well, Lieutenant, carry on.

"Captain, please accompany me to the Combat Information Center where we will wage this battle."

June 23, 2008, 16:03 local time

Combat Information Center. PLAN Sun Tsu

500 miles West Southwest of Midway Island

Admiral Yao Hsu and the Captain arrived in the Combat Information Center just in time to see the wave of bright green "V's" on the main board begin impacting the escort vessels in their task force. Two large group of vampires, as the enemy missiles were universally known, were spread out on fronts over two miles wide and several missiles deep and they were now entering the formation. All told, over two

hundred and fifty cruise missiles of various varieties had been launched at the Chinese task force.

Chinese anti-air missile defenses, severely hampered by the earlier anti-radar missile attack and by the heavy jamming coming from no less than four EA-6B Prowler aircraft accompanying the American strike, were able to account for only thirty-five of the attacking cruise missiles. This left over two hundred and twenty missiles approaching the close in weapons systems of the Chinese task force. It was a number that completely saturated the Chinese defenses.

Now, survival for the various Chinese ships depended entirely on the number of missiles targeting each vessel. There were eight capitol ships, six large destroyers and eight frigates in the formation. The Sun Tsu was targeted by over forty cruise missiles. Two of the Beijing class carriers were targeted by twenty-five missiles each. Some how the third Beijing class carrier was targeted by only eight missiles. Each of the Tactical Assault ships were targeted by twenty-three, nineteen, twenty-one and six missiles respectively. A total of 167 missiles targeting the capitol ships. Each of the destroyers were targeted by no less than eight missiles and each frigate had between two and six missiles targeting them.

The results were catastrophic for the Chinese task force.

Admiral Yao Hsu and the Captain died together in the Combat Information Center of the Sun Tsu. After three jolting hits that almost knocked them off their feet, the Captain glared angrily at the Admiral right up until the end when one of the Tomahawk missiles penetrated directly into those spaces and exploded, killing every man there. In all, twenty-seven missiles impacted the Sun Tsu, setting off many secondary explosions above and below decks as the weapons on the strike package that was being prepared were set off. The Sun Tsu was left a wrecked, fiercely burning, smoking and holed hulk that would sink within twelve minutes of the last impact with tremendous loss of life.

In the end, when the American aircraft turned away, all of the Chinese ships had been hit and many of them were burning terribly and already settling in the water. One of the Beijing class carriers was relatively unharmed and it continued to recover surviving Chinese CAP aircraft and launch new SU-33's to maintain some vigil over the ruined task force.

That carrier, one of the Tactical Assault vessels, two destroyers and three frigates were the only vessels that were capable of sailing away from the scene of the massacre. Those ships began making their best speed to the west, seeking out cloud cover and hoping for darkness, leaving thousands of Chinese sailors in the water to fend for themselves. Three Chinese carriers, three large Tactical Assault ships, six destroyers and five frigates would sink beneath the waves before the sun set, taking over 20,000 Chinese sailors with them.

June 24, 2008, 06:45 local time

Midway Island, Defensive Perimeter

7th Marine Division

Leon sat in his concrete reinforced and armored position looking out to sea.

He hoped he wouldn't see anything untoward out there. After his experiences on Diego Garcia, seeing enemy ships out there on the horizon near an island he was defending was something he hoped never to witness again. He knew what it would mean. It would mean that his own naval forces and air forces had been driven from the area and he certainly didn't want that to happen.

And so far here on Midway Island it hadn't.

But today was another day and they had been told to expect imminent enemy action. So far those predictions had been right on the money. Already this morning one wave of Chinese aircraft had broken through American air defenses and bombed the runway and some of the storage and repair installations near the air field. Dark smoke was still rising from over that way.

One flight of those sleek, camouflage gray enemy aircraft had come in just over tree top level and at high speed, right over Leon's position. He and his security personnel and a number of the other Marines with them had stepped out of their emplacement and opened fire. From off to his left, a stinger-missile team had launched and brought one of the aircraft down. Unfortunately, that aircraft had gone into a flat spin after being hit by the missile and had crashed into a company of Marines in an adjoining position, killing fifteen good soldiers and horribly burning eight more.

Now, they had just been warned that another missile attack was in the works and Leon hunkered down to prepare for the impacts. When they came, it was much worse than the day before when he had been much safer in the bomb shelter. The noise, the overpressure and the jolting were all orders of magnitude greater. One near miss dug a hole ten feet deep into the ground one hundred feet from Leon's position and showered their position with dirt, debris and worse. The position over there, with five more good Marines in it, not greatly different from Leon's position, had simply vanished from off the face of the earth except for the smoldering hole, the dirt, the debris and the coppery smelling pieces of flesh that came raining down.

After the barrage ended, the Captain came around and spoke to each position in hushed tones.

"Okay, men, stay hunkered down.

"The enemy is out there. G2 says that they are making a run for the island and that they have massive numbers of transports full of battle hardened chinks. Our fly boys and our navy boys are meeting them now. If they get past them, it'll be our turn.

"Stay on your toes ... stay ready!"

As the sun climbed higher, Leon looked again out to sea. This time, way off to the southwest, low on the horizon, he could now see smoke ... and lots of it, where there had been none before. He could not see the masts or the silhouettes of the ships, but he knew they were out there, and a lot of them. There was a big battle going on out there away over the horizon, probably more than fifty miles away. He felt a chill go up and down his spine. If the airfield had been sufficiently damaged and if the Navy was taking a beating, he might be fighting Chinese soldiers right here on Midway very soon.

But the ships never came in view. The smoke low to the horizon increased, hung there for about three hours and then was slowly dissipated or drifted away. Before it did, there had been one more, much lighter missile barrage which caused them all to keep their heads down for a good fifteen or twenty minutes. After that ... nothing. No more Chinese aircraft penetrated to the island or were seen.

The Marine 7th Division didn't know it at the time, but by noon of June 24th, the second battle for

Midway Island was, for all intents and purposes, over and it ended with the same outcome as the first, over sixty-six years earlier.

The larger Chinese task force had indeed made a run for the island, and it had been a disaster. No one knew, American or Chinese, why that Chinese task force commander had ordered the assault in the face of the catastrophic losses associated with Admiral Yao Hsu's group the day before, but he had. It would later be shown that he had received confirmation of Hsu's losses and that he must have known that the American naval task force had not been seriously damaged by Chinese attacks. But he ordered the assault on Midway anyway. For whatever reason, when it was all over, two more Beijing class carriers were sunk along with five large transports full of Chinese troops, two Tactical Assault ships, four supply ships, eight destroyers and twelve frigates. A horrendous 58,000 Chinese personnel were lost to the sea.

One of the famous quotes that would forever be attached to the second battle of Midway was made by an American naval aviator as he returned to the U.S.S. George Washington and was asked by his air group commander for a battle assessment. He had simply responded.

"It was like shooting bobbing apples floating all alone in a tub."

For the Americans, there had also been more losses.

In the fighting on the 24th another Frigate and Spruance destroyer were sunk and a Burke destroyer severely damaged by loitering Killer Whale devices whose path that SAG crossed. Chinese aircraft not only wreaked some havoc on the island and its airfield, they also caught several transports on the far side of the island as they were making their way toward Midway with provisions. Defended by only one destroyer and one frigate, the Chinese focused on the transports and sunk two of them, along with the armor, provisions and other equipment they carried.

Then, after the bulk of the fighting was completed and the remaining Chinese forces had withdrawn, very early on the morning of the 25th, while fire fighting crews and repair crews continued to work feverishly on the U.S.S. Wasp, tragedy struck. At 03:21 a tremendous explosion rocked the ship. Whether it came from some internal source to the Wasp or as a result of undetected enemy action was never known. Within five minutes it was clear to the Captain of the ship what had to be done. He ordered "Abandon Ship" and the remaining personnel quickly made their way into life rafts or onto the waiting frigate or destroyer that were standing by to assist. At 05:45 the Wasp sunk and another three hundred personnel went down with her.

June 26, 2008, 02:12 local time

Rendezvous Point Xia

1780 Kilometers Northwest of Midway Island

The ships rendezvoused in the dark, quietly and with precision, despite events of the last few days. The remainder of Admiral Yao Hsu's task force and the remainder of the larger force that attacked the island, when combined, was still a very potent group. One large Mao class carrier, two Beijing class carriers, six large Amphibious Assault ships, two Tactical assault ships six destroyers, ten frigates and a multitude of

smaller transports and supply ships had survived the mauling around Midway.

After several hours of running together while the commanders held a serious and direct conference, the force began to split apart again. Both Beijing class carriers, all five of the Amphibious Assault ships, both Tactical Assault ships, most of the other transports and supply ships, three destroyers and four frigates formed up and turned to the north.

The Zenim and the other vessels turned back to the west.

As Kao Pham stood on the deck of the PLAN Tactical Assault ship, Chongqing, and watched the large carrier, Zenim, and its escorts depart, a sense of the magnitude of the conflict he was involved with struck him. He had been so proud. Despite the losses he had witnessed before Midway, he had felt that the PLAN was invincible, that although there might be minor set backs and losses, that nothing, not even the vaunted U.S. Navy could stand in there way.

Now he knew better.

Off of Midway, in that final run in towards the island with guns blazing and missiles launching, almost within site of their objective, Koa Pham had witnessed death and destruction on a scale he had never conceived.

"So many bodies in the water," he thought as he took a final drag of the cigarette that he had been smoking while he thought about these things.

"Our ship had simply pushed them aside or crushed over them as we retreated, both the living and the dead," he concluded as he flicked the cigarette butt over the side.

Now, as he sped north with this smaller, but still powerful task force of the Chinese Navy, spirits began to lift. Once under way there had been a general announcement that they were going to assist in what would always be remembered as one of the greatest achievement of the People's Republic. They had been told that the action they had just been involved with was a grand feint, a grand deception and that the principle goals were in fact being achieved and that they were now to be a part of that.

This lifted Kao's spirits greatly, but as he made his way back inside the ship and towards his birth, he couldn't help but wonder what type of plans required a deception on such a horrific and terrible scale and just how many such "victories" his nation could sustain.

June 26, 2008, 09:45 local time

Field Command Headquarters

PLA Northern Group, 1stand 3rdArmies

Nome, Alaska

General Wu Tsing read the "eyes only" dispatch with mixed feelings.

Things off of Midway had gone badly. So many ships and personnel lost in such a short time. Admiral Yao Hsu dead, lost with his flagship. The materiel objective of that feint wholly unachieved. Perhaps the worst single twenty-four hour defeat that the People's Republic of China had suffered in its entire history.

Then again, the Admiral had to agree with the assessment of his high command. Despite the losses, despite the numbers of casualties, the operation had been a success. The occupation of Midway Island had only been a secondary, though highly desirable, goal. The primary goal had been to distract the Americans so that this operation could make a successful beginning. In that, the attack on Midway had achieved stunning success.

"And now, with the additional naval resources coming this way and the additional troops and transports, that success will only be enhanced," thought the General as he once again reviewed those specific new components of his command.

The entire Seward Peninsula had been secured. Over 150,000 Chinese troops were now ashore here in Alaska and more were landing every hour. Significant number of ballistic missile launchers were arriving too, with which the General continued to harass and plague the U.S. airfields outside of Fairbanks and Anchorage. The buildup was going better than expected, he was ahead of schedule.

The remaining population in Nome and other small towns had been pacified. In some instances this had taken extreme measures as Chinese troops broke into every house and relieved the citizens of every firearm the soldiers could find. Many Americans would only give those firearms up to the occupiers after they had been killed and their cold fingers pried from around the stocks and trigger guards. The General and his advisors marveled at this because it occurred amongst all age groups, genders and ethnicities here, where they died quickly against overwhelming odds. Just the same, the population was relatively small and the Chinese occupation forces were growing rapidly.

Except for these few citizens in the towns and outside of some continued minor sniping from local hunters and trappers outside of the towns, and by a few of what the General had learned were called "Home Guard" units, there was no organized American resistance. That was true all the way over to the Yukon River where Chinese forces were already making their initial advances to the east. He had established his furthest advance in strength at Kokrines along the Yukon River and had positioned an observation post, portable radar and anti-aircraft emplacement on Wolf mountain overlooking the entire Yukon Valley there. His engineers had indicated that a good spot for their first major inland airfield would be at Ruby, a few miles to the west of Kokrines.

The U.S. Air Force was beginning to push back somewhat as more of their F-15 and F-16 aircraft arrived from the lower American states and pushed at Tsing's combat patrols near the Kuskowim Mountains between Nome and Anchorage. But, with the capture of the small, undefended U.S. airfield at Cape Romanzov and the stationing of several J-10 and SU-33 aircraft there ... and with the airfield extension here in Nome estimated to be completed by the 29th... the General was certain he would be able to contain the American air force. Then, when he could extend his own patrols by basing an entire wing of his best fighters right here in Nome along with AEW and refueling aircraft, and then later in Ruby... he was certain he would push those American aircraft all the way back to Anchorage and Fairbanks ... and beyond.

"And that will be particularly helped in these early stages by those two Beijing class carriers that are coming," thought the General.

"Once they get here, we'll station one here off of Nome and another further up the Norton Sound near Koyuk. That should allow them to be mutually supportive and that should further secure our airspace both here over Nome and out over the Yukon," the General concluded, quite pleased with himself and the current status of his assignment.

The more that General Wu Tsing thought about it, the more positive he became about his prospects. Alaska and Canada lay open before his forces. He felt now that some of his enemy's most strategic resources at Prudhoe Bay and in the ANWR were easily within his grasp. The battle for Midway Island was now over, having accomplished its objectives despite the losses ... and the battle for Alaska was just beginning, and from the General's perspective, it had gotten off to a most excellent start.

Chapter 8

"... fire upon the Red Coats from behind every bush, from behind every tree." Unknown Colonial American Militia Officer

July - September 2008

In Alaska

After the massive viewing on the Internet of the attack on Nome, Alaska by the Red Chinese, President Weisskopf's sobering address to the nation the afternoon of June 23rd, 2008 galvanized an already sobered and fully mobilized America. That afternoon was the highest single day in history for signups for the Armed services, and the next day broke the record again. The United States, that already had over six million active duty personnel in the armed forces engaged in World War III, found those numbers growing rapidly. By the end of July, an additional million Americans had signed up for military service. Another two million older or otherwise not qualified for active duty individuals joined Home Guard Units all over the nation, bringing the Home Guard numbers up to almost ten million individuals.

Imminent American military plans in the Caribbean were put on hold as the forces that were being gathered for that operation, were rushed north to the defense of Alaska. In addition, as quickly as they could become trained and ready, the new combat enlistees were formed up, mixed in with seasoned NCOs and officers, and also sent north. Most of these new forces were focused in the Anchorage area to prepare the main defenses, although a full division, along with Canadian reserves were targeted at reinforcing the ANWR and Prudhoe Bay.

But it takes time to train, equip and keep supplied sufficient forces to hold back the size of invasion the Chinese had unleashed, and time was something that Fairbanks, Alaska, Prudhoe Bay and the ANWR did not have. General Tsing pushed relentlessly forward along the Yukon River. By the first of July, his naval assets off of Nome had grown considerably and consisted of no less than four Beijing class carriers and many destroyer and frigate escorts. The airfield in Nome was completed to his satisfaction and hundreds of aircraft began being ferried into Alaska to contend with the growing numbers of American aircraft at Elmendorf and Eielson Air Force Bases. These former air bases were under relentless ballistic missile attack from Red Chinese launchers that were also being brought into Alaska and from the Tactical Assault Ships off of the Alaskan coast.

On July 10th three Aegis Burke destroyers and one Aegis cruiser arrived off of Anchorage and added

significantly to the air defense of Elmendorf. From that day forward, air operations began to improve significantly around Anchorage and the numbers of American aircraft on that airfield began to grow steadily without the threat of constant destruction. But several hundred miles to the north, at Fairbanks, the same was not true.

Efforts to build a land based set of Aegis cells there were conducted in vain. The rain of Chinese ballistic missiles continued unabated and destroyed construction and repair efforts before they could make the progress necessary. Two Patriot missile batteries did help somewhat, but as Chinese forces in great strength continued to progress up the Yukon, and then turned southeast on the Tanana River towards Fairbanks, it became apparent that a general evacuation of Eielson Air Force Base and of Fairbanks itself would be required, or all of the men and materiel there would either be captured or destroyed in place. On July 21st the general evacuation order was given and a hurried and harried evacuation occurred just in advance of the Chinese forces. On July 25th, Fairbanks, Alaska fell to the Chinese and was occupied.

While this was happening, United States Army forces in the ANWR, at Prudhoe Bay and over towards Barrow, Alaska had been reinforced somewhat by air, but that air route had to extend north through Canada and approach these areas from the east. By the time Fairbanks fell, the Chinese had completed a substantial airfield at Ruby, Alaska and their coverage to the north was sufficient to cut off any further reinforcements. In addition, their forces continued to advance further up the Yukon River to the vicinity of Stevens Village, Alaska where a vigorous defense by a mixture of Regular Army units, the Alaska National Guard and several thousand citizens organized into militia units called up by the Governor, temporarily halted the Chinese advance.

At that point, in late July, the three divisions that the Americans fielded along and to the north of the Brooks Range and along the pipeline at defensible positions, was faced by over twenty divisions of Chinese troops now pouring into the north from their staging areas in eastern Siberia. With strong airfields ultimately at Nome, Ruby, Cape Romanzof and Cape Newenham (which like Cape Romanzof was captured intact in June) the Chinese air forces in the area exerted air superiority over an area ranging from just west of Fairbanks, north to Prudhoe Bay and all points west of that line back to the Bering Straits.

Conditions for American citizens in these occupied areas became unbearable. To the surprise of General Tsing, only about 25% of the population was pacified, giving up and trying to maintain some semblance of life in the occupied territory. They were treated, for all intent and purposes, like indentured servants at best, and like chattel more commonly. What surprised the General and his staff was the resistance of the other 75% of the people.

Most of them were well armed and fought with their personal firearms, against all odds and to the death. Although the Chinese knew that Americans living in Alaska tended to be much more independent and self sustaining, this was not what he had personally envisioned or been briefed to expect from the otherwise believed to be soft Americans. Apparently the Americans inhabiting Alaska were much more hearty and independent than even the Chinese intelligence had been willing to give them credit for. Logistics issues to the front became an issue despite the overwhelming numbers of Chinese troops. Many truck drivers and supply depot maintainers fell victim to what the Americans called the Rule of 308 and Proposition 223. Although his forces always ruthlessly hunted down, killed and made an example of any Americans sniping or attacking his forces, and although the General gave a general order allowing his commanders to use their own discretion in reprisals against the local population, rather than decreasing, the incidents only increased with American resistance fighters joining up into small groups as time progressed.

One of the most notorious of these resistance groups was headed by a figure that became known to

Chinese intelligence simply as the Orka, a figure associated with what the Chinese later found out was an ad-hoc transmission of their assault on Nome to the American populace over the internet. This group's efforts had taken on an almost legendary tone in the weeks after the invasion and the Chinese forces were especially anxious to capture or otherwise kill and make an example of this particular resistance group.

Several major incidents involving full convoys of Chinese supply materiel and entire patrols of Chinese troops were mauled in quick hit and run attacks by the Orka. The General's intelligence indicated that the group numbered no more than twenty individuals, that it operated in a complete "live off of the land" mode and that it was extremely familiar with the terrain from the Seward Peninsula all the way along the northern side of the Yukon River to Wolf Mountain. Apparently most of its members were what were termed as Native American Eskimos, people the Chinese had believed might even welcome them. In an effort to promote such an open-arms attitude, the Chinese were advertising reparations and significant bonuses to any Native American if they would turn on what the Chinese viewed to be their "oppressors", the government of the United States. Apparently the ploy was not working according to intelligence projections either. In fact, the General's observation, radar and anti-aircraft facilities on Wolf mountain had to be significantly reinforced after an incident where the radar and anti-air battery were crippled by one of the attacks from a group identified with this insurgent.

Despite this, the hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops continued in their advance. On August 4th, 2003, the Chinese broke through American defenses at a strategic pass near Ambler, Alaska and poured onto the Tundra north of the Brooks Range. The fall of Barrow, Alaska was imminent and Prudhoe Bay was sure to follow. America's Arctic Oil Reserves were now clearly about to fall into the hands of the Chinese, who at this point began going to great lengths to avoid their destruction.

In what later became one of the most controversial decisions of the Weisskopf administration during the war, a decision was made on August 13th for American forces to destroy American oil production facilities at Prudhoe Bay, in the ANWR and at strategic pumping stations along the pipeline to the south of the Brooks Range to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy. The most controversial part of the decision was the manner in which it was carried out.

In an apparent route, the American forces made a hasty and quick withdrawal from all defensive lines on the evening of August 15th and throughout the 16th. They left many of the facilities intact. Although cautious at first, the Chinese rushed into the areas on the 17th and 18th and took control of those facilities and began checking for sabotage while assessing the ability to keep the facilities in production. To their surprise, they found the facilities largely intact and by the 19th had ferried I substantial numbers of personnel to defend and begin operating them.

Then, on the afternoon of August 20th, at four critical drilling and extraction sites around Prudhoe Bay well out from the town, at eight similar places in the ANWR and at six pumping stations along the pipeline, small, deeply buried nuclear demolition devices were detonated by the Americans. The resulting explosions, though mostly contained underground, completely destroyed all of the facilities, including the equipment, the drill holes themselves, which collapsed from the pressure, the pipeline operations and several thousand Chinese personnel.

The Chinese upper command critically analyzed General Tsing's instant request for a nuclear counter strike on Anchorage and rejected it. Getting the oil for themselves would have been a significant bonus, but the principle goal for the operation was to occupy those Alaskan areas and stop the oil production for America and then keep it out of their hands. Those goals had been accomplished, and now enhanced by the American's own sabotage. General Tsing's request was denied and the Chinese troops were ordered to continue now towards the goal of taking Anchorage and extending their control towards

Dawson in the Klondike Region of the Yukon in Canada. By September 1st, the Chinese were turning south in an effort to completely eject U.S. forces from Alaska.

July - September 2008

In the lower 48 United States

News of the first the fall of Fairbanks and then the fall of Prudhoe Bay and the ANWR oil field hit Americans hard. The President announced on to the nation what he had done on August 21st regarding the American sabotage and destruction of their own oil fields with demolition nuclear devices. The opposition party, pushing for their own Presidential aspirations in November and having won their primaries with the full support of their party apparatus made a tremendous issue of this event.

Curt Johnson, and the former Senator Susan Crater, made all of the talk show circuits. They attacked President Weisskopf on his decision to utilize nuclear demolition packages to destroy the oil facilities and the pipeline after a hasty retreat. They indicated that this fit a pattern of escalation in the warfare that had already cost America greatly, citing how the initial escalation in space in 2006 by the United States had, in their view, led to the loss of America's satellite advantage and the horrific tragedy with the Space Station impact in San Paulo, Brazil. They also attacked the Weisskopf administration on its recent arrest, incarceration and charges filed against David Krenshaw, the CNN executive who had given so much support to their own campaign. They demanded that the administration stop hiding behind current "anti-terror" laws and reveal more fully the exact nature of the evidence against Krenshaw or release him from "detention". Their veiled claims that the arrest was actually politically motivated came through loud and clear in all of their appearances as they prepared for what they viewed to be a now serious challenge for the Presidency in the imminent elections of November.

In the face of this, President Weisskopf remained undeterred and unruffled. He had not campaigned at all for the primaries held during the Spring and Summer and had one them all overwhelmingly. No other GOP contender entered any race. It was a unique circumstance in American political history. In addition, the President's response to the allegations by his challenger was simply to refer all questions to his Attorney General, Dean Byron Hull. Attorney General Hull, in his turn referred the reporters to the indictment and the grand jury indictment and billing. His standard response to the media went like this,

"David Krenshaw is being tried as an American citizen under various anti-terror and trading with enemy provision in our current law. He is not in "detention", he is being held over for trial, without bail and has been indicted by a Grand Jury. You all have copies of that indictment. The evidence will be presented at trial and made available to the press where the American public will see the massive, overwhelming evidence against this man, who had the American people's trust and abused it to his own, and to our enemy's ends at the cost of American lives. The government will seek the maximum penalty allowed by law in this case. Thank you."

The trial for David Krenshaw was scheduled to be held in early October.

While all of these momentous events were transpiring, another, ultimately equally momentous set of events was also progressing. Dr. Joseph Trevor, assisted by his wife Elizabeth (after her return from

visiting and comforting Cindy Simmons) and in conjunction with the work and findings of Dr. Sandra McPherson, had painstakingly reviewed the initial findings of the National Academy of Sciences. As Joseph had expected, that body was reluctant to run with their initial findings and had asked for more detailed analysis, while starting a detailed study of their own.

Joseph sensed a stalling tactic and was determined to not allow that to happen. During July and August, he took a leave of absence and worked with his wife and Sandra to put together an iron-clad proof of the procedures and methodologies that had led McPherson to the discovery of the Human Reasoning Structures in her fetal samples from Europe. As much as he detested it, he worked with her as she acquired more samples and built a rock solid case for their findings. For her part, Dr. McPherson was driven to prove that these structures in fact proved that the human fetus was, at the very earliest stages of development, endowed with the ability to reason and therefore categorically must not be subjected to "termination" according to the current abortion laws.

The President became aware of the study in late July and was intrigued by it, as well as troubled by what the implications implied that his nation had done, under the color of law, for over thirty-five years. His Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, herself a strong pro-life advocate, had recognized immediately the implications of Dr. Trevor's and Dr. McPherson's work and had brought the matter to the President's attention. The President issued a policy statement instructing all arms of the executive branch to support the study and the effort to reach a meaningful and provable conclusion if at all possible.

Susan Crater was very vocal in her own opposition to the President's new policy statement upon hearing of it. Having benefited from a political career that rode the wave of all of the social issues, and her pro-abortion stance particularly, she was incensed by what she termed as "voodoo-science" and actively campaigned on the issue against the President. Curt Johnson, himself pro-life, but willing to compromise on the issue in certain areas to try and attain consensus, was not as active as his running mate on this issue, choosing instead focus his remarks on the national security issues.

Ultimately, the National Academy of Sciences re-examined the issue at the President's request in the third week of August. On August 29th a short, to the point but very well documented finding was published. It stated, unequivocally what was obvious from their own data, and from that amassed by Doctors Trevor and McPherson. The human fetus, at a very early stage in its development, was capable of rudimentary reason and was therefore a human, endowed with the ability to perceive and be aware of its surroundings and react intelligently thereto. The triggering mechanism was conception and from the point of any brain activity it must be considered an individual.

This finding reverberated around the nation... and around the world. It was destined to radically alter the view of the fetus, and turn honest, compassionate and thinking people everywhere back to an earlier day, when common sense dictated that a fetus was a baby. In an unprecedented announcement, the new Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Thomas Clarendon, announced on September 7th that after review, the Supreme Court of the United States would re-open and re-hear the famous 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling based on this new evidence.

With all of these momentous occurrences, every day life supplying the needs of the war effort while maintaining life in the United States ground on. Factories, shipyards, production facilities, Nuclear Power Plants, research parks, agriculture, forestry, mining, additional petroleum drilling and processing and all of the other necessary elements for continued viability of the United States in these harsh times continued to be built and come online at a rate that astonished the world. All of the new factories, machinery and facilities were ultra-modern, extremely efficient and built, defended and operated with pride. Production levels, particularly in the energy sector, surpassed not only requirements as they existed before the invasion of Alaska, but quickly rose to compensate for those losses as well.

Department of Homeland Security Home Guard units operating at the county level had now been engrained into American society. The awful specter of terror attacks drove the American consciousness to embrace and whole heartedly support the defense they provided. Terror attacks, which through 2007 and the first half of 2008 had been common place, now were dropping off at a significant rate. Much of America had become an armed camp, but it was also a polite camp and the overall crime rates around the entire nation were drastically reduced as well.

America's borders continued to be rigorously controlled. Immigration policy had been revitalized to define what legal immigration consisted of, what commitments and promises were required of would-be citizens, what time frames would be applied in a trial mode for them and what was expected of them once they became citizens. Education regarding the history and meaning of American liberty and self-sufficiency, the English language, oaths to the Constitution, no social leeching, and the qualities of thrift and hard work were re-enthroned as the guiding principles. Regardless of perceived hardship or other political status, the conditions governing these principles had to be satisfied or citizenship would be denied. A significant sub-set of the same guidelines applied to any visa applications outside of temporary, vacation visas, which then were only permitted for individuals from proven friendly nations and only after a significant background check in conjunction with that nation's security apparatus.

The population in the detention camps in various parts of the country was decreasing. As the individuals were processed, those coming from non-aggressor nations who did not meet the new standards for citizenship application or visa application, or who did not pass background checks, were returned to their homelands. Those who did meet the requirements and who passed the background checks were released into the new programs and went about their life.

Those individuals from aggressor nations were detained. If they were known belligerents, they were held in strict confinement under maximum security and prosecuted for their crimes. If they were not known belligerents, they were simply held over and put to work, to be held until the end of the conflict when they would be returned to their homelands.

By the middle of September 2008, the number of those being detained had dropped from a high of over 630,000 in April of 2008, down to under 600,000. It was expected that the number would drop below one half million by the middle of 2009 and continue to decline. Despite the objection and legal wrangling of some organizations, the vast majority of Americans approved of the measures and the way that they had been implemented and very few politicians were willing to openly oppose or contradict the immigration or detention programs for fear of their political life.

July - September 2008

In the Pacific

The Chinese, the Indians and the GIR (through its member state in Indonesia) continued to consolidate their vast gains in the Pacific. Although resistance in Australia continued, it had reduced significantly. The reason for this was the same as it had been in Japan and the Philippines. The CAS and the GIR were importing large populations into the conquered nations and literally transforming them. Former owners of lands, housing, factories or shops were displaced by new Chinese, Indian or Indonesian owners. The former inhabitant could either work for the new owners for a pittance, or they could starve. Little or no

mercy was shown to those who voiced opposition to this...or their families.

In this way, particularly in nations who had disarmed their citizens almost completely through legislation or edicts, the possibility for large scale resistance was remote to begin with, and it faded with each passing month as the numbers of those who would resist became a smaller and smaller portion of the whole living in the occupied lands. In Australia, the effect was telling as the conquering nations demonstrated a direct willingness to turn the entire continent into a vast *lebensraum* for their populations, splitting up the continent into three autonomous regions that were immediately recognized and accepted into the CAS, joining the many other nations already engrafted into the same.

Now, along a vast line, stretching from Australia and Tasmania northward to Wake Island and then on up to Alaska, the high tide of the CAS and GIR welled up. To the west of that line, complete control was exerted by the CAS and the GIR nations. The new factories of all of the Asian Tigers, when coupled with the vast manufacturing capabilities of China, added up to a huge war machine that showed no signs of letting up or slowing down, despite the recent horrendous losses around the American island of Midway. The economic condition became self sustaining as the agricultural, energy, military and textile needs of each area was met by the whole.

In terms of military manufacturing, the production rates for new systems was exceeding the loss rate in general, with the exception of the brief spike associated with those tremendous losses off of Midway. The export business to the various nations within the CAS and to the member states of the GIR was huge as KS-3, anti-stealth, anti-satellite, LRASD, fighters, naval vessels and all manner of armored vehicles were sent in copious amounts to the various theaters of operation throughout the Pacific, in Asia, in the Mid East, in Europe, in Central and South America and now in North America.

For their part, the allies, principally the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and the governments in exile of Taiwan, Japan and Australia sought to contain the burgeoning beast that their enemies had become. The buildup in the Pacific for this containment now focused on three areas where men and materiel were gathering in large numbers and where the full extent of allied efforts were applied in defending those build ups until they were strong enough to go on the offensive and counter attack. Those areas included Midway Island and the entire island chain back to Hawaii, New Zealand and in the Samoan Islands.

July - September 2008

In Africa and The Middle East

Warfare in Africa, outside of that directly associated with the Middle East lines around Israel, was relegated to the Allied attempt to put pressure on those very same lines. The large Brazilian expeditionary force that had embarked from Nigeria with several allied African nations, continued to be bogged down in Chad. Allied reinforcement forces consisting of American, Canadian and some British troops, served mostly to maintain those lines, and halted the lost ground resulting from the joint GIR and Chinese forces opposing them.

Northern Africa was firmly in the hands of the GIR. No further allied attempt, particularly out of southern Europe was made to open up a front on the north African coast. The allies simply had their hands too full in other areas and were going to have to win victories in those areas first before they could turn their

attention to North Africa again. This made maritime transport across the Mediterranean very hazardous as GIR aircraft patrolling out of Libya, Morocco and other points along the north African coast, constantly harassed the convoys with cruise missiles and the increasing numbers of LRASD systems being exported to them from China and India.

The Middle East proper was dominated by the GIR. The Muslim world had been united under the great Imam, Hassan Sayeed. The only area of the Middle East not under GIR control remained right around Israel from the Sinai Peninsula on the south past the Golan Heights and into Lebanon on the north. From the Mediterranean on the west to a line approximately twenty-five kilometers along and to the east of the Jordan River in portions of Jordan. That condition could not continue to hold indefinitely as both sides had continued to mass more and more men and materiel in the area and as clashes grew more frequent and more violent.

General Talabari was almost prepared to unleash his overall plan for the defeat of the state of Israel and their American and English protectors. He had gathered not only a sufficient force to attack the teeth of the allied technology, but also a tremendous reserve to throw in as a second wave once the allied high technology war shots were exhausted fighting off the first wave. The General was planning on an Allied counter attack into the teeth of that second wave once they thought they had decimated the initial attack. It was a high stakes gamble, a poker game where the ante and bets would be measured in mounds of human bodies and rivers of human blood. By September 1st, General Talabari was preparing to be en route to Damascus for the final stages of planning before the great attack.

The General had one stopover to make in Georgia to meet with the commander of occupation forces there and where he intended to meet with newly promoted Colonel, Abduhl Selim, who had distinguished himself again over the last several months in fighting in the underbelly of Europe, and then bring him on to Damascus. There the young Colonel, would receive a command in the reserve forces that would ultimately deliver the coup de grace to Israel in the General's plan. It would also allow the General to mentor the Colonel further up the chain of command and present him directly to the Imam after that victory as one of the trusted inner circle that would help maintain the peace in the great possessions of the GIR after the conflict was won.

But the General's plan presupposed the abject defeat of the allies in the region who were preparing for the monumental confrontation themselves, with anything but defeat on their mind. Americans like Colonel Jess Simmons and General Olson worked feverishly with their Israeli, British and other allied counterparts to come up with a defense and counterattack strategy that would allow them to fight their way out of the box they were enclosed in, and in so doing defeat the massive GIR and Chinese forces that were surrounding them.

There wasn't an easy answer. The allied commanders decided that head to head, they were outnumbered by a two to one margin, and that if they reserves the GIR was bringing up were factored into the equation, that the margin was more like three to one. They severely underestimated the GIR and Chinese reserves that were being amassed. With those reserves, the margin was close to four to one.

At the start of September, the GIR forces were constantly harassing and probing the allied lines, while resisting similar probes by the allies directed at their lines. The regimental, divisional and Army Group commanders were awaiting the arrival of General Talabari and his final orders to implement their great plans. But when the final battle broke out, as is often the case in war, it would not start according to the grand designs that either side was busily and painstakingly putting into place. It would start as a result of one of those quirks of the battlefield that neither side can predict, but that often brings both sides in a conflict together at a time and a place not planned for by either side, but to which both sides must conform simply because they are left with no other choice.

July - September 2008

In Europe

Europe was in turmoil. Millions of refugees were streaming north and west away from the large GIR army group that was making gains in both Romania and Serbia. The principle European powers had finally amassed a force of almost three million men in that portion of Europe and set up strong defenses along the Carpathian Mountains and the Transylvanian Alps in Romania, and along a line of the Danube, the Sava and the Bosna Rivers in Serbia. It was at these defenses line that the GIR forces were finally slowed and stopped by September of 2008 after all of Bulgaria, Albania and parts of Romania and Serbia had already fallen to the GIR.

Further north, and even more critical situation was developing. German, Polish, Finish and Swedish troops who had come to the aide of Russia had been defeated in the Urals and pushed back towards Moscow by the larger Chinese and Indian forces that were now pouring out of Siberia and through the Ural Mountains towards Moscow. To the west of the Urals both Perm, and Ufa fell to the joint Chinese/Indian advance despite Russian attempts to use nuclear weapons to halt it outside of Perm, which failed to stop the advancing Chinese hordes. Within six weeks, the next line of defenses at the confluence of the Volga and Karma Rivers also fell as over four million Chinese and two million Indian troops amassed for the push on Moscow. Those forces were about to be joined by over a million troops under the GIR banner that were advancing steadily up from the south. This was the GIR Army group that had been circumventing the Black Sea that had turned north after hostilities broke out when Siberia had declared independence. The French, Italian, Spanish and German forces attempting to halt their advance had been routed at Volograd and again at Saratov.

Now, a great GIR and CAS pincer consisting of over seven million men and their equipment was closing on Gorkiy. Twice the Russians had attempted to use tactical nuclear missiles to halt the advance, but the new Chinese KS-3 ballistic missile defense had proven too effective. Of over twenty missiles fired, only two had penetrated the Chinese defenses and exploded. As mentioned, one of these had been on the outskirts of Perm, near Lysva, just to the west of the Urals. In that attack, one Russian medium range nuclear missile out of a flight of eight that had been launched from the vicinity of Kirov, had avoided interception and exploded two thousand feet over the battlefield. In the resulting explosion, over 15,000 Chinese troops had been killed as well as almost 2,000 Russian soldiers who were too closely engaged with their enemies. But an even greater death toll had been inflicted on the civilian population, citizens of the very nation that had fired the missile.

The other detonation had occurred just before the battle of Saratov, when another Russian missile had penetrated the enemy ABM defenses and detonated upon an advancing division of GIR troops. Over 10,000 GIR troops had perished, opening up a gap in the attacking GIR formations. Again, the civilian death toll, with so many refugees out in the open trying to escape the horrendous conventional warfare, had been far greater. Before Russian and other European forces could take advantage of it, the GIR reserve forces had filled their gap and continued relentlessly on and taken Saratov.

To date, neither the Chinese or the GIR had retaliated with nuclear weapons of their own. In a conference held in the spring of 2008 in Mashhad in the former Iran, and in anticipation of this very stage of their Russian offensive, Jien Zenim, Hassan Sayeed and KP Narayannen had discussed in great detail

the conditions warranting nuclear release by their forces. They had decided not to respond in kind as long as their forces were advancing and not completely decimated by any tactical attack. They made this decision in order to prevent a full scale exchange with the Russians aimed at their own homelands, which would ultimately involve the United States, England and France as well, and in a bid to prevent playing to that overwhelming strength that the west had. Instead, they decided to continue to use their greatest advantage, and that was simply an overwhelming number of men at arms streaming into Europe and around the rest of the world out of China, India and the Islamic countries, protected by their KS-3 systems that were now being massed produced in both China and India.

As September began, Europe had gathered over five million men, more than half of them Russian, to the defense of Moscow. Many of these were the armies that had been falling back in front of the advancing enemy. Over three million more were the reserve forces that the allied nations had rushed to the area after Gorkiy fell. Included in the mix were over 65,000 Americans who were operating the various high tech equipment, aircraft, Aegis missile batteries, and strategic defense lines along with their allies.

The Russians leadership had lobbied the allies for, and won the appointment of General Andrei Nosik to be in charge of all allied ground force in the defense of the Russian capitol. His brilliant fall back defenses in Siberia, in the Urals and then at Gorkiy, where he had commanded vastly outnumbered forces against overwhelming numbers of the enemy had won him the respect and confidence of his superiors, and particularly the Russian President, Vladimyr Puten. The Russian president now wished he had listened to General Nosik's requests and communiqués while he commanded the Russian security forces in Siberia, before hostilities began, instead of the tired old general's in the Kremlin who had been advising him. As a result of not doing that, he was now faced with the imminent destruction of his capitol, and perhaps his nation. President Puten had tried every means at his disposal, short of a complete, all-out nuclear attack on Beijing, New Delhi and Tehran. He knew what such an attack would mean, but he had already decided, that if he were fated to be remembered as the person who last the entire Rodina, it would not occur without him exercising every option he had available.

July - September 2008

In Central and South America

The fighting in Argentina and Venezuela had once again ground down to slugfests between those nations and Brazil. Brazilian troops had advanced into the north central part of Argentina with their spearhead clearly pointing south at Buenos Aires. But the Argentine resistance had become firm along the Parana River near the cities of Santa Fe and Parana, and the advance had ground to a halt. More and more men and equipment from both nations were being thrown into the maw of that battle as counter attacks raged back and forth.

The Brazilians made overtures to Uruguay in an effort to open another front to threaten the Argentine capitol, but to no avail. Despite overtures from Brasilia and Washington, DC, the Uruguay government remained firm in its insistence on neutrality. By the end of August, the new Brazilian President, Henrietta Maldenado, was faced with the momentous decision of considering marching her armies through Uruguay without their permission.

Further north, in Venezuela, the Chinese were able to bring in an additional 65,000 men on transports that, with the aide of LRASD weaponry, had run the American attack submarine blockade that the U.S.

Navy was trying to maintain off the Columbian and Panamanian west coasts. Twelve large transports were sunk, costing the Chinese almost 20,000 of their reinforcements. But the cost had been extreme to the Americans as another nine Los Angeles class attack submarines were lost in the exchange. Despite this, thirty five large transports and their escorts and support vessels made it through to deliver those 65,000 troops into Columbia, who then advanced rapidly into Venezuela along the coastal mountains and to the north into the southern portions of Panama being held by the CSAS and their Chinese allies.

Further north still, the situation was not as negative for the allies. The American forces, supported by their allies, continued to advance in Panama. Despite large Chinese, Panamanian and Venezuelan counter attacks, by the end of August the American led forces had advanced to within thirty five miles of the Canal Zone and showed no sign of being fought to any kind of standstill. The American government was intent on not only recapturing the canal, but upon making an extended area around it into a new Canal Zone that would be considered from thenceforth not only an American protectorate, but officially an American territory. There was no intent of ever forgetting the mistakes of the past that had led to such a dire strategic situation that so adversely impacted America's ability to re-supply or move its forces between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.

Realizing America's intent, the Chinese forces currently defending the canal had very specific orders for its sabotage and demolition if and when the American forces broke through. In an operational plan reminiscent of the American's own, special forces and special demolition charges had already been set in place. The Panamanian government, who considered themselves the closest of Chinese allies, did not have the slightest idea as to what lengths the Chinese were willing to go to ensure that the Americans could not benefit from a re-opened Panama Canal.

September 2, 2008 13:35 WST

Control Facility

Joint Services Firing Range, Central Nevada

Captain Percy Thiebolt reviewed the latest results of the test exercise he was in charge of conducting and analyzing. The results were positive and beyond his expectations. The last pass of the new oversized stealth cruise missile and its munitions had proven 100% effective against infantry, 94% effective against soft vehicles and an astounding and better than expected 87% effective against armor.

"God knows we need this," thought the Captain as he wrote his initial assessment to his superiors, "now if its durability will just prove to be equally effective in the robust environmental ranges we've specified."

The new missile, to be designated the AGM-999 and code named Hail Storm, was a large cruise missile designed to be stealthy, with added enhancements that hopefully reduced its signature in the new anti-stealth environment that the Chinese had produced. In this regard, the capabilities were new and untested. They were based on projections and analysis of the Chinese anti-stealth emitters, not on hard facts. The allies had not captured any of those devices yet, so the capabilities of the AGM-999 would be based purely on what was projected from electronic emissions and capabilities of the enemy capability that had been observed through battlefield contact and after action reports.

The missile was also designed to be intelligent, with a loiter capability and sensor suite that rivaled much larger aircraft. New fuel enhancements, larger fuel capability and advances in micro-technologies had made this possible over the last four years, and particularly since the beginning of the war.

Of even more import was the munitions the smart and stealthy AGM-999 could carry and how they were activated. The munitions were small caliber, high density projectiles for the most part, but could be augmented with various types of bomblets and sub-munitions. All of these were carried in three pods in the over-sized wasp shaped belly of the missile and all of them were fired completely electronically by 100% solid-state components. There were no moving parts.

This technology, although initially developed in Australia in the late 1990's and early 2000's, had been shared with the United States and ultimately perfected by joint studies, the most advanced of which had been completed here in the desert southwest of the United States during the long battle for Australia. To make that possible, all of the sensitive technology and equipment that was being used in the outback of Australia for testing before the war, had been evacuated from Australia well in advance of the CAS offensive there. The advanced state of the development and its readiness for combat production were still be a complete secret from the CAS and the GIR.

Pure electronic firing and solid state components allowed for tremendous variance in rates of fire, angles of fire, muzzle velocity and almost any other ballistic characteristic associated with the munitions. The AGM-999, with all three of its pods filled with .177 caliber, depleted uranium pellets, carried an astonishing 30,000 rounds per missile that could be fired from the three "guns" at variable rates according to the type and density of the targets. All 30,000 rounds could be fired in much less than a minute if desired, or they could be fired at varying rates at individual targets, or groups of targets with the appropriate dispersal patterns and angles of fire. The anti-personnel and anti-armor bomblets could be handled the same.

"But that might not be necessary", thought the Captain.

After much testing, Captain Thiebolt had determined that ten of the depleted uranium pellets, fired at hypervelocity speeds, were sufficient to penetrate the upper armor of a T-80 tank, the final pellet pushing enough of the molten armor inside the personnel compartment to kill everyone within. Five pellets similarly targeted at the engine compartment would penetrate through to, and destroy the engine, stopping the tank in its tracks. In fact, the effectiveness against armor and personnel of the pellets themselves was so high, that Thiebolt was inclined to recommend cancellation of any further anti-armor or anti-personnel bomblet tests.

"These depleted uranium pellets, are doing just fine themselves," the Captain concluded to himself as he concluded the recommendation regarding the munitions packages. Turning to one of his staff, he gave orders.

"Sergeant, make sure these reports I have just uploaded to the server are not only delivered electronically, but also by secure pouch to the General and his staff.

"They'll want to act on this immediately.

... and the Captain was right. Based on his report and recommendations, and the follow-on recommendations made by his superiors, the missile air frames, which were already being mass produced, would be rushed into full production along with the solid state firing pods, the artificial intelligence components for sensing and guidance, and the enhanced Tomahawk missile engines that would power them. At a production rate of 100 missiles per week, the first four hundred missiles would

all see action across the globe in the six weeks it would take to produce and deploy them.

September 12, 2008 19:59 EST

Interrogation Room 23B

Federal Detention Facility

Outside of Reston, VA

As David Krenshaw walked out of the interrogation room that he had just spent the last six hours in, he was flanked by two husky guards and the FBI agent that led the way. He was being taken, as usual, directly back to his cell.

Since he had been taken into custody in June, almost three months ago, David had only had one opportunity to speak to his wife ... that was in mid-July ... and only a single two-hour conference with his lawyer, which had occurred near the first of August. That conference had not boded well from David's perspective. Under the various provisions of the anti-terror legislation and the Patriot Acts that had been passed, and under the older Emergency War Powers and Trading with the Enemy Acts, his lawyer explained that he felt lucky to even have had the one chance to meet with David.

"But what about my rights as a U.S. citizen?" David had exclaimed as his counsel recited the various provisions of those Acts under which David was being charged.

"David," his lawyer had replied, "given the provisions of these acts and given the charges against you, this could very easily be the only time we get to talk. In fact, we are lucky to have had even a single meeting. My understanding is that it was only as a result of the President's insistence that we are meeting at all, so he could point to you being provided access to your counsel, despite the current law. You're going to have to get control of your emotions right now and spend the time we do have as productively as possible if I am going to be able to do anything for you.

"Understand this, the Weisskopf Administration is out for blood ... and I am not using that term metaphorically. They intend to show that your actions cost American soldiers and other personnel their lives in a time of war. They intend to seek the death penalty, David, and based on the report from the Grand Jury, they have the evidence to push for it."

That pronouncement had sobered David up and the remaining time had been spent answering questions and discussing exactly what his counsel wanted discussed. That had been almost six weeks ago and since that time David had not seen or heard from his lawyer again, despite his many requests to do so made to the Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Director Andy Syke.

But the FBI agent in charge, and his interrogators were not in a deal making mood. Oh, they held out some sliver of hope that David might avoid the death penalty if he would cooperate, but that was as far as they would go. This had incensed David to begin with, and he had resolved to take a tough stance and tell them nothing. But as days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, without any further

improvements or progress . . . David had ultimately given in. His tough act was only skin deep, as his interrogators and jailers sensed it would be. By the 6th of September, David freely signed a full confession and quickly began to tell the FBI personnel everything he could remember, dating from his involvement prior to the election of President Weisskopf in 2004, right up to the time he had been taken into custody.

Unknown to David, those revelations only served to strengthen the government's case against him, and as the full extent of his treason became apparent, it only hardened the resolve of those tasked with trying him to push forward for the death penalty. With the confession in hand, and with mounds of evidence available, the Attorney General was able to get a trial date established for the second week in October. David Krenshaw would not have to wait too much longer for his fate.

September 28, 2008 21:36EST

Oval Office

The White House, Washington, DC

The President watched as Curt Johnson entered the oval office and sat down. No one else was in the room, though the Secret Service tapes were rolling.

"Curt, thank you for coming by. I know it is out of the ordinary and I know you are very busy here with only a few more weeks left in your campaign."

Curt Johnson was not in a mood for small talk.

"You're right Mr. President, so why don't we cut to the chase and get down to brass tacks. That campaign is still one, despite the odds, where I fully intend to unseat you as the President of this nation and return some sanity to world affairs."

President Weisskopf considered this reply. It said a lot regarding what he had to present to Curt Johnson, why he had asked to meet with him here in the first place.

"Well, yes, Curt, I know you are serious about that, but it is precisely for that reason I have asked you here. There are serious things to discuss, and given our former relationship, I did not feel comfortable with anyone else sharing this data with you.

"You are aware of our case against David Krenshaw?"

Curt leaned back in his chair and gaped at the President.

"Am I aware of it? What kind of question is that? Of course I am aware of it . . . and I am aware of your administrations manipulations in that regard as the reflect upon my candidacy.

"You guys are way out in right field here Mr. President. You have taken into custody a media mogul, one who has openly criticized your policies, one who is a leading figure on the Council of International Relations, and one who has counseled my campaign, the campaign of your opponent.

"I'd say from all appearances that you are trying to shut down honest dissent and debate on the issues, and it is apparent Mr. President ... apparent to me, to my campaign and to the public. It is an issue we are gaining traction with and one I will not back away from!"

The President had vowed he would not get emotionally involved in what he knew was going to be a difficult discussion. He was getting perilously close to breaking that vow.

"Curt, pardon my directness, but would you just shut the hell up for a minute and give me the opportunity to tell you why I asked you over here?"

"I didn't have to do this you know. My advisors insisted that I just let the information go public as the trial approached, but I couldn't do that. Despite what you may think of me, and despite our current differences, I believe you are an honest man, Curt. It's why I selected you to begin with and felt you were doing a good job up until the time we parted over fundamental issues regarding the second amendment and how it applies to honest citizens of this nation.

"But rehashing that argument is not why I asked you here today.

"Curt, David Krenshaw has signed a confession and come completely clean. He has been operating in this nation, since before my own election, at the instigation of, and for pay from the People's Republic of China in general, and for Jien Zenim specifically. I wanted you to know it ... and to be able to react to it before ...

Curt Johnson stood up, visibly shaking.

"What is this? You expect me to believe that?"

"You take a man into custody, hold him incognito for months, giving him only one chance to see his own lawyer ... and then you come up with this cock and bull story?"

"How strong of a dose of *truth serum* did your people have to give him, Mr. President?"

The President tried to interject.

"Curt, it's not just the confession, it's the mounds of hard evidence ..."

But his opponent would have nothing to do with it.

"Well, I'm not buying it ... and I tell you what I am going to do Mr. President, I am going to thank you for this information and I am going to take it and run with it. Right to the press and right to the people."

The President was resigned now to failing with the intent of this meeting. He had hoped that Curt, whom he still believed was a loyal American, would seek to find a way to not only handle this data, but to work with the administration to find ways to avoid its use in a way that would in any way benefit their enemies.

Now, too late, the President could see that his own advisors had been correct. Curt Johnson was too caught up in the campaign and in his own anger and differences, to consider the truth of what the President had just communicated to him. The hard cold proof that the administration had would have to hit him full force in the side of the head before any significant dent could be made in Johnson's attitude or opinion.

"Curt, I'm sorry you see it that way. Let me just say this ... the proof we have is incontrovertible, you are only going to hurt yourself, the nation ..."

But Curt Johnson, already on his feet, was moving for the door.

"We're done, Mr. President. Time will tell what impact the shenanigans your administration is engaged in are going to have on the election ... but I can promise you, I believe they will be historic in nature given the gravity of the situation."

As he slammed the Oval Office door behind him and as the President's advisors entered the room shaking their heads, Curt Johnson had no way of knowing that his last utterance had been more prophetic than he could have guessed possible.

October 4, 2008 23:35 local time

COSCO Research and Development Laboratories

Tianjin Shipyard, The People Republic of China

Admiral Lu Pham checked his figures again for the fifth time. It was painstaking work and the computers could churn out the calculations much quicker, but the Admiral had grown up in the old school of mental calculations and slide rules and still preferred, on anything critical that he was personally involved with, to check and recheck the figures himself. And the results kept coming out the same ... unsatisfactorily.

"Well, it's late and I am just going to burn myself out if I keep raking my mind over this now.

" I suppose it's time to bow to the inevitable this evening and apply the tried and true far-eastern principle of critical thinking that let my sub-conscious mind grapple with the problem while directing conscious thought elsewhere. Perhaps after a good meal and during a bedtime back rub by Song," the Admiral thought pleasantly.

"But by all accounts, that one weapon did actually broach somehow and rose in the open air before exploding.

"There must be way to get them to do it within current design constraints! And to control it," he concluded as he reflected on the intelligence reports he had received.

From loose lipped American sailors who wrote and emailed their friends and relatives, and from the American press who picked up the story, accounts of the Battle of Midway II, as it was being referred to, made reference to just such an event in conjunction with the damage sustained by the U.S.S. Bataan. That Sea Control Carrier had apparently sustained its worst damage when one of the LRASD devices

somehow malfunctioned or was otherwise forced into the maneuver.

The report had immediately mystified and then intrigued Lu Pham, the principle architect of the LRASD weapon system. The system had never been designed for such a maneuver, but if such maneuvers could be programmed into the weapons ... terminal maneuvers ... then that would be something. It could be something that could swing the technology war back in favor of the PLAN and the LRASD systems and once again provide a lynch pin for the Chinese success in the Pacific against the U.S. Navy.

Their weight and speed was the major obstacle. A broach would have to occur at just the right angle, just the right speed to ensure that the weapon came out of the water in a stable fashion, out of range of the new American super-cavitating defensive weapons, but close enough to avoid the American Phalanx CIWS reaction time ... and shallow enough so as not to rise too high into the air. It would require a complete work of the guidance algorithms and their artificial intelligence acquisition and decision matrices. It would also require the installation of control surfaces that could be deployed when the weapon became airborne.

But getting the current design to maintain stable, airborne flight was the first obstacle, and it was an obstacle the Admiral was still grappling with. As he documented his calculations and entered some final notes into his word processor, he had one more thought of where he might turn for additional critical and creative thinking.

"Sung Hsu!" realized the Admiral, "He would be a natural for this type of problem.

"Perhaps I will call him tonight ... no, it will wait until the morning. I'll call him then, after I have had the chance to sleep on it."

And with that, the Admiral got up from his desk, walked out of the door, locking it behind him, and left for home.

October, 12, 2008 18:55 EST

Supreme Court of the United States

Washington, DC

Chief Justice Thomas Clarendon considered the amount of time that it had taken the court to arrive at this momentous decision. Many in the press, using their judicial analysts and experts, had predicted that it would take weeks, perhaps months, for the court to rule on this issue. They had been wrong. In fact, no one, including the justices themselves, would have dared contemplate or imagine a five-day hearing, analysis and ruling. But after only four full days of very strong opinions from lawyers representing both sides of the issue, and the compelling scientific evidence ...

"No, not just evidence," thought the Chief Justice, "proof."

... after those compelling scientific proofs associated with the Human Reasoning Structures and the testimony of Dr.'s Trevor and McPherson and so many others, the Justices had held a late-night

conference together on the 11th and determined that they were each ready to render their decision.

That had been yesterday. Today, October 12th, 2008, a date that would be remembered long into history, those opinions were in and had been tallied. There would be no dissenting opinion, the decision was unanimous and it would be earth shattering. Roe V. Wade would be overturned . . . and not just overturned, it would be completely reversed in a way far beyond expectation.

Constitutionally, it was clear that the fetus, at a very early stage of development, was in fact human and capable of awareness and independent thought processes. It was therefore to be afforded protection under the constitution *to life* .

It was now left to Chief Justice Clarendon, the first black Chief Justice in the history of the United States and who himself had narrowly been nominated to the Supreme Court after a bitter, partisan process several years earlier, to announce the opinion of the court. He was prepared to do so and he had stayed up most of the night writing his own opinion, re-writing it, reflecting upon it and ultimately completing it. He was now prepared to give it.

The cameras were set up by the hundreds. The press, the leaders of every major lobby group on both sides of the issue, agency heads, heads of governments from all over the free world, and tens of millions of citizens were now focused on what Chief Justice Clarendon would announce and say over the next few minutes. It was an event, despite the ongoing ravages of war and the immediate compelling issues associated with it, that had captured the attention and the imagination of most Americans, in deed, of most of the free world. All were almost spell bound as to how the Supreme Court of the United States would rule on this issue. When it came, it was astonishingly direct, to the point and short.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States of America with regards to the matter now before the court, the re-hearing of the Roe V. Wade ruling originally decided in 1973 is as follows:

"The human fetus, as a result of scientific proofs regarding the Human Reasoning Structures and their existence within the fetus, has been shown scientifically to be a living, thinking human. Based on this new evidence, the court finds unanimously that no individual, has the right to willfully terminate or cause injury to that human growing and developing within the womb. Roe V. Wade is therefore unalterably over-turned based on this new evidence.

"Further, the court finds that the constitutional protection *of life* must be extended to the fetus, as it is extended to any other under-age child. The parent or other legal guardian shall be responsible for the health and welfare of that child like they would for any other.

"This is the legal finding and decision of this court, and it is unanimous. There is no dissenting opinion.

"Now, in addition to the official, legal decision this court has just made, let me take the unprecedented step of adding a few of my own comments as a purely personal note. I want to ensure that it is understood by all, that what I am about to say represents my own personal feelings and is not representative of any legal finding of this court. I do so because this ruling represents an unprecedented occurrence, and it speaks to an issue that has divided us as a free people, and stained our national consciousness for far too long.

"For the last thirty-five years, this nation, through its legal process, has embarked on a course where we ruled legally that innocent human life, as has been shown in the recent months, could be systematically terminated. . .killed. I stand before you today, as do we all, in abject shame for that decision and the

holocaust it has now been shown to have produced. It is to the credit of every member of this court, regardless of what side of the issue that they had taken before, that when presented with this clear scientific evidence, every member ruled appropriately and quickly on what could only be the single legal ruling possible. No partisan political interpretation existed in this court today.

"Would to God that we had all listened to our heart and to our conscience long before today and used our common sense to have risen above the partisan politics of the era and so ruled much earlier. There is no telling what expertise, what significance, what developments, what future we have denied ourselves because of the death of all of these tens of millions who might otherwise have lived to endow and bless us with their presence...with their life. Perhaps now, we will experience some of those things we have caused ourselves to miss, and perhaps now, at long last, we will embrace and protect the life developing amongst us and somehow atone for our collective actions, albeit belatedly.

"Thank you, that completes the courts ruling and my own remarks."

October 13-16, 2008 18:55 EST

Across the United States

After the Supreme Court Ruling

All over the nation the reaction was varied to the Supreme Court Ruling regarding abortion and the life of the unborn.

From the many Christians conservatives who had been praying for years for just such a miracle and who rejoiced at the ruling, to the libertarians who quickly proposed a new platform plank taking into consideration the right to life of the now proven, reasoning fetus, to those more liberal minded individuals whose financial and intellectual well being had been vested in the abortion industry and the philosophy that demanded that a fetus be considered nothing more than a mass of tissue, reaction varied from quiet acceptance to protests against the ruling and counter-protests to those protests.

Many in the leadership of the National Endowment for Woman (NEW) vowed that they would conduct nation-wide civil disobedience and continue the practice of abortion in clinics where ever any doctor and their staffs would stand firm. The American Civil Liberties Union vowed to support this attempt and to make what they termed a principled stand for the rights of women to continue to do with their bodies as they pleased, despite the overwhelming scientific evidence that another human body existed within them, a body that was living and thinking.

In the end, the civil disobedience and the protests fizzled. The vast majority of Americans, even the more liberally minded, accepted the scientific evidence at its face value, and distanced themselves strongly from the radical supporters of abortion. Now that the national consciousness was awake to the fact that living human babies, capable of thought and reason, had been killed by the millions, a revival of sorts began sweeping the nation. No more than a dozen doctors and their staffs across the nation responded to the calls by the NEW and the ALCU organizations. Those that did were subjected to massive counter protests that were organized in large part by the Independent Republic and other online internet organizations that immediately pointed out the location of these few clinics and organized massive "save

the children" protests in conjunction with the civil disobedience planned by the opposition.

Those "save the children" protests, organized by the Independent Republic Network, a confederation of Independent Republic chapters across the nation, caught the imagination of the American people, and surfed the rising wave of the revival spirit that was sweeping the nation. In every case, a handful of twenty or thirty protestors for abortion were confronted by thousands of protestors there to "save the children". The few doctors who had entertained thoughts of continuing the practice in some type of twisted protest for the rights of woman, as they prepared to terminate the life of now proven reasoning babies, quickly saw that any attempt on their part to do so would not only lead to potential jail time...it would lead to financial ruin as well. As a result, with no doctors or their staffs willing to take up the cause, the civil disobedience ended within three days, before it ever actually got started.

Elizabeth Trevor sat in contemplative silence on the evening of October 16th as she and her husband, Joseph, prepared for bed. Dr. Joseph Trevor and his entire family had been subjected to intense media exposure and coverage over the last several months as a result of the initial announcement regarding the HRS found in the fetal tissue and the fast track to the National Academy of Sciences and the Supreme Court. Elizabeth knew that the coverage had produced far more intense pressure, testimony and scrutiny than he had received in the run-up to his Nobel Prize in April of 2007 due to the initial discovery and documenting of those very Human Reasoning Structures.

"Joe, can you believe what's happened? The change for the good?"

"I simply marvel that a little over two and a half years ago you were led to discover those intricate, Godly structures at the root of our humanity ... and now look where it's led, and by what means!"

Joseph laid down in bed next to his wife. They had just finished their evening prayers together, where they both had uttered heartfelt and humble thanksgiving for the events of the last week.

"No, I really can't believe it ... and yet it is so.

"But honey, don't pile the credit on me, you were right there in the mix of all of this. If it hadn't been for your intuitive ... no, no, your inspired comments that turned my attention about the HRS towards the nervous system and the brain ... I am not sure I would have ever chanced upon the discoveries that I did."

Elizabeth knew her husband too well. He was modest, but he was driven. There was no doubt in her mind that he would have ultimately ended up there in any case, with or without her input.

"Joe, you ended up there because it was where you were supposed to end up. Whether it had been my input, or some other, the Lord was behind this, I am certain of that. Just look at Sandra and the change this has wrought in her ... who would have believed it?"

There was no need to answer that question. Neither of them would have believed it unless they had witnessed it themselves. Both of them viewed the change wrought in Sandra McPherson as a pre-cursor, or a type, representative of the change they hoped, and believed they were seeing being wrought in their nation. With those thoughts in mind, they both remained reflective of it all as they lay there and ultimately drifted off to sleep.

October 24, 2008 03:55 local time

Federal Court

Annandale, Virginia

"Ladies and gentlemen of the Jury," the Judge enquired, "Have you reached a verdict?"

Standing up at the Judges request, the foreman of the jury, a middle aged and balding white gentlemen replied, "We have your honor."

The Judge replied in the time honored phraseology typical of the American legal system, "How find you on the first count of Treason during a time of War against the United States of America, with special circumstances?"

The foreman stood up a little taller, straight backed and stared evenly at the Judge, "Your honor, we find the defendant guilty as charged!"

The courtroom erupted into bedlam as some reporters rushed out of the courtroom and others immediately began talking into their cell phones, or microphones. The special circumstances condition, which indicated that his actions had led directly to the deaths of American personnel and/or citizens, carried with it only two possible sentences, life in prison without the possibility of parole, or death.

BANG, BANG, BANG

The Judge's gavel came crashing down, demanding and receiving an instant reprieve to the noise.

"*WILL* have order in this court. Bailiff, remove anyone from this chamber who does not sit down and remain quiet within the next five seconds."

The Judge then continued through the list of charges, to which the foreman of the jury answered the same on every count, "Guilty as charged."

The trial of David Krenshaw had lasted for ten days. In that time the Government had produced an abundance witnesses, the defendants own testimony and several declassified electronic intercepts and surveillance images that firmly established that David Krenshaw, President of WNN Worldwide News and a leading member of the Council on International Relations, had consorted with the enemy and provided materiel, data and intelligence assistance to them as they waged unrestricted warfare on the United States of America and her citizens.

The evidence was overwhelming and compelling. The defense argument that much of the data was privileged or protected by 1st amendment rights was ineffective in the face of the defendant's own sworn and written testimony. It was clear to all, in the court room and out, that David Krenshaw, for several years, had sold his country and his fellow citizens out for his own materiel, professional and political ambitions, and that he had done it to adversaries, and then enemies of the nation both before and after the onset of hostilities. The final charge, of conspiracy to influence the political process was terribly damaging to the political aspirations of the opposition party.

The defense lawyer in the court room, and the political mechanism that surrounded Curt Johnson and his running mate, the former Senator Crater, in the press, tried to make the case that the current administration was deliberately pursuing a path with David Krenshaw's prosecution that itself was motivated by political gain. But the President's continuing refusal to so much as campaign for either his party's nomination or the eminent national election belied their arguments. No one, outside of those closest to Krenshaw and those close to the opposition ticket, was buying it, in the court room or out. Curt Johnson's own insistence on pursuing this path, long after the evidence dictated otherwise, was his own undoing.

In the end, David Krenshaw was found guilty on all counts. His sentencing hearing was put off until late November, but the overwhelming majority of American citizens, feeling deeply the betrayal of this media figurehead that so many of them had come to trust, were in favor of the maximum penalty. The Administration was pushing for that same penalty, and the Judge, who had been appointed by President Weisskopf almost three years earlier. was known for being extremely hard on crime.

The Attorney General of the United States said it best, a week later, just before the national elections, when he responded to a reporter's question regarding the disposition of Krenshaw.

"Mr. Krenshaw rose to some of the highest positions possible in our free and moral society. As a result of his love for himself, his ambition, his commitment to enemies of this nation and his corruption . . . as a result of his perusal of all of these things above his commitment to his fellow citizens and the liberty that availed him of the very opportunities he enjoyed . . . he sacrificed it all and threw it all away.

"And not only did he throw it all away for himself . . . for the same reasons his actions led to the deaths of countless American service personnel and citizens. For all of these reasons, David Krenshaw, as great a traitor as this nation has ever known . . . and it has known a few . . . has been given the guilty sentence he so richly deserves and it is this administration's absolute hope, that he will be sentenced to die for those crimes. An ignoble and dishonorable end to an ignoble, dishonorable, traitorous and murderous life.

"I would to God that we could bring forward evidence and proof for all of those who have so abjectly sold out our nation and led it to the precarious and dangerous circumstance we are currently in, where so many of our people and servants have died defending this Republic. If we could, we would, and they would receive the same treatment as Mr. Krenshaw. As it is, we do have the evidence of Mr. Krenshaw deeds and it has been presented and ruled upon by a jury of his peers according to the Constitution. We shall now await the sentencing along with the rest of the nation."

As Americans shook their heads in disbelief and contempt, and went on their way, it was clear that historically, the name of David Krenshaw, a man that had benefited so much from the liberty and freedom that America afforded, and who had betrayed that freedom so absolutely. . . the name of David Krenshaw would eclipse the name of Benedict Arnold as the greatest traitor in the nation's history.

November 3, 2008 10:34 local time

Executive Ruling Counsel Conference

Politburo, Beijing, China

Jien Zenim reflected on the last four years as his intelligence apparatus fed him the returns from the American elections.

As was the case four years ago, the elections were not going as he had hoped, or planned. The difference this time was that the results were not unexpected. Despite his planning and hopes, the American President, Norm Weisskopf, had performed admirably as an opponent and had rallied his people. It was not surprising that he was winning so handily, much more handily even than in 2004 when he had defeated the wife of the former President whom he had been in power throughout the 1990's..

"Ah for those days again," thought Zenim, "when a corrupt and weak administration in America had been so easily influenced and turned to our purposes."

"But the 1990's are gone, and in truth, they have given rise to the 2000's and the current state of world affairs. Affairs that are coming closer and closer to the realization of our goals."

Looking to his aide and beckoning for some more of the English Earl Grey tea that President Jien Zenim enjoyed, he asked his chief of staff for an update on the returns.

"Mr. President, we are understandably several hours behind the American tallies, but at last count it was clear that Weisskopf will win in a landslide.

"In fact, unless trends dramatically reverse themselves, and we see no reason why they should, President Weisskopf seems destined to win all fifty states and every one of their electoral votes. It will be a first in their history."

Jien Zenim thanked his chief of staff and indicated that he had heard enough.

Clearly, the trial and impending sentencing of that lackey Krenshaw had pushed the American public completely over the edge politically, as if they hadn't been close enough already. The Chinese President had no illusions. Using David Krenshaw as he had done had always contained the inherent risk that the weak man would be caught and would cave into pressure ... as he had done. But the benefits over the last few years had outweighed the risks, as evidenced by the success of Zenim's master plan in confederation with the Indians and the Islamics. People like Krenshaw and the other decadent and naïve people in America that the Chinese had co-opted over the years by the thousands were ultimately and entirely expendable, Zenim would shed no tears over their ilk. They were simply tools and means to an end, to be discarded or disposed of when they had fulfilled their usefulness.

"How did Lenin put it?", the President asked himself, "Yes, that's it, that's it entirely, *useful idiots* . Useful idiots and nothing more."

Turning to the other members of the executive council on the politburo, Zenim simply announced.

"Well, it seems we are destined to continue to face this bull of a man, Weisskopf.

"He is definitely a worthy adversary, but his re-election will not amount to anything of serious consequence. Our forces and our allies continue to push forward. That is the harsh reality with which he and his allied leaders must deal, and ultimately come to grips with.

"Despite the minor set backs we are experiencing in Central America near the Panama canal, and the great sacrifice near Midway Island, those forces have done their duty. The object of that duty now lies

within our grasp. Over the next weeks we will see America's puppet regime in Israel fall and be decimated, we will see the Russian capitol fall and all of Europe will be at our feet, and we will see the consolidation of all of North America's most strategic oil reserves and the fall of the entire American state of Alaska. Those are defeats that will break the will and the back of the enemy ... they will have no choice but to sue for peace ... and it will be peace on our terms my friends, the terms we have worked so long towards achieving."

"So, let the American President have his day, it shall be followed by many nights of long darkness."

As he stopped speaking and began to sip his tea while he observed the various members of the executive counsel, the Chinese President had no idea that several thousand miles away, in an area already long occupied by his allied forces, an event was about to occur that would pull one of the lynchpins out of his carefully laid plans which to date had been immensely successful.

November 6, 2008 15:22 local time

Occupation Commander's Luncheon

Old Parliament Conference Facility

Tbilisi, Georgia

General Talabari scanned the crowd of upturned faces he had just addressed. It had been a rousing reception, luncheon and speech. The commander of the occupation forces here in Georgia had specifically requested, many weeks ago that the legendary and heroic General stay over an extra night and address his command staff. General Talabari had agreed and had also taken the opportunity those many weeks ago to finally arrange for the young Colonel, Abduhl Selim, to leave his command in Romania and join him here and travel on with him to Damascus. But the trip had been delayed by meetings with the Imam in Tehran and by a desire for a final visit to the commanding general near Moscow before that great assault began. What had been initially planned for September, had slipped into November and the General was now anxious to be about the long awaited task of destroying Israel and its allies there defending her.

In that vein, it was also time for Colonel Abduhl Selim to take on a the heavy responsibility of a major command in a major engagement and prove his worth. If it went as General Talabari expected, and as he had briefed the great Imam, then Colonel Selim would soon become General Selim and would be in the eye of the leading military, political and religious leaders of the entire GIR ... and he would be the ally of and beholden to General Talabari for it all.

But others had been privy to the General's travel plans, and they too had been forced to delay and change their own plans as a result of the changes to the General's. Now, like the General, their plans were ready for implementation, but they would be implemented first-here today-well before the General could implement his own.

As General Talabari stepped down from the podium, his security detail fanned out in front of him

attempting to hold back the crowd of officers who wanted nothing more than to shake the hand of the great man. As was his custom, the General began to grasp the hands of a few of those well wishers as he passed through the crowd.

Cries of "*Allah Mak!*" and "*Allah Ahkbar!*" rang out as he passed by, grasping hands and speaking briefly with his well wishers.

One compelling hand reached out from the crowd to grasp his as the General passed by. The man offering it was flanked by two others, also reaching out to the general, but in a position to block the security detail from the outstretched hand of the first. That first man was dressed in the garb of a full Colonel of the occupation forces.

The General turned to the man to take his hand. In the instant he grasped it, he looked into the eyes of the man standing there and recognition flooded into his mind as he attempted to pull his hand back. As he began to do so, his greeter mouthed the following words directly to the General.

"Allah Mak, General, God is indeed great. Will sends his greetings!"

Captain Riley Adams, dark skinned and fluent in the Farsi and Arabic languages, knew that Talabari had recognized him, and despite the risk, that was exactly what he wanted. As soon as he saw that recognition in the General's eyes and felt the first movement of the General's hand being pulled back, Adams activated the small compressed air, dart gun hidden in his sleeve and there was the slightest, almost inaudible *psst* as the small dart, tipped with a powerful nerve agent, shot out from its concealed position on his wrist and impacted the General under his outstretched arm. No one in the crowd, including the nearest security personnel, heard that sound, the noise of their approval and greeting of the General was simply too loud.

Adams let go of the General's hand and the General was immediately rendered speechless and began to visibly slow in his step, turning his head slowly from side to side. The security personnel were just noticing that something might be wrong. As they did, Riley Adams and his two partisan compatriots had already pulled back into the crowd and were slowly making their way away from the site of the attack.

General Talabari took three steps, attempting to turn his head and say something to someone, to anyone to warn them, and then he collapsed. As he lay there on the floor, with a gathering crowd of security personnel and then medical personnel, all he could do was think.

"I knew this day would come," he thought, "... in my heart I knew it. The Americans would never forget such a betrayal."

He was slowly drifting away, thinking back on that day outside of Irbil in 2005, when he had been the assassin ... but the assassin of a close friend and compatriot. He remembered pointing the gun at CIA agent Will Peterson who was unsuspecting and had been acting under direct Presidential Order to interdict Hassan Sayeed that day, just as the world war was really starting. He remembered firing that round into the back of Peterson's head and the course it had set him upon. It was a course that led right here, to Tbilisi, Georgia, laying on this floor slowly losing feeling in all of his appendages.

"Adams ... that was Adams, Peterson's second in command," he thought. "How did he get here ... how did he know?"

"What was that he said, God is great ... greetings from Will ... Will, a good soldier ..."

As the numbness spread into his torso and reached his heart, the General simply stopped breathing and died there while his attendants frantically tried to revive him.

As they did so, one of those next to him stood up and slowly scanned the crowd and the room. It was a crowd that was shocked into silence, looking around, wondering what terrible thing had come to pass. Colonel Abduhl Selim sensed what had happened. He did not believe this was natural. He was looking for anything odd, anyone moving quickly away. But his search was in vain. Riley Adams was too wise to call attention to himself or his compatriots, all of whom had separated and were very much accustomed to maintaining a low profile amongst their enemies.

Before the building could be locked down, there were several diversionary explosions outside and the sound of small arms fire. The NCO that Adams had infiltrated the country with was doing his part with several more partisans. Adams and the two men who had helped him used that diversion to escape. Within another ten minutes, the fighting and firing had stopped completely.

Back in the parliament building General Talabari was dead, but his plans for the attack on Israel would survive him, as would his plans for Abduhl Selim. Both of those plans would be set in motion within two weeks of his death as the Colonel followed his orders and arrived near Damascus.

But the two sets of plans, one very large and far reaching in nature and the other much more individually oriented, would achieve astonishingly dissimilar results in their implementation and in their ultimate impact on world events.

Chapter 9

The Battles of Anchorage, Israel and Moscow

November 11, 2008 03:55 local time

Fall back Defensive Lines

American Forces

Palmer, Alaska

Hernando Rodriguez sat in his position, keen, observant and prepared to meet the enemy. He was positioned on a wooded hillside, in a reinforced, prepared position, ready to confront an enemy he knew would be coming, and they would be coming soon.

To date, the Americans and their Canadian allies had not been able to stop the Chinese juggernaut here in North America. Nome, Fairbanks, Prudhoe Bay, and Barrow had all fallen under Chinese control. Hundreds of thousands of additional Chinese troops were pouring into the country across the Bering Sea at Nome each week, and both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force had been prevented by the large Chinese forces from breaking through and seriously impeding that flow of enemy men and materiel.

Once the Chinese had consolidated their positions in the oil fields to the north, despite the destruction wrought there by U.S. nuclear demolition devices, they had turned their full attention south and east. Two weeks ago, Whitehorse had fallen as the Chinese continued moving up the Yukon River valley and established a firm foothold in the Yukon Territory of Canada. They had extended that foothold into the Northwest Territories and were now moving south there too.

With the rapid advancement, General Tsing had moved his center of operations to Fairbanks where his engineers had repaired the airbase there, out of which they were now operating combat air patrol and attack sorties

But the largest Chinese thrust had been reserved for the American buildup in Anchorage and its threat to their expansion. Anchorage, where Elmendorf Air Base and the United States Army were a continuing, growing force. Over three hundred thousand American troops and four hundred high performance aircraft had now gathered there to defend the State's capitol and the last hope for maintaining a strong American foothold in Alaska from which to counterattack the Chinese and win back lost ground. Twenty-two U.S. Navy warships, including the carrier, the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt, were now positioned in and around Cooke inlet to assist in air defense and suppressive fire missions. The Chinese knew that this threat had to be addressed now, that the more time they waited, the harder it would be to crack ... and they were now steamrolling their forces towards Anchorage just as quickly as they could.

American planners had hoped to be able to use the wall of the Alaskan Range to hold the Chinese back, but the defensive lines near Cantwell had been over-run despite inflicting massive casualties on the enemy. The fall back positions at Curry where the Susitna River narrowed had fallen two days later, just day before yesterday, and now the Chinese advance forces were probing and patrolling all around Palmer as they sought to bulldoze yet another American defensive line ... the line holding Hernando and his compatriots.

Hernando had talked to some of the survivors and veterans of Cantwell. He knew what to expect. There would be a tremendous sustained shelling, air and missile bombardment. That would be followed in short order, marching right behind that barrage, by masses and hordes of Chinese troops...too many to kill with the amount of ammunition the defensive line had at its disposal. Hernando remembered the description from one of the sergeants earlier this evening who had explained to them exactly what to expect.

"They'll come by the tens of thousands, men...and they march right into direct fire while others are probing and flanking.

"They pile up their own dead to fire from behind and then climb over the top and just keep coming, one pile of dead after another. I had heard stories about Chosin Reservoir in Korea, and this is exactly like that must have been.

"Just be ready, they'll be right behind the barrage. Take down as many as you can, and then withdraw in order, firing as you go. Do not expend all of your ammo before that order, you'll need it to cover your retreat."

Hernando knew that what that sergeant had said was exactly what he had seen and lived ... but he and his compatriots, and their officers were dedicated and committed to holding the line at all costs. Behind this position, the way to Anchorage would be much easier. Defended, yes, but this was the best position for defense between here and Eklutna at the head of Cooke Inlet and at the door to Anchorage.

... as Hernando rolled these thoughts over in his mind, it started.

SWOOSH ... WHAM!, WHAM! WHAM!

The impacts came furiously, deafening, even with the ear protection he was wearing. It went on and on with the entire squad hunkered down in the confines of their bunker praying to avoid a direct hit.

After thirty minutes of continuous, intense bombardment, Hernando began to notice an underlying, background noise, barely perceptible in the distance. There was no doubt what it was. Even as enemy aircraft engaged in vicious dogfights overhead with American F-15 and F-22 fighters, the noise of approaching mechanized infantry grew louder ... and intermingled with that sound, the sound of marching feet ... by the thousands ... by the tens of thousands that literally could be heard above the bombardment and above the mechanized vehicles that heralded them.

"Mother of God," Hernando uttered to himself, "How many of them can there be?"

He tried to look to his forward, using his night vision equipment but he was violently thrown to the back of the bunker by a near miss. As he shook off the effects of that concussion, he moved forward to his firing position again, urging his team members to do likewise, which they did with the practiced precision of professionals long used to combat.

What greeted them as they took up their positions and began preparing to target the oncoming enemy was frightful. There, across the valley, coming over the far ridge, were hundreds and hundreds of Chinese infantry fighting vehicles, tanks and armored personnel carriers. Despite the fearful beating they were taking from American artillery and aircraft, they kept coming and the numbers were too great to hinder. Behind them, the ground was dark, literally moving with the enemy infantry on foot.

... and then the Chinese yelled, and with a roar that drowned out all other sound, they charged from two kilometers away.

It was at this point that Hernando caught a glimpse of movement in the air, flying low over his position. When he looked up, he could just barely distinguish the form of an extremely large cruise missile, many cruise missiles, passing overhead. They were long, but they were only sleek on the front and tail ends. In the middle their wastes bulged as they sped low over the battlefield towards that onrushing mass of armor and men. They had been launched from over the Cooke Inlet some sixty miles away by ten refurbished B-52G's that had been brought out of mothballs over the last eight weeks specifically for this purpose.

Anti-aircraft missiles rose up from amongst the enemy as their *ta shih* detectors acquired contact with the missiles. Ground forces, seeing the approaching wave of American missiles began visually targeting them with small arms and other anti-aircraft fire. As the cruise missiles cleared Hernando's position a wall of missiles and tracer fire reached out towards the onrushing cruise missile barrage. As several impacts and the resulting explosions lit up the battlefield, many of the Chinese defensive missiles missed and passed right by the cruise missiles, a few sensing their proximity and exploding close enough to American cruise missiles to bring a few more down of them down.

But the bulk of the onrushing wave of American missiles approached the front portions of the oncoming Chinese assault front unimpeded. Small bay doors opened on all of the lead cruise missiles and Hernando and his team members then witnessed the most awesome act of destruction ever perpetrated on any single battlefield in the course of this war, or any other to date. The electronic, sustained firing of hundreds of thousands of .177 caliber, depleted uranium pellets at hypervelocity speeds lit up the battlefield like the hand of God ... and the effects on the Chinese were the same.

From over fifty remaining AGM-999 missiles a literal hail storm of metal, on a front over three miles wide, mowed into and across the attacking Chinese formations, leaving nothing but a gruesome tangled and grizzly mix of perforated IFV's and APC's, flesh-chopped up like so much hamburger, and immobile tanks...some of which continued to fire on the American positions. Those few, roughly twelve percent of the Chinese tanks, were no longer capable of movement, their engine compartments having been ruined by the impact of 177 depleted uranium pellets, just as the missiles had been programmed to do.

In less than forty seconds, the initial wave of Chinese troops, numbering more than seventy-five thousand men, five hundred APC's and IFV's and over three hundred tanks, had been stopped dead ... literally dead, outside of Palmer, Alaska.

Ten minutes later, the slaughter was repeated as the follow-on second wave of Chinese troops and their equipment rushed into the same killing fields, and were assaulted by another wave of AGM-999 missiles that broke and destroyed another eighty thousand Chinese troops and their equipment. It was too much for any army to withstand without breaking. Although the full Chinese assault included more than five hundred thousand troops, the loss of almost one third of them in a period of half an hour devastated that assault entirely, routing the remaining attack force who began to rapidly fall back in the direction from whence they had come.

Had General Tsing understood that the United States had expended all of the AGM-999 missiles available to them in Alaska in that monumental effort outside of Palmer, he might have pressed on with his remaining forces and yet won the day. But he could not have known, and he dared not risk his remaining troops. As reports filtered back to him, from the observation of follow-on troops who witnessed the carnage, and from the absolute silence in communications from those first two waves, the General had no choice but to call for an immediate and complete withdrawal back towards the Alaskan Range and Cantwell, where he hoped to regroup and resume the attack.

But the American commanders were too wise to allow that. When their own observation posts reported the success of the AGM-999 attack and the utter destruction of the enemy, an immediate all out assault and counterattack was ordered. Hernando and his squad, along with over fifty thousand American soldiers began the counter offensive and harried the Chinese rear all the way to Cantwell where they overran their defenses before they could be prepared.

Over the space of the next eight days, the attack evolved and expanded to include over two hundred and fifty thousand American and Canadian troops. That counter offensive broke through the Alaskan Range and carried all the way to Fairbanks, which was recaptured from the Chinese in vicious fighting on November 19th as a rushed General Tsing evacuated his command post and fell back down the Yukon Valley towards Ruby, Alaska.

He left behind over eighty thousand Chinese troops in Canada who were now completely cut off from their supply lines and from any hope of relief in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. It also left an emboldened American Army preparing to attack north towards the Brooks Range and the ANWR, and to the west towards the Chinese positions now solidifying around Wolf Mountain and its shoulder on the Yukon River ... an American Army at that point that was about to receive another influx of AGM-999, Hail Storm missiles for use in their continuing counter offensive against the Chinese.

November 14, 2008 19:28 local time

Landing Zone Zulu

Joint U.S. and IDF forward position

East of Damascus, Syria

Colonel Jess Simmons guided his Comanche helicopter in for a quick, flared landing, all of its ordinance expended. For the last two days it had been like this, flying out into a target rich environment, expending all of his ordinance, and then returning to load up again and start the process all over.

He was reminded of the letters and conversations he had with his son, Billy, last year while he had been defending Australia, and well before he had been lost off of the coast of Australia when his ship, the Tarawa, had been sunk. In those correspondences and conversations, Billy had told him of much the same experience, flying his U.S. Marine, AH-1Z Viper attack helicopter out into a target rich environment, expending all of his ordinance over and over again at the oncoming masses of enemy.

"Except in that case, the enemy in Australia had been attacking, and now here we have them on the run," reflected the Colonel as he silently contemplated current conditions versus those of six months ago when Australia fell, and his son with it . . . and he again mourned that loss.

"Dear God, please keep Billy in the palm of Your hand, wherever his body lies, and help Cindy and I understand and accept Thy will," he pled as he unbuckled and prepared to exit the aircraft.

As U.S. Forces unleashed their AGM-999, Hail Storm missiles on the Chinese in Alaska, allied forces here in Israel were prompted, prematurely to do the same. A few hours after the attack in Alaska, and just hours before the late General Talabari's attack order could be implemented on November 13th, an argument between a Jordanian farmer and a roving Israeli patrol attracted the attention of a company size detachment of Syrian troops moving up towards their jump-off positions for the GIR major offensive planned for very early the next morning.

The Syrians attacked the much smaller group of Israelis and the Israelis called in air and additional ground support. Within thirty minutes a major battle was developing and support aircraft saw and witnessed the imminent GIR buildup. In a flash of inspiration, and in order to preempt the GIR attack, General Olsen recognized the GIR intentions and ordered the immediate implementation of the allied counterattack plan, which was set to spearhead right through the area in question. This committed the American, British and Israeli forces to a counter attack along a line that ran from east the Sea of Galilee up to the Golan heights.

Two waves of forty AGM-999 missiles each were immediately used to open up a gaping hole in the GIR defensive lines, which also decimated their forming attack formations. Well over two hundred thousand enemy personnel were killed in a space of less than an hour. Many more were severely injured and disabled in their prepared positions. The resulting rent in GIR lines allowed the allied counter attack to pour through into the fiercely contested ground between Damascus and the Golan heights, where they were met by the huge reserves that General Talabari had gathered to meet the ultimately anticipated allied counter-attack. But that plan had contemplated the allies expending most of their high tech weaponry against the initial line of GIR forces, and then breaking out to contend on equal terms the larger, reserve GIR forces.

But the joint allied armies that had broken through the shattered initial line of GIR defenses arrived with all of their high tech weaponry intact, thanks to the AGM-999 onslaught which chewed through the GIR lines. The sophisticated allied weaponry that General Talabari had hoped would be exhausted when the allies met the large reserve forces were still plentiful. Just the same, the GIR reserve forces were much larger than the allies had expected and were no pushover. They were prepared and eager to fight.

Led by an inspired and hard fighting Army group consisting of over twelve divisions, whose command had passed to the young Abduhl Selim when the other senior officers were all killed or disabled, the battle raged for over three days as GIR forces contested the allied push towards Damascus. But the superior acquisition, targeting and munitions technology enjoyed by the allies took its toll. Ultimately, when allied air superiority was achieved over the battle field early the third day, what had been a slow, grueling advance on the allies part became a breakthrough on the afternoon of the 15th. U.S., United Kingdom and Israeli forces pushed GIR forces back to, and then through Damascus where the fighting became a bitter, street to street conflict. General Olsen ordered the bulk of the allied forces to cut-off and bypass Damascus and prepare to assault defensive positions that the bulk of the GIR forces had fallen back to and were hurriedly strengthening well to the east of the city.

In the mean time, a general order had been given by the GIR high command in that northern sector of the battle for all other GIR forces to fall back towards the defensive lines to the east of Damascus, while a sizable contingent sought to draw the allies into an urban warfare scenario in the city. As the allies bypassed the city according to General Olsen's orders, the leading elements of the assault ran headlong into a large GIR force arriving from northern Lebanon. There were no more AGM-999 missiles available to the allies to stop these forces, which were able to punch through the initial allied advance and reinforce GIR defensive positions before the bulk of the allied force could be brought to bear. This left a developing confrontation east of Damascus on the night of November 17th, pitting superior allied artillery, close air support and armor against the still larger numbers of GIR equipment and personnel, who were digging in and preparing for battle.

The last thirty AGM-999 missiles available in theater to the allies, which had been held back as a reserve, had been used late on the 15th to crush and destroy a counter offensive that GIR and Chinese forces had made along the Suez Canal. That enemy attack had utilized a direct assault into the higher fire power of the allied forces who were operating behind well prepared positions. After two days of violent struggle, the massive GIR numbers had broken through the Israeli and British defenses on the 15th and were in the process of carrying well into the Sinai towards Gaza. This became a critical situation, with the danger of the successful allied offensive to the north and east being taken in the rear and completely enveloped. The allies quickly made the decision to deploy the last of the AGM-999 missiles to halt that advance. Thinking, as a result of their breakthrough and steady advance on the 15th, that the allies were powerless to stop them, the GIR force were utterly devastated by those thirty missiles and their deadly Hail Storm munitions late that day. Over 250,000 GIR and Chinese forces pouring across the Sinai were eliminated and their follow on columns were forced into a state of confusion and disorder by the carnage. Reserve IDF divisions out of Israel proper, and reinforcement American divisions from south of the Dead Sea, successfully engaged and halted the GIR counterattack. By the end of the 17th, allied forces to the south were very close to pushing the enemy back to the Suez canal.

As night fell on Damascus on November 17th, Colonel Simmons rested and contemplated the horrific fighting of the last five days that had accompanied the successful "break out" that allied forces had achieved here. The carnage was incredible, the fighting had been fierce, but the Colonel was now secure in the knowledge, along with the other allied commanders, that the siege of Israel had been broken. The allies were finally in a position to take the offensive in the Mid East, albeit against a still determined and resourceful foe.

November 19, 2008 9:28 local time

HQ Command Facility

Russian High Command

Defense of Moscow

News of the tremendous allied victories in Alaska and around Israel had been received with much celebration and joy in Moscow. It instilled hope to the defending forces in the midst of the current crisis. They all now knew that the juggernaut that had been the GIR and CAS forces could be thrown back, and with tremendous loss. It helped to know, that the Americans had been able to deliver over eighty of their vaunted new weapon, the AGM-999, Hail Storm, missiles to Russia, flown in on the venerable B-52 bombers.

But, as others celebrated and looked forward to what now appeared to be a sure counter offensive against the surrounding GIR and CAS masses, General Andrei Nosik planned. He knew that here the AGM-999 capabilities would not take his enemy by surprise. He knew that the enemy had now had the time to analyze and understand the new threat and was bound to prepare for it. He would not underestimate them, not after being driven several thousand miles west by their armies, right here to the gates of Moscow.

No, he had to wisely apply his assets. He was still vastly outnumbered and at great risk. He also had to convince the Americans to let him use those AGM-999 missiles in the defense of his homeland as he saw fit. And he had a plan...it was a bold one, and also a risky one. But, under the circumstance the General viewed anything else as an even greater risk, and he wanted to maximize his ability to apply those deadly weapons the Americans had developed. He was sure that he had come up with a methodology to do just that and, based on his long experience with the Chinese, he was committing his entire defense plan to the surmise that the Chinese would respond to the new American threat accordingly in their assault on Moscow.

He was also thankful for the weather. An early winter storm had gripped the city and surrounding countryside in its clutches for the last three days with snow and bitter cold. That bad weather had allowed him to execute the initial stages of his plan under its cover. Now that weather pattern was forecast to break late this evening and he expected the enemy to attack very soon. From everything he had seen, very soon now he was going to find out if he was correct in his assumptions.

November 20, 2008 00:01 local time

Forward Russian Positions

Defense of Moscow

Late that night the weather did clear, and the temperature fell. By midnight, under a dead calm, the temperature had dropped well below zero Celsius, and down into the low teens Fahrenheit. Very early that morning, the morning of the 20th, when the enemy attack came, it came from artillery and missile launchers by the thousands that were established on a twenty-five mile front to the east of Moscow, and on a fifteen mile front to the south. It was a bombardment and barrage, the likes of which had not been seen before in the history of war. Off to the east and south, the night sky literally lit up, brighter than during the day, and stayed lit, with a pulsating, reverberating kind of light that simply would not go away.

Short seconds later, the entire terrain in front of, along and behind the allied lines also lit up ... with thousands and thousands of explosions. Deep, earth-penetrating blasts that shook the earth for miles, ground-level blasts and airbursts that racked the prepared defenses with shrapnel from above.

Electronically observing it from his deeply buried forward command post, General Andrei Nosik realized with a start and with perspiration beginning to run down his face that the memory of his dream had come fresh into his mind. Except this time, it was no dream plaguing his sleep, it was harsh reality. For over two and a half years he had been filled with strong feelings of foreboding from that dream since he had first experienced in Siberia. He had done everything in his power to prepare his forces and his superiors for what that dream forebode ... and now, despite his every effort, here he was living it out.

He recognized the incessant flashing lights from his dream as the flash of this artillery and missile barrage ... and it was directed at his forces ... directed at him. Like in the dream, it went on and on, a constant reverberating light, but unlike the dream the constant roar of the explosions, although not completely audible, was rumbling through the structure all around him, conveyed through the earth ... reaching out, searching ... wanting to destroy him and his nation.

And, like in the dream, he had already seen the masses streaming to the east to escape the tide of death and destruction. All across the *Rodina*, from Volograd to Moscow to his own home city of St. Petersburg, millions of people, Russian people ... refugees ... streaming to the west by foot, on roads, following rivers, across country ... any way they could. And no one to help them. In the past, it was at this point that he always woke up ... in a cold sweat, shaking. Now, the cold sweat was continuing, and the shaking was all around him ... but he was not waking up from this dream, it was harsh reality.

They all knew what was coming, and they had prepared as best they could for it. After over eight hours of incessant pounding, at 08:20 the enemy attacked, rolling in behind another massive barrage.

As that barrage lifted, from all across that front, not massed as they had been in Alaska, or cramped into static defensive positions as they had been in Israel, the enemy advanced, roaring with a yell that could be heard over the din of combat for miles. It was the most massive single assault in the history of mankind, over three million men and their materiel in the initial assault wave alone, all across the front. Too dispersed for the AGM-999 missiles to halt all along those two fronts ... and now too close to the allied forces for nuclear weapons to be used without committing mass suicide in the process.

"Perhaps that is where this leads," thought the General, "a final '*how I shall grapple with thee*', and then death to both sides."

But the General's plan now began to be executed. The largest barrage of cruise missiles in the history of warfare was now unleashed by Russia and her allies against the attacking force of the CAS and the GIR. They were not the unbelievably effective AGM-999 missiles of the Americans, but they were every other variety of land attack cruise missile available to the allies, from Russian, German, French, British and

limited American stocks...and the enemy had to presume that they were the more deadly missiles. They came streaming across the battlefield by the hundreds, and by the thousands. Anti-aircraft missiles rose in their thousands from the Chinese, Indian and GIR assaulting divisions and were very effective at knocking them out of the air in burning, crashing, exploding debris that impacted on both sides of the engagement. But with so many cruise missiles, hundreds and hundreds exploded amongst the enemy, making perceptible dents in their offensive, and even more importantly, channeling that offensive where General Nosik wanted it to go.

Andrei was implementing a plan that was meant to herd the masses of attacking enemy into two major channels, one here to the east of Moscow, and another to the south. Those channels represented two natural river drainages from which the enemy could approach Moscow. They were channels where he knew the enemy had knocked out his forward and secondary lines of defense with their artillery and missile barrage and would pour through towards the city unimpeded. He knew this because in those positions, the lines had been vacated late last night under the cover of the inclement winter weather before the barrage began. Those defending forces had fallen back to the outer suburbs of Moscow proper and were waiting there now, the final defense if his plan failed, and a strong counter attack force if it succeeded.

On the enemy came, fierce defenses being waged against them in the areas not intentionally open to their advance. Along those lines approaching the channels to the right and left, the bulk of the massive conventional cruise missile barrage had been and were being expended. Chinese and GIR forces were rolling up against those lines and in some cases, invariably penetrating them because of the vastness of their numbers and the damage that had been done to those lines by the enemy barrage. In those cases, the General was hoping that his secondary lines and his reserves would be enough to contain them and channel them into what they had to believe were their major breakthroughs along the two channels the General had prepared.

And it was working. Like flowing water seeks the easiest course, the advancing enemy hordes began to flow and then pour through the paths of least resistance.

By 10 AM, along the two channels, each no more than two miles wide, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of enemy troops were massed and approaching Moscow rapidly, almost unimpeded. To the east over one million, two hundred thousand Chinese and Indian troops were gathered in that channel on a two mile front and extending back over eight miles to the rear. To the south, over seven hundred thousand GIR troops had been funneled into a channel comprising a one and a half mile front and extending back almost nine miles. Each of these vast armies had over fifteen hundred APCs and IFV's and over six hundred main battle tanks. They were forces that would absolutely crush and pulverize the Russian capitol if they were able to reach it, and that was the risk General Kosik was taking.

Now, flying up the valleys, low to the ground, flying well under the massive aerial dogfights above the battlefield, came the eighty American AGM-999, Hail Storm missiles. There would be no second wave of missiles this day, all missiles available were being expended in this great gamble to halt the enemy offensive at the very door of Moscow.

To the east, fifty American missiles, carrying over 1,500,000 depleted uranium pellets assaulted the attacking enemy forces. Very few of them were intercepted by Chinese missiles as most of those defensive missiles were continuing to intercept the much greater numbers of conventional cruise missiles attacking the flanks of the enemy columns. Across that two mile front, the American missiles laid down a wall of hail and hell over three miles deep. Not enough to destroy the entire column by far, but more than enough to halt it, jamming it up against the absolute destruction to its front. Over 400,000 enemy soldiers and their equipment were destroyed there in the space of less than ten minutes.

A virtual repeat of the same story occurred to the south. There, the thirty American missiles laid down a complete suppressive wall all across the one and a half mile front and back into the enemy columns over two miles, killing and destroying another 280,000 of the enemy and creating a massive log-jam as the enemy to the rear ran up against and could not effectively pass the total destruction to their front.

It was the most massive destruction of men and materiel in the history of warfare and in the history of mankind. . .but it did not entirely halt or turn this battle. The enemy was simply too numerous and was still pressing forward with over a million men in their initial wave across the battlefield, and another three million in a secondary wave that would begin their attack late that afternoon.

But the allied forces were not waiting for that.

As soon as the massive destruction to the front of those two channels was observed, General Nosik gave the order for his counter attack. Over one million allied troops and their own armor, fell in on the flanks of the two channels that had been created in their own lines. The forces that had been pulled back the night before then attacked all along the front of those same channels. The Chinese, Indian and GIR troops that had been channeled into those areas were now surrounded and being fired on from well planned and executed overlapping and mutually supporting firing positions.

It was a battle of epic proportions, literally millions of men and materiel engaged at one time in the killing fields to the east and south of Moscow. It was also turning into a slaughter of biblical proportions as the initial assault waves of the enemy forces were surrounded and on the verge of annihilation late that afternoon. That is when the second wave of the enemy attacked.

That attack was accompanied by an artillery and missile barrage almost as massive as the first. The CAS and GIR commanders had determined to let those barrages fall all across the front, and in particularly right on top of where the initial wave was still engaged with allied forces. It was the enemy's version of "*letting God sort it out*" and it worked to great effect, The portion of the enemy first assault wave captured in the two channels, now given up as a lost cause by their own commanders, was savaged and further destroyed by that barrage, but the allied forces out in the open fighting them were also terribly damaged.

General Nosik called up the last of his own reserves and the battle see-awed back and forth across two fronts over forty miles wide and fifteen miles deep. It went on and on, first for days, and then for weeks. Casualties were massive, unheard of. . .literally numbering in the millions. In spite of the cold, disease broke out in ravaging waves as the dead remains of the unburied were scattered across the field of battle by the incessant fighting.

On the first of December, the Chinese and their allies made a massive feint to the north, and then punched directly into the city of Moscow from the east, penetrating over five miles into the city proper and coming within two miles of the Kremlin. The government had been evacuated two months earlier to St. Petersburg, but the possibility of losing the Kremlin was like a shot of adrenaline to the Russian morale, their troops fighting like mad men. Initial allied thoughts of abandoning the city and withdrawing further to the east were rejected by the Russian high command as national pride and honor rose above immediacy.

The savageness of the resulting defense and counter attacks in street to street fighting inspired the allies as the battle raged for days close to the historic seat of government. More reserves and volunteers were rushed to the front from throughout Europe. The intense fighting saved the Kremlin from capture, but much of it was destroyed in the artillery, armor and air battles that accompanied the battle. Ultimately, by

December 11th, enemy forces were driven from the capitol in a massive counter attack of over one and a half million men made possible by the arrival of over 450,000 French, Polish, Czechoslovakian and Finnish troops at the front that were immediately thrown into the offensive.

As the fourth week of December was reached, just before Christmas, enemy troops were conducting an orderly but general withdrawal to the east back towards Gorkiy and to the south towards Tambov where they intended to take up defensive positions for the winter. They carried with them the remains of several of the downed U.S. AGM-999 missiles that were to be rushed back to points far to the east and south for analysis. CAS and GIR engineers and planners were anxious to come up with new defenses and strategies for countering these weapons that had cost them so much, and halted and turned back the major offensive operations of their nations right at their zenith. Those defenses and counter strategies would not be long in coming.

For their part, the allies in Russia were content to snipe at their enemy's flanks during their withdrawal and keep close watch upon them. Allied forces were simply too spent to cope with the Russian winter while conducting a continuing offensive to push their enemies further to the east and south. They would have to first regroup and re-provision themselves with weapons, aircraft and ammunition of all types, including more AGM-999 missiles, before they could sustain further major offensive operations. Both sides had worn themselves out in the fighting around Moscow where over two and one half million military personnel had died, and another four million had been wounded in the course of six weeks of the most intense fighting the world had ever known...and those figures did not begin to account for the horrendous, unimaginable civilian casualties. It would take the entire next year, and more, to bury the dead and clean up the debris of war around Moscow.

Those same conditions would hold true in Israel and north of Anchorage, Alaska where service personnel and citizens would be finding small pieces of debris for years to come. In the three epic battles, Anchorage, Israel and Moscow, millions had died on both sides and millions more had been wounded. Over the space of six weeks, these pivotal battles had been fought and decided in three vastly separate places on the earth's surface. Their outcome would ultimately be pointed to as the High Tide of CAS and GIR power during the course of World War III and as a pivotal moment in the history of all mankind. But as monumental as the battles were, the fighting and carnage was far from over and the ultimate outcome of the war was far from decided...and the entire earth's population knew it.

Epilogue

December 22, 2008, 02:20 Local Time

125 miles West of Juneau, Alaska

The Gulf of Alaska, The Pacific Ocean

The four ships made their way northward, a small convoy carrying men and supplies up to Anchorage for the Alaskan war effort. There were two older naval transports, a newer Whidbey Island LSD class amphibious ship packed with men and supplies, and a single Arleigh Burke class Aegis destroyer outfitted with the new SUBT CIWS system.

As they progressed, well over the horizon from shore, they were constantly monitored by both an E-3 Sentry aircraft out of Elmendorf Air Base near Anchorage and by an E-2C AEW naval aircraft off of the Theodore Roosevelt. CAP aircraft from the base and the carrier were in the air at all times. Further offshore, three Los Angeles class attack submarines, recently outfitted with SUBT CIWS themselves, monitored the approaches to Juneau and Anchorage, and the entire inside passage.

With the recent victory near Anchorage and the continuing successful counter attack into the interior of Alaska, the commanders of the ships and those tasked with protecting them thought they were relatively safe. They were wrong.

Suddenly, on the threat boards on the Aegis destroyer, the U.S.S. O'Kane, and aboard the Whidbey Island class LSD, the U.S.S. Rushmore, warnings were sounded and sonar operators picked up the unmistakable sound of rocket engines being set off in the water resulting in the rapid approach of Killer Whales. It was quickly apparent that six of the fearsome weapons were approaching, one for each of the transports, and two each for the O'Kane and the Rushmore.

The Captain of the O'Kane, who was the commander of the small convoy, had positioned himself perfectly to handle any attack from seaward, exactly from where these weapons were closing on his position. The Rushmore was directly to his left and only one hundred yards away. Each of the transports were in a tight formation, one ahead of and the other behind the Rushmore, well within range of the destroyers SUBT CIWS. Though sweating as he received the sonar reports of the enemy Killer Whale weapons closing on his formation, the captain felt certain that he had the best defenses possible and was reasonably confident his four SUBT CIWS turrets could engage and destroy all of them.

He was wrong again.

A good eight hundred yards out from the O'Kane, just as the weapons were coming into effective SUBT CIWS range, the two weapons targeting the Burke class destroyer rose and broached the surface of the water, rising fifteen to twenty feet into the air, continuing to approach the warship, but now increasing their speed and approaching 700 knots. The forward Phalanx CIWS was immediately activated, but it took it over two seconds to power up, lock on and engage the first target. In that time the two weapons had closed over six hundred yards and were beginning to angle down towards the ship's waterline, only another second from impact.

The Phalanx fired a full one second burst which impacted and exploded the first weapons a mere instant before it impacted the ship. The second weapon impacted the ship under full power and dove halfway through the vessel before exploding six decks below the bridge. The combined energy of both weapons wreaked horrific damage on the vessel and rolled it completely over on its side, where it capsized before being struck a glancing blow by a third weapon tracking on the Rushmore. That final glancing blow and explosion only hastened the O'Kane's sinking three minutes later.

Each of the older transports, now helpless against the flying Killer Whales approaching them, were impacted by those weapons with resulting terrific explosions and loss of life. Both of them quickly settled into the cold waters of the Gulf of Alaska as the massive rents the weapons had opened up in them opened the ships to the sea and they both also sank.

The U.S.S. Rushmore was much more fortunate. The two weapons attacking her had to fly through the wreckage of the O'Kane and one of them impacted some object protruding off of the ship as it rolled over, causing that weapon to glance off of the O'Kane and explode over her side. The second weapon continued on in towards the Rushmore, but was engaged by its Phalanx CIWS and one of its RAM missile launchers. These defenses intercepted the target, but it was close enough to the side of the ship

that the explosion and debris barreled into the side of the vessel and caused significant damage and secondary fires and explosions and a substantial loss of life amongst the sailors and marines aboard. But unlike the other ships in the convoy, the impact was not fatal and the Rushmore was not ripped open to the sea.

For over three hours helicopters from the Rushmore and others arriving from Juneau searched for and picked up survivors from the other three vessels. Damage control crews extinguished the fires and made emergency repairs to the Rushmore. In the end over nine hundred American lives were lost, and another, new and perilous threat to the U.S. Navy was revealed. Lu Pham and his engineers had again been successful and another chapter in the sea war was about to begin.

December 24, 2008, 21:00 EDT

The Oval Office, The White House

Presidential Christmas Address

Washington, DC

President Weisskopf looked directly into the camera. He knew he was looking out at well over one hundred and fifty million Americans who were tuned into his Presidential address this Christmas Eve. He hoped that what he had to say would be conveyed to the heart and soul of America to prepare the nation for the long road ahead.

"My fellow Americans. I greet you this Christmas Eve with all of the feeling and spirit of the season. We gather together this night in traditional American settings all over the country for sharing, thanksgiving and a spirit of brotherhood and joy. This is our tradition and our heritage, even in this monumental crisis that we face as a nation, as a people, and truly as a world.

"Despite the travail, we have much to be grateful and thankful for this Christmas Eve my fellow Americans. Despite the best efforts of our enemies, and make no mistake, those efforts are directed at us with hate and ire. . .but despite those efforts, we still live in freedom and relative peace, and we are still the most prosperous nation on the face of the earth, one the entire free world now looks to for leadership and example.

"And around the world we are providing that example. I will speak briefly to you of three monumental victories we have achieved in the last few weeks. You may have heard something of each of them, but I wanted to emphasize to you all the import of those victories.

"Over the course of the last three years, our world has experienced an outbreak of tyranny and cold calculated murder on a scale never before seen on earth. We have been set back on our heels for that entire time, seemingly riding from one major set back to another as we strove to hold our ground and rebuild ourselves to the point where we could overcome the tyrants rising out of China, India and the so called Greater Islamic Republic. Never has the world experienced an Axis of pure unmitigated terror and evil as has been perpetrated by the confederation of these nations, even more dangerous, brutal and wide

spread than the Axis of the last century. Scores of millions are dead, hundreds of millions are hurt, wounded or experiencing unspeakable horror, *billions* have been subjugated, and the conflict is still far from decided.

Never before has so much of the world, or so great a percentage of her population been brought under the domination and subjugation of such tyranny. From west of the Ural mountain in Russia stretching far to the east across the Bering Straits into Alaska, from the Arctic Ocean across all of Asia and covering the entire continent of Australia. Across an increasing portion of the underbelly of Europe and all but the slightest slice of the Mid-East. Stretching over half of Africa and including large segments of Central and South America as well.

"My fellow citizens, at this zenith of their growth, these powers have brought into subjugation almost three fourths of the world's population, almost four billion souls.

"I do not mean to belabor this on this Holy evening meant to honor and punctuate the Peace we all aspire towards. Indeed it is an evening that should be full of rest, peace and contentment, but in so much of our world, there is no peace and there is no rest or contentment.

"But, here, in America, we still have a measure of peace unknown to most of the world, despite the attacks and terror on our own soil. It is my intent, it is my unalterable commitment to see that the peace that we enjoy holds my fellow Americans, and to see that it spreads abroad over the world to overshadow and extinguish the evil rule of tyrants that have waged war upon the peaceful nations of the earth. I know from my own experiences of the last three years, that this is a shared commitment I have with all of you, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for that sure knowledge through the acts of compassion, patriotism, hard work and commitment that you all have made. We must all continue in that same course and take heart from recent events.

"Because now we have more reason to hope, a great hope that we can in fact begin the hard work of extinguishing the darkness and the tyranny ... and we have it for two principle reasons. Let me speak to you somewhat about the first, which is the less important of the two, as important and necessary as they both are. The first reason is simply this... we have turned back what I consider to be the High Tide of these evil, aggressor regimes. Their evil, their hate, their compulsion and force of arms washed up hard against allied forces right here on our own soil in Alaska. It crashed hard against our own forces and those of our allies in Israel, the last free bastion in the Middle East ... and it crashed up mightily and with perhaps the greatest force against the gates of Moscow.

"My fellow citizens, in all three cases that evil tide crashed against the will, the commitment, the bravery and the morality and liberty of free peoples... and it broke. In horrific circumstances and battles that no sane person wants to contemplate or ever experience, the massed forces of tyranny... forces many time larger and seemingly more powerful than the combined might of our own and those who fought with us... forces that for the last three years have raged up and down in the world, seemingly unstoppable and unbeatable ... those forces crashed up against the forces of liberty and they were defeated... and they were defeated decisively.

"Make no mistake. This war is far from over. *The millions* who have died defending and throwing this wretched tide back from its zenith at Anchorage, Israel and Moscow give us mute evidence at to what lies before us. The forces of evil will not go away quietly into the night... they will rage on... they will fight hard to hold onto the lands and people they are exploiting, torturing, raping and pillaging... but just as they found in these three places in November and December of this year, they will ultimately be defeated, and defeated decisively and absolutely.

"In closing, let me share with you exactly why they will be defeated. It goes to that second reason for hope that I referred to...it goes to the basic differences between ourselves and our enemies. It is the simple difference between free choice and compulsion, morality and abject immorality and evil.

"What I am about to say may offend some, but I hope it causes all of us to deeply and seriously reflect on who we are, and what we represent. What I am about to say is the unvarnished truth, and it a truth that we have been brought back to as a result of these terrible circumstances...a truth we are now perhaps prepared to re-learn and accept once again from the heart.

"My fellow Americans, our freedom is founded in free choice and morality. Both are critical, both are absolute. This is something the founders of our Republic designed into the system, and I believe that they were inspired by God to do so. Yes, I said that ...*they were inspired by God*. I am not afraid to say that in these desperate and trying times...and I hope that Americans of faith and of goodwill will never be afraid to say words like that again, and ascribe our success as a people and a nation to where it rightly belongs. As an example of this, let me share with you what has come to be one of my favorite quotes from any of the founding father of this nation, a quote that strikes to the heart of what has made us strong. It is from John Adams and it goes like this.

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

"Mr. Adams said that in October of 1798, not long after the nation was formed and the Constitution settled upon. He knew what he was talking about. The religious feeling he spoke of was a frame of mind...a tolerant frame of mind that recognized our unalienable rights as deriving from God and recognized that we the people are the true stewards of the conditions that allow for the equitable exercise of those rights. Police aren't the steward, armies aren't the steward,*government* is not the steward. We are. And we are free to choose...we must be free to choose if we are to be free ... and with the knowledge that we must choose good and moral lives, of our own free will, if we are to stay free.

"That morality, that goodness is rooted in religious principle, those time honored and time proven principles of doing unto others as you would have them do to you, of loving one another as you yourself love, of not tolerating evil, but trying to help those who lose their way if we can. My fellow Americans, that is our great strength, that is the underlying glue that holds our institutions of liberty together. We cannot forget it, we dare not forget it, regardless of what religious persuasion we embrace...even if we choose to embrace no particular religious persuasion.

"To forget it puts us on the path to losing our freedoms and liberties...and in our day, we have come perilously close to forgetting it. As a prosperous and successful people we almost abandoned those principles, our conscience and our moral compass. The result, as surely as the Civil War was the ultimate result and consequence of Americans of a by-gone era turning their back on those same principles, the result in our day has been our society being placed in great peril.

"Over decades, we allowed ourselves to become morally indolent, to become fertile ground for the type of manipulations, greed, shortsightedness and immorality that placed us in the gravest danger this nation has ever faced, both at home and abroad. The external threat has only been an outgrowth of a more sinister internal disease. That inner disease culminated in its most brutal and direct manifestation when we, through our legal wrangling and mechanisms, permitted for thirty-five years the most atrocious and heinous holocaust the world has ever known. We gave up and sacrificed almost two generations of our most innocent, our most precious humanity...our unborn. And in our arrogance we called it legal and we called it free choice. How lost as a people and as a nation we had become.

"Happily, thankfully, I believe we as a people have come to our collective senses. Providence has shown us the path and allowed us one last test to rise to the challenge and throw off the sickness that had beset us. Thank God, my fellow Americans that we have risen to that occasion and stepped back from the brink. Thank God we have firmly placed that horror behind us, and as a people turned back to the source and well spring of our liberty...our own free will choice to be moral and to extend that morality to all of the innocent.

"I stand before you this evening and say that my own personal conviction is that our successes on the field of battle over the last few weeks are tied directly, inexorably to the earlier decision by our people, through our Constitutional processes, to reverse the greatest blot and stain that has ever existed on our national consciousness. Our founders taught us that among the unalienable rights that we all enjoy, that the first is the right to life. As a people, as a nation, we have now remembered that simple and benign truth. Let us never forget it again, let us never lose our morality in such a horrific way, because in our morality, we find our freedom and liberty.

"Therefore, acting in the capacity vested in me by the people as the President of these United States, I call on all Americans to observe tomorrow, December 25th, 2008, as a National Day of Prayer, Recompense, Thanksgiving and Atonement. May we always remember and hallow the monumental battles and sacrifices that have taken place this November and December near Anchorage, in Israel and on the outskirts of Moscow where the physical forces of evil were dealt such stunning blows.

"As much as we must remember those victories, let us remember even more the date of October 12th, 2008, Columbus day, a true day of discovery, a day of self discovery, when an even more important focal point in the history of our nation and our people was reached. Through the Supreme Court ruling of that day, the legal sanction of the evil growing in our own hearts was dealt an even more stunning blow.

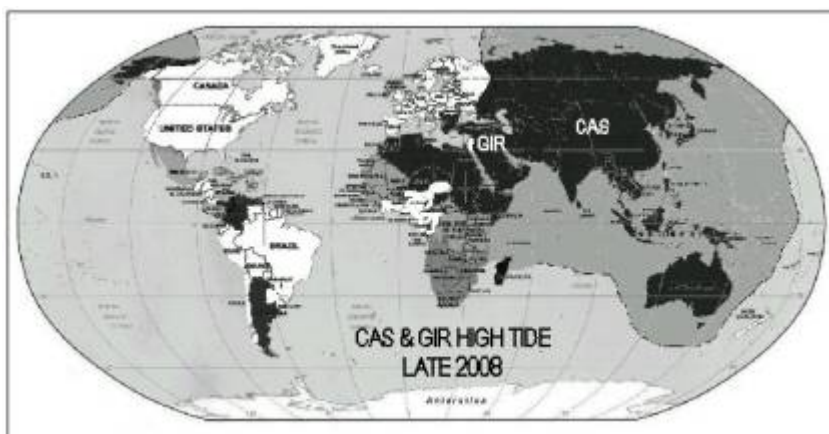
"As a result. I am compelled to believe that Providence is once again smiling on these United States and that we are now not only in a position to physically go forward in this monumental struggle...we are prepared to do so in our own hearts.

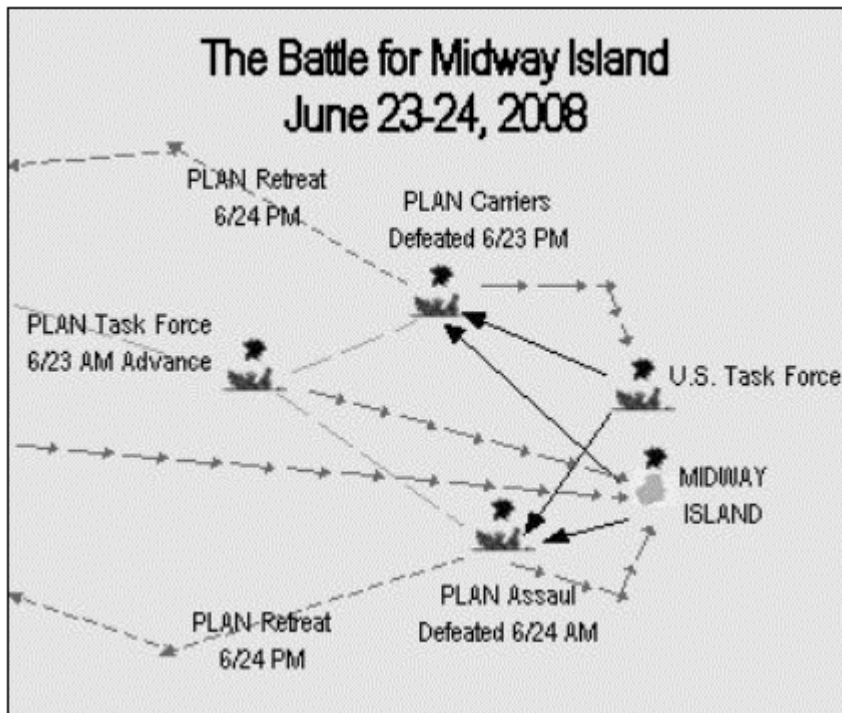
"May God continue to bless America in these continuing hours of our greatest peril.

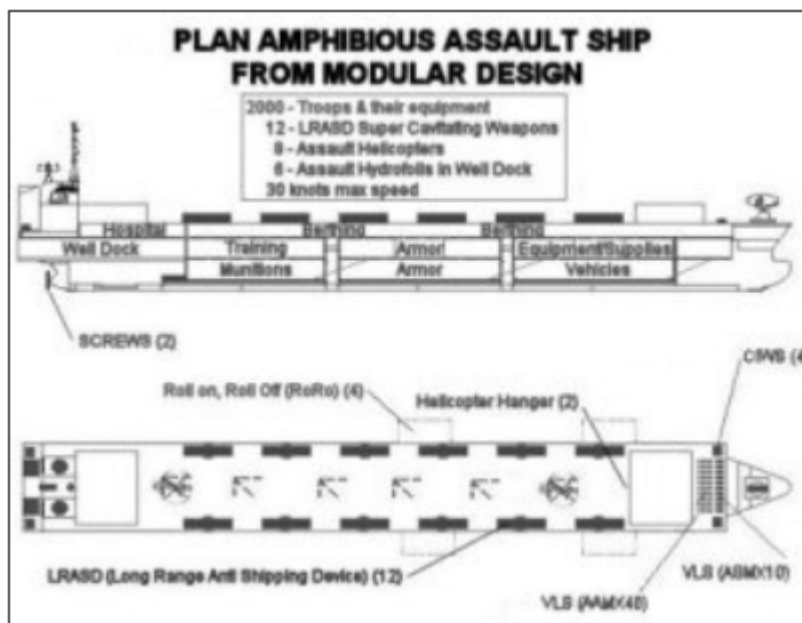
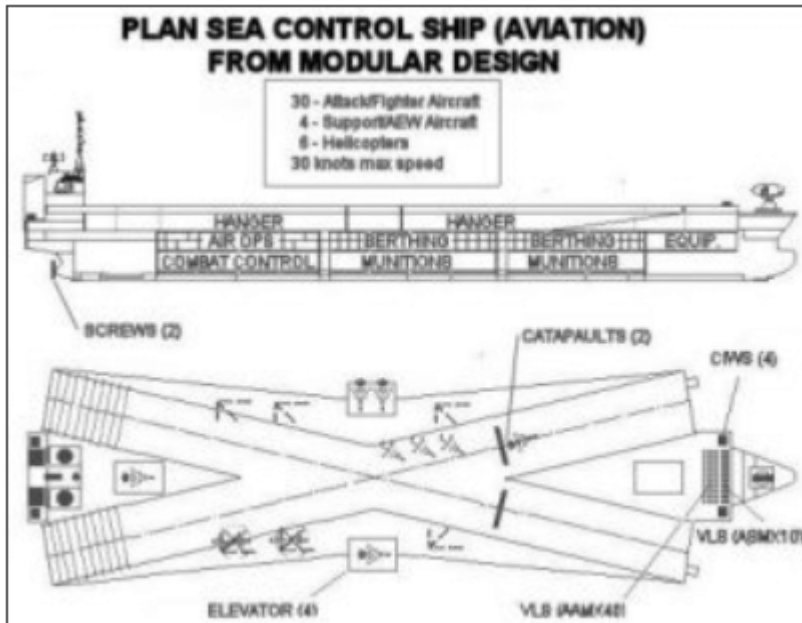
"Merry Christmas my fellow Americans, and goodnight."

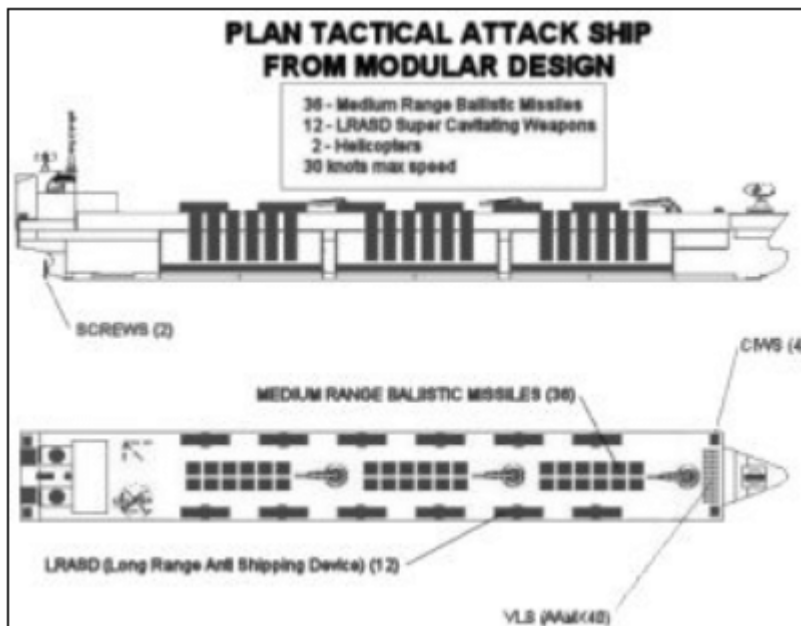
The end of Volume III.

Maps and Illustrations









Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

TERM	DEFINITION
AAW	Anti-Aircraft Warfare
Abrams	Premier main battle tank designated M1A1
ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ABS	American Broadcasting System
ADCAP	Advanced Capability
AEGIS	Advanced phased array naval radar system for anti-air defense.
AH-64	Most capable western attack helicopter called Apache
ALCM	Air Launched Cruise Missile
ALRAAM	Advanced Long Range Anti-Aircraft Missile
AMRAAM	Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile
Apache	Most capable western attack helicopter designated AH-64
APS	Armored Personnel Carrier
APSRON	Afloat Pre-positioning Ship Squadron
ARCM	Anti-Radiation Cruise Missile
ASAT	Anti-Satellite
ASDS	Advanced SEAL Delivery System
ASROC	Anti-Submarine Rocket assisted torpedo
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
ATO	Asian Theater of Operations
AV-8B+	VTOL or STOL fighter-bomber used by U.S. Marines.
Avenger	AAW variant of HMMWV carrying Stinger missiles.
AWACS	Airborne warning and command aircraft
B-1B	Advanced supersonic, Long range bomber called Lancer or Bone
B-2	Sub-sonic, long range stealth strike bomber called Spirit

Backfire	Supersonic, long-range Russian strike aircraft. (Red China, India)
Badger	Older, 1970's Russian strike aircraft. (Red China, India, GIR)
Bandit	Enemy Aircraft
BATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (U.S.)
BDA	Bomb or Battle Damage Assessment
Bear	Older, prop-driven Russian recon & ASW aircraft. (India)
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
BRITREP	British Representative
Buddy Stores	Refueling tanks
CANTFOR	Canadian Task Force
CAP	Combat Air Patrol
CAS	Coalition of Asian States
CBC	Continental Broadcasting Company
CBG	Carrier Battle Group
CBT	Carrier Battle Task Force
CENTCOM	Central Command (U.S.)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)
CIC	Combat Information Center
CINC	Commander in Chief
CINCCENT	Commander in Chief Central (U.S.)
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief Pacific (U.S.)
CIR	Council on International Relations
CIWS	Close in Weapons System
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations (U.S.)
CO	Commanding Officer

Comanche	Advanced, stealthy recon/attack helicopter. RAH-66 (U.S.)
CONUS	Continental United States
COSAS	Coalition of South American States
COSCO	China Ocean-going Ship Company
COSTIND	Commission of Science, Tech & Industry (Red China)
CTF	Combined Task Force
CVN, CVX	Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carrier, CVX is next generation
DDG	Guided Missile Destroyer
DDH	Large helicopter carrying destroyer
DNC	Democratic National Committee
DOE	Department of Energy (U.S.)
Dragon's Fury	Chinese operation to ambush the U,S, 7thFleet.
E-2C	Naval Airborne Early Warning and Command aircraft. (U.S.)
E-3	Air Force warning and command aircraft. (U.S., U.K., Japan)
Eagle	High performance, supersonic fighter aircraft. (U.S.)
ELINT	Electronic Intelligence
EMCOMM	Electronic Emissions and Communications
EMP	Electromagnetic Pulse
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
ETO	European Theater of Operations
EU	European Union
EW	Electronic Warfare
F/A-18E	Modern, supersonic, high-performance naval aircraft
F/A-18F	Two seat attack/strike/EW version of F/A-18E.
F-14D	Latest upgrade of supersonic, high performance fighter/bomber
F-15	High performance, supersonic fighter aircraft (U.S.)

F-15E	Two-seat strike version of F-15C aircraft (U.S.)
F-16	Highly maneuverable fighter/bomber (U.S. and allies)
F-22	Advanced, stealthy, high performance fighter, the Raptor (U.S.)
F-35	New, advanced, multi-service fighter/bomber. STOL & VTOL
Falcon	Highly maneuverable fighter/bomber, F-16 (U.S. and allies)
FBC-7	Long range strike aircraft (Red China)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation (U.S.)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (U.S.)
Fencer	Long Range Strike Aircraft (China. GIR and India)
FFG	Guided Missiles Frigate
Flanker	Advanced Russian fighter/bomber. (Red China, GIR, India)
Foxbat	High speed, 1970's Russian interceptor. (North Korea, GIR).
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
Fulcrum	High performance Russian fighter (Red China, India, GIR)
GIR	Greater Islamic Republic
Global Sentinel	High-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aircraft.
GOA	Government Office of Accounting
GPS	Global Positioning System
HARM	High-speed Anti-Radiation Missile
Harrier	VTOL or STOL fighter bomber used by US Marines and UK
Hawkeye	Naval Airborne Early Warning & Command aircraft
HELLFIRE	Laser guided anti-tank or surface missile (U.S.)
HGP	Human Genome Project
HMMWV	High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
HR-7	Hyper-velocity, exo-atmosphere recon & surveillance aircraft

HUMRAMM	AAW variant of HMMWV carrying AMRAAM missiles.
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (Nuclear)
IDF	Israeli Defense Force, or Indigenous Defense Fighter (ROC)
IFF	Identification Friend or Foe designator
IFV	Infantry Fighting Vehicle
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
J-10	Advanced fighter/interceptor/attack aircraft. (Red China)
JGI	Joint Genome Institute (U.S.)
JH-7	Long range interceptor aircraft (Red China)
JMSDF	Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force
JSF	Joint Strike Fighter (U.S.)
JSOW	Joint Standoff Weapon
JSTAR	Battlefield management aircraft w/synthetic aperture radar
KFOR	Korean Forces
KS-2(+)	Advanced surface to air missile, Plus variety similar to Patriot.
KS-3	Advanced version of the KS-2+ missile capable of TMD
KV	Kill Vehicle
Lancer	Advanced supersonic, long-range bomber, the B-1B (U.S.)
LAWS	Light Armor Weapon System
LAX	Los Angeles International Airport
LCU	Landing Craft Utility
LRASD	Long Range Anti-Shipping Device
M1A1	Premier main battle tank called Abrams. (U.S.)
Mach	Designation for the speed of sound
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket System

MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade (U.S.)
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit (U.S.)
MFD, MFCD	Multi Function Display, Multi Function Color Display
MIG-25	High speed, 1970's Russian interceptor. (North Korea, GIR).
MIG-29	High performance Russian fighter (Red China, India, GIR)
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MPSRON	Maritime Pre-positioning Ship Squadron (U.S. Navy)
MUAS	Miniature Underwater All-aspect Surveillance Devices
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAS	National Academy of Sciences (U.S.)
NASA	National Aeronautical and Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	National Command Authority (President of the US)
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer in the military
NEW	National Endowment for Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization (Affiliated w/UN)
NHGRI	National Health Genome Research Institute (U.S.)
NIH	National Institute of Health (U.S.)
NORAD	North American Air Defense Command (U.S. and Canada)
NORCOM	Northern Command (U.S.)
NRO	National Reconnaissance Office (U.S.)
NSA	National Security Advisor or Agency (U.S.)
OIC	Officer in Charge
OPLAN	Operation Plan
Orion	Turbo prop ASW, Recon & strike aircraft (U.S. and allies)

P-3C Turbo prop ASW, Recon & strike aircraft (U.S. and allies)

Patriot Missile Land based, long range, anti-aircraft missile system.

PDWE Pulse Detonation Wave Engine

Peacekeeper Highly exported APC armed with .50 cal. machine gun. (U.S.)

Pervador High speed, high altitude, recon & surveillance aircraft.

Phoenix Long range air to air missile designated AIM-54 (U.S.)

PKF Patriotic Kurdistan Front

PLA People's Liberation Army (Red China)

PLAN People's Liberation Army Navy

PRC People's Republic of China (Red China)

PTO Pacific Theater of Operations

RAH-66 Advanced, stealthy recon/attack helicopter (U.S.)

RAM Rolling Airframe Missile

Raptor Advanced, stealthy, high performance air superiority fighter

ROC Republic of China (Taiwan)

ROC(AF) (N) Republic of China Air Force or Navy

RORO Roll On Roll Off transport ship

RPG Rocket Propelled Grenade

R&R Rest and relaxation

RTB Return to Base

RV Re-entry Vehicle

SAC Strategic Air Command or Special Agent in Charge

SAG Surface Action Group

Sea Flanker Navy version of SU-30. (Red China, India)

Sea Sparrow Medium range, ship-launched anti-missile missile. (U.S.)

SEAL Sea, Air & Land Special Forces (U.S. Navy)

SECDEF	Secretary of Defense (U.S.)
Sentry	Air Force warning & command aircraft. (U.S., U.K., Japan)
Sidewinder	Advanced all aspect short-range air to air missile (U.S.)
SITREP	Situation Report
SLCM	Ship or Submarine Launched Cruise Missile
Spirit	Highly stealthy, sub-sonic, long range strike bomber (U.S.)
SR-77	New high speed, high altitude recon and surveillance aircraft (U.S.)
SSBN	Nuclear Powered Ballistic Missile Submarine carrying ICBM's.
SSGN	Nuclear Powered Guided Missile Submarine carrying SLCM's.
SSN	Nuclear powered attack submarine
Std. missile	Long range U.S. anti-air missile. Advance used for TMD.
Stinger missile	Short range, all aspect, self-guided anti-air missile
STOL	Short Take-off and Landing
Strike Eagle	Two-seat strike version of F-15C aircraft designated F-15E (U.S.)
SU-24	Long Range Strike Aircraft called Fencer (Red China, GIR and India)
SU-30	Advanced Russian fighter/bomber. (Red China, GIR, India)
SU-33	Naval version of SU-30 called Sea Flanker. (Red China, India)
SU-35	Two seat strike/radar suppression/EW aircraft. (Red China)
SUBT CIWS	Sub-surface Threat Close in Weapons System
Super Hornet	Advanced supersonic, high-performance naval fighter/attack
SUV	Sport Utility Vehicle
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics (Police)
T-72	1980's variety main battle tank employed by GIR and CAS.
T-80	1990's variety main battle tank employed by GIR and CAS.
Tango	Military term for a terrorist

TAS	Tactical Assault Ship (Red China)
Ta shih	Chinese anti-stealth sensor, acquisition and fire control system.
TF	Task Force
Thunder Dart	Hyper-velocity, exo-atmosphere recone & surveillance aircraft
Threat Zebra	Watertight combat threat condition for naval vessels.
TMD	Theater Missile Defense
Tomcat	Supersonic, high-performance, 1970's carrier fighter/bomber
Top Dome	Russian radar system for advanced surface vessels. (Red China)
Top Plate	Russian radar system for advanced surface vessels. (PRC)
TOW	Wire guided anti-tank missile
TU-16	Older, subsonic Russian strike aircraft (Red China & allies)
TU-22M	Supersonic, long-range Russian strike aircraft (Red China, India)
TU-142	Older, prop-driven Russian recon & ASW aircraft (India)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UEDF	Unified European Defense Force
USCGS	United States Coast Guard Ship
USFK	United States Forces Korea
V-150	Highly exported APC armed with a 20mm cannon.
VLF	Very Low Frequency
VLS	Vertical Launch System
VTOL	Vertical Take-off and Landing
WNN	World News Network
XO	Executive Officer

About the Author



Jeff Head is a 47 year-old father of five children living in Southwest Idaho. He and his wife of 25 years are the proud grandparents of a 1 ½ year-old grandson from their oldest daughter and her husband, and of a two month-old granddaughter from their third daughter and her husband. He has worked as an engineer and consultant for the last twenty-four years in the defense, nuclear power, and computer industries where he has been involved in a number of projects in various engineering, support, and management capacities. These included the A-7 attack aircraft program, the San Onofre Nuclear Power project, the Multiple Launch Rocket System program, and the Theater High Altitude Air Defense System.

While working as a director at Structural Dynamics Research Corporation, Mr. Head was involved in efforts at the Thiokol Corporation Strategic Operations Division to review and improve their operations in the years following the shuttle Challenger disaster. As a result of that effort, in 1992 Mr. Head was presented a Vice President's award from Thiokol Strategic Operations for his teams efforts in the Computer-Aided-Engineering and Design (CAE/CAD) area.

Since 1995, in both a program management and consulting role, Mr. Head has traveled extensively overseas on behalf of U.S. firms to establish manufacturing and development operations in the Far East, India, and Eastern Europe.

Mr. Head has also been involved in several civic events including the "Klamath Basin Water Crisis" in Oregon in 2001. In August of 2002, Mr. Head accepted a "Person of the Year" award from theFreeRepublic.com web site resulting from his involvement at Klamath Falls and his work on issues associated with 9-11. That work is documented at a web site Mr. Head produced called, "The Attack on America Web Site" which memorializes the horrific events of 9-11.

Mr. Head is also very active in his Church and involved with the Boy Scouts of America, helping with rafting trips and winter camps in the mountains of southwest Idaho.