

The Time Patriot

Episode 4 - Survival

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Dedication

This book series is dedicated to my sweet daughter, Megan Elizabeth Megahee, who left us far too soon in October of 2022. Her singing, writing, comedy, and inner and exterior beauty are missed by all who were fortunate enough to know her.

Relevant Quotes

“Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right...and a desire to know; but besides this, they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers” —John Adams—1765

“Truth will ultimately prevail where pains is [sic] taken to bring it to light.” – George Washington — 1794

CHAPTER ONE

Saturday, February 14th, 2037 – 11:05 PM EST – A subdivision in Mason Neck, VA

Afshin threw open the back doors of the barn and looked up. It was cold, but clear—a perfect night for practice.

He returned to the HG-3 and uncovered it. After sliding into the cockpit, he started the fans, checked the battery levels, and all his controls. All green, his American instructor would have said.

Afshin chuckled at the thought. His American flight instructor thought he was Afghan.

The fool. Who cannot tell an Iranian from an Afghan?

Afshin caressed the controls, and the HG-3 lifted off and rotated 180 degrees. He pushed the controls forward, and the HG-3 slipped out of the barn and down the wooded path to the shoreline.

He would fly low and without lights. There was little recreational traffic and anyone who saw him would think he was a small speedboat traveling too fast. He would veer off course before he got too close to the boats anchored offshore at Mount Vernon. From his current location, he could be at Mount Vernon in less than two minutes.

He glanced over his shoulder at the metal rack behind him. During the attack, the rack would hold a high explosive designed to explode on impact.

With any luck at all, he would kill the demon General Washington, and destroy American dominance before it began.

It's too bad the American President will not be there, too.

He smiled as the HG-3 left the shoreline and sped out over the Potomac River.

No matter. The death of Washington will assure my place in Paradise.

He pushed the throttle up to one hundred knots and veered south down the river. He passed a few cargo ships and a tugboat in their shipping lanes. At a height of one meter over the water, he would look like a competition speedboat in the dark. When he reached the open sea, he executed a long, lazy turn to return the way he had come.

If only I could take this craft back home...

He had visions of flying through the mountains and impressing his family and friends. They were proud of his record as an F-16 pilot for Iran, but they would be even more proud to learn about the blow he struck against the Americans.

He pushed the throttle forward and flew back up the river. He flew past the cargo ships and the tugboat like they were dead in the water.

On the fateful day, he would fly straight past Fort Belvoir on the left and hug the shoreline of the Mount Vernon landmass. At the Mount Vernon wharf, he would pull back on the altitude control. He would fly over the wharf and rise, hugging the treetops. The Mansion would come into view, and he would race to meet his destiny.

But tonight, as he passed Fort Belvoir, he dropped his speed to ten knots and veered right out into the middle of the river channel. The back of the Mansion was lit by spotlights, and the reflection off the snowy lawn intensified the light and illuminated the boats anchored offshore.

Afshin slowed to a stop, lowered his altitude to one foot, and hovered there. He relaxed in the cockpit and smiled.

Before I leave this world, I will turn that American shrine into rubble, and their first great leader into carrion.

He pulled back on the altitude control, increased the speed, and flew back down the Potomac River to his barn and his teacher.

Sunday, February 15th, 2037 – 1:30 AM EST – The White House, Washington, DC

President Wade Harrison sat up in bed and blinked several times. He looked around the room.

What woke me up?

After another few seconds, there was a soft knock at the door.

He got out of bed, stepped into a pair of slippers, and swung on a robe. As he walked to the door, he glanced at his wife on the other side of the bed.

Still sound asleep.

He opened the door a crack. It was Detweiler, his chief of staff.

Opening the door further, he spoke. "What's going on, Avery?"

Detweiler spoke softly. "It's the Iranians, sir. They're on the move."

"Thanks," Harrison said. "The Joint Chiefs?"

"They're on their way here, sir, to the Situation Room."

"Is the room ready for me?"

"It will be, sir, by the time you slip on some clothes and get down there."

"Okay. I'm on my way and I have my phone with me just in case something else happens."

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, and get the word out to Israel in case they haven't heard. Not likely, but do it anyway. Alert NATO, and especially our Mideastern allies around the Mediterranean."

"Yes, sir. Anything else?"

"Yes. Please make sure there's coffee and food available. Empty bellies make stupid mistakes."

"Yes, sir. I'm on it."

"Thanks."

Harrison closed the door and tiptoed into his closet. He chose jeans, sweatshirt, and sneakers. *Best to be as comfortable as possible. It's gonna be a long day.*

As he walked back to the bedroom door, he wondered why, at this hour, Avery still had on a suit and tie.

He chuckled. *Geez, doesn't that guy ever sleep?*

Sunday, February 15th, 2037 – 2:00 AM EST – White House Situation Room, Washington, DC

Harrison exited the elevator at the deepest level underneath the White House and flashed his badge at the armed enlisted man at the door. The soldier saluted him and waved him inside.

Inside were the duty officer and assorted men and women hovering over data and video screens.

He walked to the big conference table in the center of the room. The duty officer strode over to him, clipboard in hand.

“Where are we?” Harrison asked.

The officer nodded and read off the facts.

“The Joint Chiefs are still on their way. SECNAV should get here first—”

“Skip over that part. They’ll get here when they get here. What’s happening?”

“Yes, sir. The Iranians have crossed the borders of Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. They bypassed Kuwait, surprisingly, and are making a beeline for Riyadh. As expected, they are lobbing missiles into Israel.”

“What about Turkey?”

“There are a few Iranian troops near the Turkish frontier, but they are more than thirty miles back from the border. The Pentagon thinks they are hoping Turkey will stay out of the fight. They’ve taken a big bite with the countries they’re attacking. It’s a big risk for Iran, unless they expect Russia and China to have their backs.”

“We’ll come back to that. What have we heard from the countries they’ve attacked so far?”

“The President of Jordan has publicly called for us to help. Israel is quiet so far. Saudi Arabia has scrambled their fighter jets to intercept those of Iran. There is data that supports that the Syrians are fighting a delaying campaign against superior forces from across the Iraqi border.”

“I see,” Harrison said. “CIA?”

“Their assessment is that this is *it*. They aren’t fooling around. And they believe that, if we don’t react and step in, the Russians and the Chinese will take it as a sign of weakness and move on Eastern Europe and the Philippines, respectively.”

“Have the Russians or Chinese said anything or moved off their positions?”

“No, sir.”

“Okay,” Harrison said. “Get the Saudis and Israel on the phone. Then I want to talk to the Russians and the Chinese. Send out a note to their ambassadors that I want to see them here at the White House in one hour. Let them know I’m not kidding.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And where the hell’s the coffee?”