April 22nd 1980, Varistan.

A dying national leader lays on his deathbed in the capital city of Brkolov, slipping in and out of reality. A group of politicians and military officers wait outside the room for the inevitable, finalizing their plans to avoid a destructive succession crisis. The tense atmosphere is breached only by the concerned, hushed conversations of a team of doctors, the best the Communist party could find. There is nothing more that can be done.

National radio begins broadcasting on the morning of April 23rd, at 6:30 AM. Television stations flash specially prepared headlines and grim, stone faced presenters prepare to deliver their important message. This special broadcast begins with Mozart's Lacrimosa, transitioning to the famous baritone of Varistan's most well known TV presenter Zlatek Topolsky. The people listen.

> "To the working class, all the working people and citizens, and all the nations and nationalities of the Socialist Federated Republic of Varistan:
>
> **The President has succumbed to his illness.**
>
> On April 22nd, 1980, at 15:05 in Brkolov.
>
> Great sorrow and pain are shaking up the working class, nations and nationalities of our country, every citizen, worker, soldier, war veteran, farmer, intellectual, every creator, pioneer and youth, and every girl and mother.."

While decrepit and corrupt national institutions initially have control over the only real thing that guarantees power in Varistan, the military, a foray into parliamentary politics that provided peace for the nation now leads it down a path of certain destruction at the hands of abusers: sedition, distrust, riots. New scandals fuel old rivalries, desires to self govern, ethnic conflicts flare across the rotting torso of the nation. Varistani society, sucked dry by elites, begins to crumble.

Reformers flock to the newly formed Nationalist Party, promising changes to an aging system in the immediate aftermath of the president's death in Brkolov, but the old die-hards who remember the days of the wars of independence gather around the flag of the Communists headquartered in the Ornis region, demanding right to old wrongs.

A war brews in Varistan, and the first shots of it are fired weeks later in a quiet coffee shop in front of the parliamentary building in Brkolov. The interim president of the Communist party is killed by a political agitator, and the Varistani government plunges into chaos.

On **June 15th 1980**, the communists in the Ornis region declare themselves the only legal government of Varistan and issue orders for mobilization, declaring the beginning of a military operation to close the capital city. Armored cars with Communist flags careen down the streets of Brkolov, indiscriminately firing their machine guns into government buildings followed by firebombs and assaults by motivated volunteers from the Ornis communist youth corps. They are met by the national police and the Presidential Guard who immediately open fire, plunging the government district into a great yet indecisive melee lasting for days.

Forced to fight, the Nationalist Party uses their weakened grasp on the state apparatus to perform a mobilization of their own. On the codeword "Loyal Son" on national radio, regional loyalists spring from their hiding places and begin rounding up those who they suspect to be communist sympathizers as part of a plan that must have been prepared for years ahead of the crisis. Farmers, students, scientists, poets and artists now all have one common tool: the Avtomat Kalashnikov, the peace loving Soviet Union's gift to the world, and for the first time in 40 years, the people of Varistan wake to the sound of artillery fire.