

Command & Conquer: Red World

Chapter One: Workers of the World, United!

“Comrades, Citizens of the Soviet Union, allies and friends from around the world: Welcome to Victory Day!”

The cheers and jubilation spread through the crowd like a roaring wave, hundreds of thousands of people in Red Square and around Moscow, around the world, packed tightly to see the Premier of the USSR speak.

It was the one job I enjoyed most of all.

“Today, we honour the 20th Anniversary of the triumph of Communism around the world. The end of brutal Imperialism, the end of soul crushing Capitalism. The date when we finally ended the tyranny of the now deceased United States of America and of its boot licking Allies!”

As my voice echoed through the dozens of massive speakers arrayed around Red Square, the cheers began again, louder than before. I could only grin as I watched the population of Moscow, from everyday workers and soldiers on the ground, to my comrades and friends of the Politburo applaud and cheer around me.

Twenty years. It seemed like yesterday, and also a lifetime ago, all at once. The memories of standing off the coast of Alaska as a nuclear missile plunged from the heavens to obliterate the last hope of the Allies, their Chronosphere. I was assured I was far enough away to be able to watch the end of the War of Liberation, but it took weeks for my eyesight to return to normal after that bright flash of light. But it was worth it to watch the massive orange and grey mushroom cloud rise overhead where the Chronosphere once stood.

“The Soviet Union has never been stronger. All comrades from the humble farmer to our greatest generals with me here today now live lives of freedom: freedom from ill health, freedom from poverty, freedom from want or need. And around the world, billions of men, women and children celebrate and enjoy their new lives, their new standard of living with

plentiful food, high quality education, and the ability to live, work and play wherever they may so desire.

“But we must continue forward. While we are all better off than we were 20 years ago, there is more to do until we live in the Utopia that Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Romanov had promised us.

“But we are close, closer than any time in human history to achieving universal plenty and joy! So let us pledge today, on this 20th Anniversary of Victory Day, that we will reach that peak, that crescendo of human development, by next year!”

The crowd erupted in cheers again as I finished my speech, and I waved and saluted to the citizens and soldiers below, as the massive orchestra of the Red Army on the street below picked up their instruments and began to play the National Anthem, with the whole audience singing along with the choir of a thousand young children, chosen from every nationality and great city and tiny town from Atlantic to Pacific for their singing talents.

Soyuz nerushimy respublik svobodnykh

Splotila naveki velikaya Rus'.

Da zdravstvuyet sozdanny voley narodov

Yediny, moguchiy Sovetsky Soyuz!

I continued smiling, basking in the shared euphoria and celebration as the Soviet Union celebrated its greatest victory through song. I may have led the armies that achieved it, but I knew well enough that it was everyone, from conscript to Apocalypse Tank commander to Kirov pilot to Dreadnought crew that brought the Soviet Union our victory.

Do you really think that, Comrade Premier?

That voice.

That *damned* voice!

I tried hard to not let anyone around me notice, as ghosts of the past that I thought I had banished now suddenly returned.

Yuri.

He was 20 years dead.

I know it.

I watched as the Kremlin crumbled, with that backstabbing traitor inside.

His body was found, cremated, and scattered into the White Sea. I oversaw that personally.

Why was he still in my head? Every year, at this time, the ghosts of the past would come to haunt me....

“Comrade Premier, are you okay?”

I turned to my left to see Zofia, my long time aide, looking over me. Even after 20 years, she was still beautiful, smart and intelligent. She knew me better than I knew myself.

“It... it is fine, Colonel,” I said, giving a forced smile.

“You look very pale. As if you saw a ghost.”

Or heard one...

“I may be a bit tired. You know, preparing for today takes a lot of time,” I said with a chuckle. “Nothing that a trip to Hawaii can’t fix, no? Say next week after the celebrations.”

“Of course, Comrade Premier. I shall get on that right away.”

I smiled. I wouldn’t be here right now without her.

The Anthem was over now, and the crowds were waiting for the next great event: the ever popular military parade.

Even though conscription had been done away with since the end of the War of Liberation, the Red Army still has millions of men and women on active duty. It was a badge of honour to serve, and a great chance to see the world, from the beaches of Australia to the peaks of the Alps to the cities of former America, and now even on Luna Base.

The parade began, like usual, with the everyday soldier. Regiment after regiment, their boots and helmets polished to a mirror shine, their uniforms pristine and immaculate, began to march through Red Square as the band played patriotic tunes that even I couldn’t help but hum along with.

The majority of the infantry on parade, as well as the army as a whole, were riflemen from across the Soviet Union, carrying the trusty AKM assault rifles, in their brown overcoats that covered armor, the rows upon rows of metal helmets gleaming in the midday sun. The gas masks they had worn back in the Third World War were no longer used, but they were still in the barracks, just in case.

The conscripts weren’t alone: there were battalions of other soldiers; some in big metal suits that used Tesla coils to zap the enemy, others with portable flak cannons, handlers with their well trained canine units that could tear out a man’s throat in a single move, and soldiers with jetpacks hovering just off the ground, the proud soldiers of the Raketno Pekhotnyy Korpus, the Rocket Propelled Infantry Corps. They were one of the few additions to the army

based on the Third World War, and inspired by the blasted Allied Rocketeers that had caused much destruction and chaos in their lightning fast hit and run tactics, and one branch of service that I in particular wanted to be replicated by the USSR. And then there were companies of soldiers from the allied nations: Iraq, China, Poland, Italy, Germany, Britain, Mexico, America. They beamed, their uniforms slightly different in cut and style, their weapons carbon copies of our own, but all of them loyal Communists and believers in the World Socialist Alliance.

After the display of the sheer numbers of the Communist nations of the world, came the heavy hitters. Battalions of tanks, modernized with ever more powerful cannons and armor plating from their Third World War counterparts, rolled by, the tank commanders standing up in the copula and saluting the dignitaries. Energized Tesla Tanks followed behind, then the slow, lumberous, double barreled Apocalypse tanks, with pods of anti-air missiles pointed skyward.

For an hour, the tank treads of hundreds of heavily armored vehicles slowly grinded up the pavement of Red Square. Tomorrow workers would bring in asphalt and steamrollers to repair the streets, but for today the great display of Soviet power would be on display for all to see.

Trucks followed behind, carrying the brand new V4 ballistic missiles that could carry warheads three times as powerful as the old V3's of 20 years ago, and had been used to send most of the Soviet Space Program into orbit. Flacktraks, the APC's that also carried a powerful anti-air weapon, followed by more tanks, more missiles, more weapons of war. Above the parade on the ground, great Kirov Airships, carrying thousands of pounds of the most powerful bombs ever devised, slowly floated through the sky like brown clouds of death. Advanced and powerful MiG jet-engined fighters screamed in from the west, three dozen aircraft in four plane formation flew by, with many excited gasps and cheers from the crowd at the loud aircraft streaked by. There followed by several wings of new Bear bombers, their four turboprop propellers turning at blinding speed as they droned on overhead, and the many other aircraft: transport planes to carry paratroopers, big tankers to keep smaller craft in the air longer, nimble interceptor craft, and finally my big, luxurious personal aircraft, Red One, the best protected aircraft in the world, flanked by more MiG fighters as it banked over Red Square.

I smiled deeply as the crowd cheered as the parade finally finished,

Twenty years ago, these vehicles were battling their way through Moscow to drive out the traitor Yuri, battling the same models of tanks, their crews mind controlled to oppose the Soviet Union. Friends and comrades, fighting each other. Tens of thousands of casualties, all because of that madman.

You keep telling yourself that. You need me now. And you know it.

No. Never!

Yuri is history. Yuri has been erased from history. He will never, ever darken the halls of power again.

I looked away as the crowd began to filter away. I turned to Zofia.

“Comrade Colonel, get me General Sirkas to meet me in my office, immediately.”

“Of course, Comrade Premier,” Zofia said, confusion in her voice.

“It’s nothing of concern for you. But I need to speak to him.”

“I will summon him right away,” she said, saluting and walking off to find Sirkas.

The only person that I know would listen to me and not think I was paranoid about the return of a man two decades dead, was the already paranoid commander of the KGB.

I began to walk toward the door that would lead into the rebuilt Kremlin, when I heard the first explosion.

I dived to the ground, groaning as my old and weary body complained, my hat flying off my head as the reflexes of war took over. I looked over my shoulder, wide eyed as I saw a black smoke cloud rise into the sky. Screams and panic came from the crowds that just moments before were cheering and singing.

“Ambush!” Someone on the platform shouted.

“Terrorists! How could they do this?” Someone else asked, shocked and confused.

I started to rise to my feet, as my bodyguard, the best soldiers of the Union, came racing up. “Comrade Premier, we must get you to safety!”

Another explosion made the whole Kremlin building rock and shake.

“We must get you out of here, now!”

“No!” I shouted, as I was half dragged along. “We can’t leave!”

“What do you mean, Comrade Premier?” The bodyguard asked. “It’s protocol to remove you from Moscow in the event of danger!”

“The Dacha north of Moscow will be unsafe. Getting to Red One will require a convoy, an easy target. Even my personal train cannot be trusted. We shall go to the Command

Bunker. It is the safest place at the moment, at least until we can track down the terrorists that attacked us.”

“At once Comrade Premier!”

“And call the Politburo. We will meet at the Command Bunker at 1900 hours. Understand?”

“Yes, Comrade Premier!” the bodyguards chorused, as I followed the steps down and down and down, two hundred feet under Red Square, to the intricate and secret Command Bunker, built to withstand everything from a nuclear attack to a possible mind control attempt.

The last thing I needed was someone like Yuri taking over this facility.

“Go to Defense Condition Orange!” I barked as I entered the bunker, which was always staffed by a skeleton crew. Moments before they were just maintaining their regular duty, not even aware that explosions had erupted on street level. But they dropped their routine duties and hurriedly sprang into action as I went to the large conference at the center of the room, lined with computer monitors and a digital map of the world all around me.

I scowled as I sat down at the head of the table, at the two dozen empty chairs all around me. Zofia sat down next to me, pulling out a small computer to prepare to take notes. Soon generals and politicians, still in their best uniforms and clothing from the recent parade, began to filter in, all of them being searched, all weapons being taken and secured. The last to arrive was the mousey General Antony Sirkas, the Commander of the KGB, who sat at his chair at the far end of the table.

“Status update?” I asked.

Kliment Boytsov, a nervous looking Russian who was in charge of the Ministry of Justice and the Police, rose to his feet, before adjusting the glasses on his nose. “Comrade Premier, early reports indicate that an explosive device was detonated at the end of the Parade, when the last infantry battalion passed by. Twenty six are confirmed dead, and one hundred fifteen are severely wounded, and are being taken to hospitals. Other minor injuries were treated on the scene. Moscow is currently under curfew, and the local garrison deployed to protect all major government, transport and communications installations as we speak.”

I nodded. “I want all resources devoted to figuring out who did this, and where they are from. Oversee it yourself, Comrade Boystov.”

The nation’s top policeman gave a quick nod, then sat down again.

Marshal Grigors Meiers, the Latvian in command of the Red Army, was the next person I turned to. “Comrade Marshal, I want a strike force prepared to go wherever it is discovered that these terrorists plotted their attack. Make it a great show of force, as I want it recorded to be broadcast at the conclusion of the operation. If we cannot prevent such attacks as these, then I want it to be crystal clear to the whole Soviet Union that we will find and punish those that do it.”

“Any limits, Comrade Premier?” asked the Marshal, in a matter of fact tone.

“No nuclear weapons,” I replied. “Wherever this is, I don’t want it irradiated for a hundred years. But limited chemical weapons will be tolerated.”

“Of course,” the Marshal said, who then saluted, and then marched to a nearby telephone to issue the orders.

Next on the list was my Minister of Communications, the beautiful Azerbaijani Mÿrziyya Shahbazova. “We must prepare a statement for immediate broadcast.”

“Of course. I must say, Comrade Premier, that it will be very difficult to hide what happened, as the better number of a billion people around the world just watched this happen.”

I grimaced. It was normal policy to not deny that something bad happened, but to simply not mention it, and work behind the scenes to fix the mess, and then announce that something had occurred, and that everything was under control. Whether it was a nuclear reactor in Ukraine going super critical, the crash of a jetliner, or half of America rising up in revolt when a psychic beacon failed, it was best to not talk about it, solve the issue, then announce what happened.

This wasn’t possible here. Too many people had seen it happen already.

“We... we will say that something happened,” I started slowly, drumming my fingers on the desk. “Say that it is too early to know exact casualties, but that all efforts are being taken to determine who did this.”

Comrade Shahbazova nodded, jotting notes down on her pad of paper, then standing up to call TV Moscow.

“Okay, that should take care of the crisis we currently are facing,” I said. “As soon as the investigation is complete, we will be ready to act decisively. We will not allow some terrorists to undermine the Glorious Soviet Union!” I shouted, slamming my fist on the table. The ministers around the table all nodded and shouted in approval.

I may have picked up some mannerisms of Premier Romanov...

But there was one man who wasn't so happy. "Something wrong, Comrade Kostin?" I asked.

Alexander Kostin, a normally jovial and happy man, who was unable to muster a smile now, and actually looked like he was a little boy called into the principal's office in school. I couldn't blame him, as much as I wanted to. "There... there is a matter that I must bring up."

I raised an eyebrow, realizing quickly what he meant to say. "Comrade Kostin, is there any progress made on repairing the psychic beacon network?"

The head of the Ministry of Psychic Affairs swallowed. "N-no, Comrade Premier. Everytime we think we have solved one problem in maintaining the core of the beacon, three more crop up. It appears that Y-, I mean, the original designer of the system had overcomplicated the plans to make it nearly impossible to repair. Even turning a screw can cause critical components to malfunction that isn't apparently connected to it." Kostin was sweating now. "As far as I can tell, the whole system will, very soon, be non-functional."

"How soon?" I asked, my voice flat.

"In at least six months. Possibly sooner," Kostin replied.

Everyone at the table sat in silence. Zofia's keystrokes came to an end a second later, leaving the whole room in silence, with only the buzz of the halogen lights, and the whir of the air conditioning systems to provide some noise. We all knew very well that if the beacons failed, the whole Global Soviet Union would crumble. We'd already had tastes of what could happen in the American Revolt just a couple years ago, the first hint we had that the Psychic Beacon Network was falling apart.

"There... there is a solution..." Kostin started.

"No!" I shouted, making everyone jump. "If you are about to suggest what I think you are going to suggest..."

Kostin swallowed. "Comrade Premier... if we don't at least consider it, the whole Soviet Union will cease to exist."

I scowled. I knew very well what he was suggesting. I'd already received rumors that some in the Ministry of Psychic Affairs had proposed it. The few that did were now in some Siberian or Canadian prison camp.

And I knew very well that there was only one person who could actually fix it.

I stood up, and almost everyone else stood up as well. “We will meet again in 48 hours,” I said. “Hopefully we will know who did this, and why.” I then turned to Kostin, who flinched.

“And I want you to tell me how we are going to clone Yuri, and make sure he doesn’t try to undermine us all.”

Kostin blinked, surprised, as was everyone else. “I-I... Yes, Comrade Premier.” Kostin said, giving a small bow.

“Dismissed!” I said, and everyone scampered away, except for General Antony Sirkas, who remained sitting the whole time, and Zofia, who sat back down beside me, closing her laptop.

“You are hearing him again, aren’t you?” Sirkas said, his voice a quiet whisper.

“Yes. The past few months, his voice keeps coming to me,” I said, sitting back down. “We both know very well that Yuri, even dead, is a danger.”

“And now you want to bring him back,” Sirkas said, accusation in his voice.

“Well it’s either that, or just pack up, and let the communist revolution collapse around the world and prepare for World War Four when America and Europe decide to try to undo it all,” I said. “We just celebrated two decades of world peace. I would like to see it go for a bit longer yet.”

“Of course, Comrade Premier,” the KGB head said, shifting in his chair. “But if we do allow Yuri to come back, and give him access to the whole Psychic Beacon network... we could be consigning the world to perpetual imprisonment. And we wouldn’t even know that we did that.”

“Which is why I want safeguards in place,” I said. “Kostin is a smart lad. I’m sure he will think of something, and ensure it will have multiple layers of safeguards at that.”

Sirkas shrugged his shoulders, then stood up. “Of course, you know best, Comrade Premier.”

“If I knew best, Comrade,” I started, “I would never have become Premier in the first place.”

Sirkas let a small smile escape, before he saluted, and walked back to the elevator that would take him back to the street.

Zofia turned to me. “So, Yuri is talking to you? Is that what you were concerned about?”

“Yes,” I said, with a sigh. “I didn’t want to worry you, but... well, it’s too late now.”

Zofia sighed. “You really do need that vacation.”

“And I will, as soon as this crisis is solved.”

I sighed, leaning back in my chair. Hopefully it wouldn’t take long. A few days, maybe a week. Then I could go relax on the beaches of Waikiki.

Over twenty years ago, I was landing on those beaches with a mighty army to destroy the American naval base there, and had no chance to see the beautiful beaches for myself. Ever since then, I always wanted to go back, for a rest, a vacation. No work, no orders, just sun, sand and waves. But every time I even thought of it, something always came up to deny me that vacation: the Blackouts of 1978 when reactors began to meltdown, the Chinese Crisis of 1983, then the American Revolt of 1991.

Oh, the hubris of thinking that I could have a vacation!