

*Aggression Without Cause,
Combat Without Foresight*

CONFIDENTIAL & EXTREMELY URGENT

Please note: this communication has been sent with extreme haste to the President and her cabinet as well as to the Members of Parliament from the Chief Military Officer.

I was not born in a democracy. But I wish to die in one. As chief military officer of this nation, it is my job to protect those strides that we, as one people, have made for our future. The rights that we have struggled to obtain, free from dictatorship, are rights I will defend. Should anything threaten our sacred existence, I will be the first to stand up against it. I will fire the first bullet.

As some of you know and some of you do not, our president plans to launch an attack on Tribekastan in less than one hour. The simple fact that some of you, the duly-elected representatives of our nation, do not know of this plan is cause for significant concern. Her reason to keep this plan secret is comprehensible, especially as she believes it vital to our country's security. However, it has always been my understanding that a democracy does not provide for a domination of the executive but rather a discussion between all democratically-elected representatives in order to arrive at the best conclusion for as many of its citizens as possible. As this regrettably has not happened, it has been left to me to divulge the true weight and probable consequences of our president's proposed attack. I was not asked to do so; it is my duty.

Those of you who know me understand that I am not a man of sentimentality – I am a man of battle. For this reason, I cannot laboriously detail philosophical and moral reasoning for abstaining to engage in war. My concern lies not in the 'should we' questions that current military action raises but rather in the 'what would be the costs.' If we embark on the battlefield and lose, that which we have fought for on the home front in the last half century will all but disappear. We will once more represent a subjugated people answering to a law that is not our

own. Yes, we are bordered by an aggressive and powerful neighbor. However, the credible intelligence I have received from a staff that has served me well for over three decades convinces me that Tribekastan is not planning an attack on us or on anyone else. Aerial photographs taken recently show no evidence that Tribekastan is amassing any of its troops or weaponry. We should not strike a war that is as of yet unnecessary if we are not assured of victory in our endeavor. To do otherwise is foolish.

Considering the military advantages and disadvantages of our nation will help us to better understand the risk our president plans to take. As we know, our air forces are our greatest advantage. We have well-trained pilots and a myriad of attack aircraft that includes ground-attack aircraft, attack helicopters, bombers, and a battery of air-to-surface and laser-guided missiles. A very limited amount of these aircraft are third or fourth generation; the rest are newer, more sophisticated models. Unfortunately, while this does attest to the strength of our air force, the Tribekastani air force boasts a comparable status. An air battle would result in a closely contested fight; however, if our air forces *alone* engaged in combat, I believe we could emerge victorious. Military experience or no, we all know that such a battle is implausible. As neither of our nations has need for a deep-water navy, it thus falls to our respective ground forces to decide the victor. Here, we cannot measure up. Plain and simple, if we fight a land battle with Tribekastan, we will lose. As a more populated and historically aggressive nation, they have the ability to mobilize thousands of more troops than we can. Their ranks will swell with militant fighters long manipulated by their belligerent leader and infuriated by our preemptive strike. Their T-72 model tanks outnumber ours 5-fold. We do not have access to combat weapons as readily as they do. The loss of life that we would inevitably incur – my staff has estimated that it could reach as high as 5,000 within the first few months – would strike at the faith of our people.

They would undoubtedly begin to question the correctness of this endeavor. Support would waver as we would continue to fight a land war we knew we were never equipped to win. Everyone knows that I am not gun-shy. I do not present this evidence because I believe that battle has no place in this world. I present the facts because I know, in my thirty-three years of military experience, that to attack now would be suicidal.

Thus far, I have spoken only of hard, martial facts. We have other hard facts to consider as well – facts that involve not only the sacredness of our nation itself, but also the place our nation holds in the international arena. Let us not forget that we are an emerging democracy. The rest of the world looks upon us with steady eyes to discern if we shall succeed in our democratic goals or if we shall fail and fall back to the despotism we have historically suffered.

It is a widespread global contention that preemptive war is justified by an imminent threat of attack, a clear and present danger that the country in question is about to attack you. In such a case, a preemptive attack is justifiable. As I mentioned before, there is no evidence that Tribekastan plans to launch an attack on us. There is only the fear that some day in the future, it might. This is neither a clear nor a present danger, and our willingness to defy international standards would damage our nation's integrity and engender us no friends for the future. We would, in effect, elicit sympathy for a neighbor who does not deserve it. An important principle of international law is the avoidance of armed force. Article 2-4 of the United Nations Charter prohibits all recourse to military force, including war. Though we are not yet a signatory of the UN, it has been our professed goal to become one. Therefore, though not required of us, it is in our best interest to abide by the well-respected UN regulations, wherein:

all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent

with the purposes of the United Nations.

Yet, as I well know, sometimes necessity calls for the use of force. The UN is not so naïve to deny this fact, and Article 51 of its charter authorizes the use of armed force for legitimate self-defense if a member nation is the object of an armed aggression. Our current situation does not satisfy that requirement. In 1974, the UN adopted the definition of aggression as the use of armed force by one state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence of another state. The leading theme in international doctrine is self-defense. In self-defense we may retaliate with force. Never does the UN discuss fear of future aggression as cause to engage in combat, and therefore we cannot in good conscience justify a preemptive strike. The nations that sign on to these international codes are the very nations we are clamoring to befriend in order to ensure the future prosperity of our country; to strike would forever separate us and unhinge the progress we have made.

I am faced with a harrowing decision which I never could have anticipated. It is a decision which tears at my heart, for it is one which affords me no desirable alternative. Should I defy my duly-elected president whom I have always supported and take my armed forces with me, it would throw her credibility into account by calling into question her abilities to rule. In this way, I might also inadvertently damage the democratic principles I am trying to protect by fueling the flame of the political opposition. And yet, should I obey the president and launch a preemptive strike on our neighbor, I would be fighting against my better judgment in a war I ardently feel we are unequipped to win. My staff and I agree that any air strike we should attempt would not disable Tribekastan and instead would throw our great nation into a long, bloody conflict against land forces that are superior to ours. I have made the president aware of my concerns, and she has chosen – as is her right – to mute them and to listen to her advisors

instead. It has always been my thought that unless you have fought in battle, you cannot understand the loss associated even in victory. That her advisors have no military experience prompts me to question their abilities to advise on military issues. As a man who has made the military his life, I urge all of you to consider what I am about to say.

As H-hour approaches, I feel that the only action I can take is to voice my concerns to you as I have just done and to resign my position as chief military officer of the nation that I love. From the research my staff and I have conducted, from the figures we have formulated, and from the geographic positions we have studied, I cannot in good conscience strike Tribekastan. Following international accords on the permissibility of preemptive strike, I cannot in good conscience commence battle with Tribekastan. And from my fervent belief in the respectability and worthiness of our current president, I cannot in good conscience defy her order and challenge her integrity. For all of these reasons, I resign. It is my hope that my resignation will prompt the president and her advisors to re-think their plan. It is my hope that our nation will focus on keeping its military strong and powerful so that if the day should occur in the future when we are threatened with a clear and present danger – an imminent threat to our security – we will be ready. It is my hope that such a day does not occur in my lifetime. I was not born in a democracy. But I wish to die in one.