

Anatomy of a Crisis

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INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - DAY

It's 5 AM Washington time and 5:30 PM North Korea time.

The President of the United States (60), the Secretary of State (50) , the Secretary of Defense (60), the National Security Advisor and two generals (40 and 50) sit around a large mahogany table.

On the table, an electronically sophisticated TELEPHONE is placed in front of each of them.

The president's telephone RINGS.

The voice of an AIDE addresses the president.

AIDE (V.O.)

Mr. President, the CHAIRMAN of NORTH KOREA is on the line.

PRESIDENT

Thank you, is our INTERPRETER ready?

AIDE (V.O.)

Yes, Mr. president.

PRESIDENT

OK, let's go.

PRESIDENT (cont'd)

(to the others)

He's on the line.

The people around the table pick up their telephones.

All put on their headphones.

A few seconds of silence interrupted by an undefinable noise.

A wobbly, distant voice breaks the silence.

VOICE (V.O.)

(in English with heavy Asian accent)

Here is PYONGYANG, the Chairman is ready to talk.

The president opens a FILE lying on the table in front of him.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Chairman, good evening, this is the President of the United States.

The Chairman speaks in Korean with English subtitles.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

Good morning.

PRESIDENT

I'm sure you know the reason of my call.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

No, I don't know.

PRESIDENT

The reason is your nuclear program... and your aggressiveness.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

We are not aggressive, we are preparing to defend our country if we are attacked by your country.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Chairman, South Korea and Japan feel threatened by your policies...we in the United States are very worried about your intentions.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

You have nothing to worry about if you don't try to invade my country.

PRESIDENT

You have to abandon your nuclear development program and the deployment of intercontinental ballistic missile. They pose a serious threat to my country and the world.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

The program is moving on...next week we'll test a new, more powerful missile. Our nuclear program is progressing rapidly...and successfully.

The president reads from the file.

PRESIDENT

Be aware that by the end of the week,
your country will be surrounded by
our war ships and nuclear submarines.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

We're ready for you...expect complete
destruction of your ships and your
country.

PRESIDENT

The United States has reached its
limit of patience...I warn you, stop
all your belligerent programs...let's
come to an accord.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

Never! North Korea cannot become the
slave of the United States like South
Korea.

PRESIDENT

But--

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

We are determined and have the power
to annihilate our enemies.

PRESIDENT

(furious)

You're a dangerous warmonger.

A long beat.

CHAIRMAN (V.O.)

(calmly)

Our conversation is over.

The communication is suddenly interrupted.

A deep silence pervades the room.

The president looks dismayed.

PRESIDENT

You have heard...that son-of-a-bitch
is crazy...a fucking madman!

The Secretary of State offers a timid suggestion.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Maybe, we should ask the SWEDISH to
mediate...

PRESIDENT
He doesn't want to negotiate...it's a
waste of time.

The Secretary of Defense looks at the president.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
I agree.

The two generals appear visibly upset but they do not add
any suggestion.

A long beat.

PRESIDENT
I've decided...let's preempt...we
have to destroy all the military
installations.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.
Are we going nuclear?

PRESIDENT
If it's necessary...

A long silence. The president looks pensive.

PRESIDENT (cont'd)
Yes...let's go with it!

The End