Into The Web

 It Begins...

The stream of bullets shattered the windshield and slammed into the driver’s head-causing it to explode in a cloud of blood and brain tissue. His panicked passenger frantically escaped through the side door of the van, only to be gunned down as he ran toward the field bordering the rural road. It was a waste of ammunition since they would be dead soon anyway-their bodies literally melting from the high dose of radiation they were exposed to. The bullets mercifully put an end to the burning pain and nausea. The dumbasses got a little too nosey and pried open the large crate that they were hired to transport. In doing so, they damaged the end-cap of the protective cylinder inside. The leaking radiation blasted them with enough alpha rays to kill an army.

The ambush took all of five minutes. Three men covered in white radiation suits and armed with Daewoo K11 assault rifles appeared from nowhere and riddled the van with gunfire. They then quickly secured the crate, transported it to the rear of a black KIA SUV, and drove off.

The cargo was on the last leg of its long, meandering journey from the United States that snaked through several countries, making plane and manifest changes along the way. It went off the Defense Department radar after a bogus flight plan, a few pay-offs, and a plane swap in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. When it finally reached Korea, these two made the pickup from the freight hanger at Pyongyang Sunan Airport. Local thugs were hired as a means of isolating the plotters, who were a part of a rogue faction of the politburo, from the smuggling operation. The plotters couldn’t risk having the other members of the Party knowing of their secret operation. The problem with hiring gang members for this was that they couldn't be trusted. These two thought they would get away with stealing the shipment and selling its contents on the Black Market for the highest price. The plotters expected this and had the van tailed from the airport.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea’s Supreme Leader, Kim-Jong-un, concerned about the loyalty of his military and obedience of his Party members, created an atmosphere of paranoia and suspicion throughout the ranks in an attempt to keep and bolster his power. It was a nasty, dog-eat-dog environment where no one was trusted. They often would accuse each other of treasonous or non-loyal acts in an attempt to eliminate their rivals and draw favor with the Supreme Leader. They were known to be ruthless enough to turn in family and friends if it would get them a favored spot in the regime. Now, with the two dead, no one outside the small rogue group would know about the smuggling operation and the plan could go forward. The plotters knew the operation must be kept from the others until the right time. Then, they would meet secretly with the Supreme Leader and disclose that they had personally launched the plot to steal the already-weaponized material and hacked computer files directly from a reclamation plant in the United States. The next shipment, they will assure him, will be enough plutonium 239 and lithium-6 deuteride, to guarantee that his daring plan to disrupt the upcoming Economic Summit taking place in Seoul next month will be an absolute success.

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The SUV made its way through the night to its final destination at a secret underground complex located in the North Hwanghae province about 50km west of Pyongyang. These sites dotted the landscape of North Korea with more being added under Kim Jong-un’s intensified nuclear weapons program. They were shielded from satellite reconnaissance and unknown to the CIA and International Atomic Energy Angency. Kim has recently been taunting the United States with a series of nuclear detonations and missile launches in protest over plans for the U.S. to deploy the advanced Thaad system in South Korea. Since his accession to Supreme Leader after the death of his father, Kim has been unrelenting in his defiance of the sanctions imposed on North Korea by the U.S.-led coalition of the United Nations. They have recently restarted the Yongbyon enrichment facility and the plutonium production reactor to the alarm of South Korea and Japan. North Korea frequently provoked the West with its launches of the Musudan-2 and Rodong missiles. It also continually fed propaganda reports to its people showing highly-edited footage of American Nuclear detonations digitally enhanced and presented as successful tests conducted by North Korea. In reality, the missiles often blew up or went off course and the atomic detonations failed to achieve any impressive results.

The problem was North Korea's nuclear weapons program, which dates back to the 1980s, was focused on practical uses of nuclear energy and the completion of a nuclear weapon development system. North Korea began to operate facilities for uranium fabrication and conversion, and conduct high-explosive atomic detonations. But these were huge, atomic, fusion-type devices-like those used on Japan. In the late 1990s, North Korea had gained access to Pakistan's nuclear technology which further refined the process but it was still antiquated technology-useless for use in modern tactical weapons. It lacked the sufficient talent and technology to produce a usable hydrogen weapon which would be small enough to be placed in the warhead of the Rodong missiles.

The plotters knew if their small group of military officers could obtain the already weaponized plutonium it could easily be inserted into the detonator of the thermonuclear device now being readied for a test detonation. This device, designed to the exact specifications hacked from the American reclamation plant’s computer will be detonated in an above-ground test which is banned by international law. It will be a blatant act of defiance, and would send a harsh message to the United States that North Korea and The Supreme Leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is now a power to be reckoned with. If all went well with the test, they could then proceed with the device that will be used to threaten the summit taking place in Seoul. And, this rogue group, who single-handedly constructed this ingenious smuggling operation, would be honored and elevated to the upper echelons of the Korean Workers Party. Kim Jong-un could take great pleasure in knowing that the plutonium and necessary bomb-construction files, were stolen right under the noses of the imperialist Americans.

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