

# Chapter Fifty-Three

## *The White House*

“MR. PRESIDENT?”

Jack McAtee looked up from his desk in the Oval Office to see his longtime secretary, Betsey Hall, standing in the doorway. She had the *look*. Something was up. It was well after midnight and he was only now getting around to reading his goddamn PDR. The president’s daily report was so sensitive, it was shared by only five people. He was bone tired. Dr. Ken Beer, the newly appointed White House physician, had told him just this morning that he needed to get more sleep and more exercise. And, cut down on the cigars. The bourbon and branch. And, that golf didn’t count as exercise and –

“Mr. President?”

“Yes?”

“I’m sorry, sir. It’s apparently urgent.”

“Who?”

“Mr. Gooch and General Moore, sir.”

His National Security Advisor, John Gooch, and the Chairman of the JCS, General Charlie Moore.

“Please show them in, Betsy,” McAtee said. He closed his PDR file and pushed it aside. Maybe he’d get to it before tomorrow’s report arrived on his desk at six. He got to his feet and moved over to the sofa near the fireplace. Might as well be comfortable. The two men filed in and took the two chairs opposite him.