

Meanders

FROM: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT_HQ

TO: Prof. *Anton Van den Brook*, Mariana Marine Colony, CERN Annex

SUBJECT: RE: YOUR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Professor Van den Brook,

President *Inayik* acknowledges receipt of your recent correspondence. He has read with interest the narration of your underwater exploration, as well as your research group's progress report and, finally, your request for assistance in transporting samples requiring containers with specific temperature and pressure conditions.

The Centre's scientists are unanimously agreed on the importance of your work and the breakthrough to be achieved if it can be repeated under identical conditions and if the product is stable enough to be used both for ground and air transportation and/or in space. The Administration is therefore ready to offer you assistance in transporting the said samples to CERN, except for container preparation and ground transportation between the nearest base and the Organization's central laboratories in Switzerland.

A specially modified military aircraft will pick up the samples at the proper time and transport them to the Andersen base from where they will be transferred to a suborbital flight to Geneva Cointrin (Switzerland).

Yours,

Bao Zhang 张宝

On behalf of President *Inayik*

[A few days later]

After having notified Sarah of the arrangement made with the President, the professor goes to the landing deck of the Colony to keep an eye on his containers while waiting for the arrival of the aircraft announced in *Bao Zhang's* email, but the transport plane is slow to come and the professor, positively fuming with impatience communicates for the umpteenth time with the tower to inquire about the eventual approach of the carrier.

"Don't worry, professor, the flight plan has been filed and the aircraft should be coming soon. The military generally like to be on time..."

"Easy for you to say," mutters the professor *in petto*, "one can see that it is not your stuff that is transported. These samples are valuable and virtually irreplaceable, although we didn't put all of them in the same shipment."

"Hello tower? This is radar approach control... An unidentified aircraft broadcasting squawk code 7777 is rapidly approaching at 10 o'clock in the 280. Contact the pilot on the civilian approach frequency. Over."

"Acknowledged, radar control, we have it on our screen. This is a chartered flight coming to ferry some scientific material of interest for the Administration. Monitor communications until the plane has landed."

[The tower notifies the professor]

"There it is, at last," says the professor, spotting the aircraft turning to face the wind. But what kind of odd airplane is this? The engines seem to rotate... Ah! An *Osprey*, I was concerned for a second."



The aircraft slows down, hovers for an instant, then touches down smoothly on the helicopter landing pad. A few moments later, a passenger, whose silhouette the professor seems to recognize, comes out closely followed by the pilot, a young blonde woman with short hair and a stern face.

Recognizing Mr. *Singh*, the professor barely suppresses a frown and says, "There you are again! It seems like there's no way to escape from you."

"Don't worry, professor, I'm just making sure everything goes well, according to the President's order. You are lucky to be able to enjoy the use of this aircraft which is generally reserved for military missions. As time is of the essence, given the power supply and other needs of your containers, I will let you immediately discuss the boarding of your cargo with the pilot, a civilian AI specialist under contract with the Department of Defense."

"Good afternoon professor, said the pilot. For security reasons, my identity can not be disclosed. Just call me *Commander*, which is my temporary rank for the duration of this mission. I understand that you have concerns about the stability of your samples. We have planned the necessary connections and strapping according to your specifications, so there should be no difficulty in this regard.

This aircraft had some break-in problems when the army initially put it into service, but it was I who personally designed and perfected the AI that now ensures its stability (it's my baby, so to speak, and no one else may pilot it unless they have been trained and certified according to my criteria). I see that your containers are already waiting in this hangar. With your permission, I will immediately take care of the loading with your staff. "

"Thank you Commander I am reassured. In the meantime, I will speak with Mr. *Singh* about logistics and other details so that you may take off as soon as possible." The professor salutes her and returns to the aircraft to chat with *Singh*. The latter bows slightly and tells him:

"I congratulate you again, professor. I see that you combine success and some influence with the President, all in a truly brief time."

"Let's not exaggerate," says the professor, "the success is not mine but that of the team I temporarily lead, as you should remember. It is rather I that should thank you because none of this would have happened if former President *Tsien* had not died in the circumstances that we know. Moreover, it was you who very diplomatically showed me the way out, at the time, according to the custom for political staff."

"There's no need to be ironic, professor, things just go their normal course according to the way I see them. All this is the work of *Shiva* and even your scientists of the atom are beginning to perceive it, especially at CERN where the Lord's statue may be found. Creation, preservation, destruction, new creation, then everything starts again: this is the cycle of the Universe..."

https://cds.cern.ch/record/745737/files/na-2004-122_0406040_01.jpg
