



STAR TREK FOUNDATIONS

“Rubicon”

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FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

TEASER

FADE IN:

We begin with a series of scenes from the pilot:

T'POL'S VOICE

Previously on *Star Trek: Foundations*...

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - CAPITOL CITY - PUBLIC SQUARE

We see a large public square, not unlike the Roman Forum, with an elevated stage area set in front of a large neo-classical governmental building. An ORATOR stands in front of a podium with a microphone, surrounded by several others in business suits. A large crowd has gathered to listen to the speech already in progress, which we can vaguely hear over the loudspeakers. We slowly zoom in, and the words of the orator become clearer. We finally get close enough to see who the orator is, GOVERNOR DWIGHT FRANKLIN, the governor United Earth had appointed as governor of Alpha Centauri.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

It is our duty to declare independence from Earth, and our responsibility, for our children's future, to make our way in the universe free from Earth rule!

Governor Franklin leans over to the microphone.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

Earth will have no choice now but to grant us our independence!

A few people in the crowd start to clap, and it builds exponentially until the entire crowd is clapping and cheering. We pan to look among the crowd, and though it's difficult at first, we can see one sole member of the crowd who is silent. We zoom in to get a closer look at him, and see that it is the sole dissenter who had challenged Governor Franklin, a man named TITUS CHEET.

TITUS

(softly)

It looks like history might repeat itself again...

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - CAPTAIN'S PRIVATE DINING ROOM

Captain Archer faces a monitor; displayed on the screen are two familiar faces: Admirals Forrest and Narsu.

NARSU

Alpha Centauri has rebelled and declared its independence.

Archer's features grow concerned.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

INT. ALPHA CENTAURI - PRIVATE RESIDENCE - BASEMENT

Titus Cheet sits in a darkened room, the only light filtering in from small rectangular windows near the ceiling - indicating that we are indeed in the basement of what could be anyone’s home on Alpha Centauri. Titus faces a small computer monitor, surrounded by several of his followers.

TITUS

(agitated)

I’m asking you to provide a peacekeeping force, so there needn’t be any further bloodshed.

We pan around to look over Titus’s shoulder, and see that he is speaking to Vulcan Ambassador SKON.

SKON

You are not even the legitimate leader of Alpha Centauri, let alone United Earth and the Federated Colonies. I do not believe that your President would be pleased if he knew that we were even speaking, certainly not about this subject.

Titus’s features harden.

TITUS

What if I could establish myself as the leader of Alpha Centauri? Would you answer our call for aid then?

Skon raises an eyebrow as he considers the new scenario.

SKON

There is a possibility, but I doubt my government would give it much consideration; the risk to our relationship with Earth would be great.

TITUS

I also think the Vulcan Alliance has more than a little pull with Earth. If you would be willing to act as a mediator in our dispute, I believe that Earth would listen.

SKON

(thoughtfully)

So you are asking for a mediator, not peacekeepers?

TITUS

Peacekeepers would be necessary to keep the situation under control while mediation takes place, but yes, we are asking for Vulcan to mediate this dispute.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

SKON

You understand, of course, that a Vulcan mediation team would be completely impartial.

TITUS

As long as there is no bias towards Earth, or against Alpha Centauri, I am satisfied.

SKON

Very well, I will pass that information along as well. However, there is still the matter that you are not the legitimate ruler of your planet.

TITUS

(distantly)

I will be, soon enough.

Skon seems to understand the implication, and a flicker of distaste crosses his stoic features as he inclines his head in a farewell nod.

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - CAPITOL BUILDING

Titus and Oscar lead a large group of people, all dressed in long coats, up the stairs of the capitol building. Four guards move forward from their positions at the door and stand in their way.

TITUS

(resolutely)

We are citizens of Alpha Centauri, and we have a petition for Governor Franklin.

GUARD 1

Sir, the Governor is extremely busy and I’m, I’m afraid this will have to wait until-

A large explosion goes off in the distance, making everyone flinch. One of Titus’s followers nervously grabs at his weapon, concealed under his long coat. One of the guards sees the weapon and reacts instinctively.

GUARD 3

Gun!

The guard fires his plasma rifle, striking the young man in the chest and killing him instantly. What follows is a blur that we have trouble following, even as the action slows down to half speed; several of Titus’s followers draw their weapons. The two guards directly in front of them raise their own rifles, one of them aiming directly at Titus. Oscar gets the first shot off, killing the second guard as he simultaneously dives in front of Titus.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

INT. ALPHA CENTAURI CAPITOL BUILDING - LOBBY

Titus Cheet levels his weapon at Governor Franklin. He swallows hard and starts to look like he might be on the verge of tears.

TITUS

Earth made a mistake by appointing you as Governor. You could have used that; we could have used that...

(beat, becoming angry)

You could have done so much more than this...murder for hire. We could have pressed Senate harder; we could have done it all peacefully, but instead, you hired mercenaries who slaughtered our fellow human beings. They'll never give up now! Now more will die!

Governor Franklin's expression is unreadable, but he is definitely affected by Titus's passionate speech. He falls to his knees, and places the barrel of a surprised Titus's weapon against his forehead.

FRANKLIN

Nothing I can do...will ever bring them back.

(beat)

Nothing I can do...can ever make it the way it was again.

TITUS

There's something else you can give me that's far more valuable than your life.

(beat, off Governor Franklin's confusion)

Your office. Make me the leader of this colony, so I can give it what it needs to survive now.

(beat)

Vulcan mediators are on their way now, but they can't help us unless the official government requests it.

INT. ENTERPRISE - ARCHER'S OFFICE

Archer sits in his office chair, dressed in a UESPA screen-printed t-shirt with matching sweatpants, trying to stay as relaxed as he possibly can. He faces his monitor, talking to someone. We pan around to see that it's Admiral Forrest.

FORREST

To make matters even more complicated, the Vulcan Alliance has officially recognized Alpha Centauri as an independent power.

ARCHER

(shocked)

What?

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

FORREST

A diplomatic envoy is being sent to mediate our...dispute over Alpha Centauri's independence,

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - CAPITOL CITY - PUBLIC SQUARE

Coming full circle, we watch as a Vulcan shuttle prepares to land in the same courtyard we watched the then Governor Franklin give his fiery speech in. The newly appointed Governor Titus Cheet waits with a group of his followers and a respectable number of police officers at the bottom of the capitol building's stairs. The shuttle sets down in the wide open space of the empty courtyard, and Titus's group starts to walk out to meet the arriving delegation. The shuttle's door opens and a small group of Vulcan soldiers step out, establishing a protective perimeter in preparation for a robed figure to step out. Titus and the robed figure meet at the edge of their respective protectors. The robed figure reaches up and pulls the hood from his head, revealing himself to be Ambassador Skon. His hand goes up in the tradition Vulcan salute.

T'POL'S VOICE

And now, on *Foundations*...

FADE OUT.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

FADE IN.

EXT. SPACE - HIGH ORBIT OF EARTH

A warship, nearly identical to the *Lexington* but bearing the name *Indefatigable*, passes through the frame as dozens of smaller ships - most Boomer transports - race to and from the birthplace of humanity. A massive spacedock, dwarfing everything save the planet itself, floats in orbit over Earth and it is swarming with activity. Pushing in toward the planetary atmosphere, we race forward at an impossible speed...

EXT. EARTH - GENEVA

A line of text is superimposed over the cityscape:

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.
Capital of United Earth and the Federated Colonies

The city of Geneva appears to have not changed significantly in the last two hundred years. The streets bustle with activity and the sky overhead is filled with shuttles arriving and departing. Only a single building really stands out - constructed more for utility than aesthetics, it is the headquarters of the United Earth Military. We continued forward, pressing through its walls...

INT. UNITED EARTH MILITARY COMMAND - WAR ROOM

A massive table dominates this room with an equally impressive vid-screen monitor that stretches the length of the room. The monitor is split-screened, displaying a number of obvious news channels, all focused on a single subject: the Vulcan support for Alpha Centauri. A dozen high-ranking military officers, a number of whom we've see before, sit at the table as well as several impeccably dressed civilians. Aides and junior officers clutter the room even further.

An absolutely furious expression on his face, PRESIDENT VANDERBILT gestures angrily at the wall monitor with one hand as he speaks. It's clear that he has been speaking for some time...

VANDERBILT

... and I wasn't elected so we could let the goddamned Vulcans dictate how Earth runs its government!

He spears the officers with his fiery eyes; most glance away, unable to meet his angry gaze, but a few return the look with polite masks of indifference on their faces. Among these select few is GENERAL NATHAN SUTHERLAND, the highest ranking officer of the United Earth Military.

SUTHERLAND

(deferential but not obsequious)

Sir, with all due respect...

With a sharp gesture of his hand, the President interrupts.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

VANDERBILT

Don't start, General.

(beat, as he locks gazes with the general)

I am not sending a diplomat to negotiate this. Alpha Centauri is an Earth colony.

(beat, as he glares at the rest of the men and women present)

Period.

Sensing an opportunity to express his own opinion, BRIGADIER GENERAL PETROV speaks up, his thick Moscow accent coloring his words.

PETROV

Mister President, if I may?

At Vanderbilt's nod (and ignoring Sutherland's glare), the Russian man continues.

PETROV

General Bernard's task force will finish repairs and be ready to strike again within twenty hours. I recommend that she be issued orders to retake Alpha Centauri using whatever means necessary.

SUTHERLAND

(hard and angry)

The last time I checked, Petrov, the Vulcans were our allies. If we force their hand, they may respond.

(beat, with a grim expression)

With force.

(beat, as he turns his eyes to the President)

Or they may just decide to end our alliance.

PETROV

(contemptuously)

Let them. It's not like they help us much anyway. How many died because they wouldn't aid us against the Nausicaans?

For a moment, President Vanderbilt seems torn as the two generals continue to argue, their voices fading into the background noise as we focus on the president. On one hand, he clearly resents Vulcan interference in what should be a solely Terran matter and this resentment is fueling his desire to do something. At the same time, he recognizes that Earth cannot afford to lose its alliance with Vulcan. His eyes drift to the wall monitor as several of the news channels prominently display the iconic image of Ambassador Skon saluting Titus Cheet upon landing. Once more, fury overwhelms his common sense and Vanderbilt speaks loudly. All conversation ceases the moment he begins to talk.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

VANDERBILT

(angry but cold)

The Vulcan Alliance does not dictate Earth policy and has clearly interfered with an internal matter. General Petrov-

Straightening in his seat, the addressed general awaits his instructions.

VANDERBILT

I want you to draw up a plan of battle that keeps our best interests in mind.

(beat, on the general's eager nod)

Retake Alpha Centauri.

He rises from his seat, a clear indication for the generals to rise as well and we focus on General Sutherland's concerned expression as we ...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE ALPHA CENTAURI A

Several Vulcan Ringships orbit the planet, each logically placed to provide maximum protection for the planet. A number of smaller ships can be seen moving around the planet but they are too far away to identify accurately.

Still bearing the scars from her engagements with Tellarite vessels, the EX-01 glides silently through the void. Maneuvering thrusters fire as the damaged *Enterprise* slowly approaches the gargantuan drydock that floats in orbit over the planet below. Station umbilicals begin to stretch out and EV suited figures rapidly approach the battered vessel to assure hard seal of those umbilicals. As the connections to the drydock are secured, the warp nacelles of *Enterprise* dim and gradually fade to darkness, a clear indication that the warp engine has been taken offline.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - BUSY CORRIDOR

Her nose crinkled ever so slightly in what might be distaste; SUB-COMMANDER T'POL frowns ever so slightly at the figure walking beside her. Not a hair appears to be out of place upon her head and, dressed in her standard uniform, she is a picture of poise and grace.

COMMANDER CHARLES “TRIP” TUCKER III, however, is anything but that. His uniform is dirty - in the interests of accuracy, one might call it filthy - and his hair is damp with sweat. Streaks of some unidentifiable substance cover the jumpsuit he is wearing (not the normal uniform) and there is a single wide smear of it covering the left half of his face. And from T'Pol's reaction, he doesn't exactly smell very nice either.

It is also patently clear that the two are - once again - arguing.

T'POL

How can you construe the Vulcan defensive presence as an aggressive action?

Tired, sore from obvious exertion, and more than a little cranky, Trip shoots her a dark look as he replies.

TUCKER

Are you serious?

(beat, off her stoic expression)

Ten warships seems like a bit much

T'POL

(hard)

They are not warships. Vulcan does not have warships.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

TUCKER

Well, if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck...

Once again, T'Pol frowns.

T'POL

The D'Kyr-class cruiser is a defensive vessel. They are present only to provide protection for the mediation team.

Still talking, Trip moves out of the way of two crewmen carrying a large chunk of metal debris through the corridor; without thinking, he enters T'Pol's personal space, causing her to take a half step backwards in retreat. Trip doesn't seem to notice, so intent on getting out of the way of the working crewmen.

TUCKER

That's crap. You Vulcans butted in on an Earth matter that didn't involve you.
(beat, sarcastically)

Again.

The two crewmen past, Trip resumes his steady pace down the corridor. Once again, the Vulcan sub-commander wrinkles her nose as she replies.

T'POL

The government of Alpha Centauri requested Vulcan mediation.

TUCKER

The legal government didn't.

Something flickers in T'Pol's eyes that just may be frustration as they arrive at the turbolift; without pausing, Trip presses the button to summon a lift.

T'POL

It was a legitimate transfer of power-

Trip interrupts her, annoyance on his face.

TUCKER

At the point of a gun! There's nothin' legitimate about that!
(beat, suddenly tired sounding)

I don't get you Vulcans. You wouldn't help us against the Nausicaans yet here you are, jumping at the chance to screw us over.

T'Pol frowns at the assertion that her species is intentionally acting against Earth, even as Trip pushes the lift summons button again - as if that will cause the turbolift to arrive any sooner.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

T'POL

That analogy is flawed. Your government requested our assistance in a war of reprisal against the Nausicaans.

(beat, off his sudden frown)

Overt aggression and a desire for retaliation is the hallmark of barbaric and primitive cultures.

He gives her a sharp look.

TUCKER

Then why do you even bother havin' a space fleet?

(beat, frustrated)

Seems to me that the Ministry of Defense is just a military under a different name and the military is nothin' more than an "overtly aggressive" institution.

The lift door slides open and Trip reacts automatically by allowing her to enter first. He follows her, pausing only long enough to hit the destination button on the inside panel.

T'POL

Defending one's self is logical.

In the seconds before the door slides shut, she finishes the thought.

T'POL (CONT'D)

(with a condescending air)

Particularly from the aggression of less advanced civilizations.

The door slides shut on Tucker's outraged expression.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - ANOTHER CORRIDOR

The door to the turbolift slides open, revealing the two commanders still arguing. Tucker's expression is more annoyed now than before as they both start to take a step forward. Once again, the human pauses, allowing T'Pol to precede him through the narrow doorway, even though he doesn't stop speaking.

TUCKER

(louder than absolutely necessary)

-don't need a Vulcan peacekeeping force! This whole situation is a human matter!

Without pausing, the sub-commander begins walking toward the nearby door of the captain's office, followed closely by Tucker. In the background, we can see a pair of crewmen glance at the two arguing officers before exchanging a knowing look and continuing on to their duties, steering clear of the argument; apparently, such an occurrence has become routine in recent days.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

T'POL

You have made your opinion perfectly clear, Commander.

She stops in front of the office door and presses the chimer to announce them.

T'POL (CONT'D)

(wryly)

Several times, actually.

Before Trip can respond - he's starting to think she times this sort of stuff so he can't respond! - the captain's voice can be heard through the doorway.

ARCHER (OFFSCREEN)

Enter!

The door slides open and the two commanders disappear through it.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

From the moment we enter the office, it's immediately clear that CAPTAIN JONATHAN ARCHER is seriously pissed off. He stands at the viewport in almost a parade rest stance with both hands clasped together in the small of his back, while glaring at the drydock and the planet beyond. The tension in his body language is unmistakable. Seeming to notice the anger in the air, both T'Pol and Tucker exchange a quick glance, their argument temporarily forgotten.

ARCHER

(terse)

Report.

His eyes narrowing slightly, Trip responds ... even though it should be T'Pol's job as First Officer to speak; she shoots him a slight frown as he speaks.

TUCKER

Warp drive is offline and we're moored to the drydock. Damage Control teams are still checking in.

(beat, off of Archer's nod)

I've got Kelby drawing up a list of our priorities now. You should have a repair schedule on your desk in an hour or so.

ARCHER

Good.

(beat, as he turns to face them)

Earth is sending us a supply ship that should be here the day after tomorrow and they want a list of the parts you'll need.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

As Trip acknowledges this with a nod, T'Pol speaks up, no hint of the annoyance she is feeling at the engineer; it is her job to inform the captain about their status, not his.

T'POL

Will the supply ship have replacement crew, Captain?

A LONG BEAT passes in silence - the only sound that can be readily discerned is the background hum of the ship. Archer's face reflects his sudden misery and guilt over the casualties taken in this, their first mission, and he glances away in a vain attempt to conceal the emotion that plays across his face. At the same time, Trip shoots a hot glare at T'Pol, angered that she would be so ... crass as to bring up their losses in such an indelicate way. Unconcerned at their emotional reaction, she returns his look with a blank expression: the question had to be asked and she feels no remorse for asking it. Finally...

ARCHER

(soft)

Yes. Replacements are en route as well.

(beat, stronger)

I want a memorial service arranged for seventeen hundred hours shipboard. All senior officers to attend.

T'POL

Yes sir.

Archer draws a deep breath, once more donning the Captain “hat” as he turns his eyes to his chief engineer.

ARCHER

Trip, I need your best estimate on how long until we're back up and running.

Tucker scratches the side of his face, seeming to realize for the first time that his face is streaked with filth.

TUCKER

(partially distracted by the dirt he's just discovered)

Factoring in full assistance from Centauri, I'd-

ARCHER

(interrupting, angry again)

Don't. Acting Governor Cheet has limited planetary assistance to the drydock.

Trip's face reflects his own flash of anger at this new information and scowls at the drydock beyond the viewport for a BEAT. In that moment, we can see a Vulcan cruiser drift into Tucker's field of vision, partially concealed by the drydock. Rolling his tongue along the inside of his cheek, the engineer continues, clearly making mental calculations.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

TUCKER

Well, in that case...
(beat as he considers)
Two weeks. If we're lucky.

That is clearly not what the captain wanted to hear and his expression reflects his surprise.

ARCHER

Two weeks! Please tell me you're joking.

TUCKER

What d'ya expect, Cap'n? If we're down to just havin' access to the tools on the drydock and have to make all of the repairs ourselves, two weeks is pushin' it!

ARCHER

You can't expect us to sit here for fourteen days!

Standing quietly by the doorway in the cramped office - closer to Commander Tucker than she's entirely comfortable with – Sub-Commander T'Pol observes the exchange with mild surprise in her eyes. From their body language, one would think that the captain and the commander were angry with one another, although that doesn't make any sense.

She also notes something else quite interesting: when Commander Tucker is tired, his accent is more pronounced.

TUCKER

I've got too much work to get done and not enough bodies to do it.
(beat, suddenly crafty)
Now if you could authorize me to use Reed's people for grunt work...

Archer abruptly smiles, as if he recognizes what Tucker wants. He nods.

ARCHER

Done. I'll sign the paperwork as soon as you get it to me.
(smirking)
Now how long will it take?

TUCKER

(returning the smirk)
I can have us operational in ... six days.

As the two men share a smile, T'Pol discreetly frowns, still not entirely sure what to make of the exchange. It seems an illogical waste of time: if Commander Tucker needed

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

additional personnel, the most prudent course of action would have been to file a formal request. She files it away for later reflection and addresses her superior officer.

T'POL

Captain ...

Archer's good mood begins to evaporate - but clearly remembering the order from Admiral Forrest to watch his tongue around his Vulcan first officer - he turns his attention to her, nodding for her to finish her thought.

T'POL (CONT'D)

Regarding the Alpha Centauri situation...
(beat, off his darkening expression)
Have we received instructions?

Archer sighs heavily, glances back at the viewport. The Vulcan cruiser that was there moments ago has moved out of sight.

ARCHER

Funny you should ask that.
(beat, off her raised eyebrow and Trip's curious look)
I just received instructions from Admiral Forrest and Earth regarding this whole ... fiasco.
(beat, with a sour look)
Enterprise doesn't even have to leave orbit.

Confusion flickers across Tucker's face and T'Pol raises an eyebrow as we quickly fade to...

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - HANGER DECK

Dressed in his service blues - the "dress" uniform of UESPA - Archer stands before the hatch of Shuttlepod 01, issuing instructions to a much cleaner than before but no less tired-looking Commander Tucker.

ARCHER

We shouldn't be too long. This is more a preliminary meeting with Cheet's people than an actual negotiation.

TUCKER

(shrugging as he smiles)
You're the diplomat, sir.

The entire deck is alive with activity as ENSIGN TRAVIS MAYWEATHER, seated at the pilot's station of the 'pod, warms the engine up. Two flight deck crewmen are circling the pod with scanners and checking to make sure that it is fully functional as MAJOR

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

MALCOLM REED approaches with LIEUTENANTS AMANDA COLE and SUN CHEN; all three are heavily armed.

ARCHER

It'll be fine, Trip.

(beat, to Reed with a hint of disapproval)

Sidearms only, Major. This is diplomacy, not a combat situation.

Both Reed and Chen appear momentarily disgruntled before the Major nods. Without a word, he and Chen begin stripping off their heavier gear and pass it over to Lieutenant Cole. For a moment, Archer and Tucker are distracted by the sheer amount of gear that the two soldiers were fielding but the captain shakes out of it.

ARCHER

(to Trip)

You'll be in command while I'm gone.

(beat, suddenly mirthful)

Don't wreck my ship.

Tucker rolls his eyes, almost as if this is a private joke between the two of them, before stepping over to lend Lieutenant Cole a hand with the extra gear. He returns her grateful half smile with a distracted nod even as he speaks over his shoulder to the captain.

TUCKER

Good luck, sir!

EXT. SPACE - DEPARTING *ENTERPRISE*

Engines burning bright, Shuttlepod 01 departs from the rear of the EX-01 and quickly races toward the planet.

INT. SHUTTLEPOD 01

Seated in the flight operations seat - behind and to the left of the pilot - Captain Archer observes Ensign Mayweather's smooth hand on the controls with approval on his face. The captain quickly glances around the interior of the 'pod, noting the white knuckled grip Ensign Sato has on her restraints ... a grip that is virtually identical to the one that Lieutenant Chen has on his own seat restraints. Sub-Commander T'Pol, seated across from Major Reed near the back of the 'pod, appears as stoic as ever, her eyes half closed in partial meditation or perhaps simple boredom. Reed, however, is obsessively examining his sidearm and looks up to meet Archer's eyes.

Abruptly, the shuttle shakes a little bit and both Chen and Sato draw in sharp breaths, tightening their death grips on the restraints that hold them in place. The captain's attention quickly returns to Ensign Mayweather and the flight controls.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

MAYWEATHER

(over his shoulder)

Sorry about that. Space turbulence.

Recognizing an old pilot's trick intended to freak out first time passengers, it's all Archer can do to keep from laughing at the absurd notion of "space turbulence." He leans forward.

ARCHER

(whispering)

Ease up on them, Travis. This isn't the Vomit Comet and I don't want to have to clean my boots before we land.

Mayweather grins broadly and exchanges a knowing look with the captain - in that instant, they've bonded: two pilots who recognize shared interests.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

You seem pretty familiar with this flight design.

MAYWEATHER

Yes sir. Kind of reminds me of this old T-16 my uncle had for a while.

ARCHER

(joking)

Watch what you're calling old, Ensign. I earned my zero-gee rating on a T-16 trainer.

Smirking, Travis glances back at his commanding officer, mischief dancing in his eyes.

MAYWEATHER

Damn, sir. I didn't know you were that old. Those things are obsolete!

Archer smiles and begins to reply when the comm. panel activates.

CENTAURI FLIGHT CONTROL (COMM VOICE)

Enterprise Zero One, we have you on approach. Stand by to receive landing instructions.

Without further comment, the captain leans back in his seat and allows his pilot to do his job.

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - SPACEPORT - DAY

Dipping out of the clouds, Shuttlepod 01 makes a near perfect landing, touching down upon a designated landing pad. Seconds later, its engines begin cycling down. The hull of the 'pod is bright with reflected heat, after-effects of their re-entry. In the distance, we

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

can see several non-military craft - probably Boomer ships due to their ungainly appearance - lifting off.

After long moments, the shuttlepod hatch opens. Major Reed and Lieutenant Chen are the first to disembark from Shuttlepod 01; although their sidearms remain holstered, it is absolutely clear that they are ready to draw them in a moment's notice. Archer appears at the hatch of his shuttlepod a moment later and looks around in mild surprise.

ARCHER

(soft, mildly annoyed)

Hmph. No one to meet us...

REED

Lieutenant Chen, find us ground transportation.

(beat, as he nods)

Captain, this way, sir.

Bemused at the major's over-protectiveness, Archer nods and follows.

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - CAPITOL BUILDING

Twin groundcars slow to a stop and the two-person military detail quickly emerges from the vehicles, acting as if they were members of a Secret Service detail. Captain Archer climbs out, followed quickly by Sub-Commander T'Pol and Ensign Sato. Ensign Mayweather emerges from the other vehicle and quickly joins them. Nothing is said as the six take a moment to study the damage before them.

Debris litters the streets, most from explosions but all of it jarring. There is virtually no activity on the street and it is eerily silent. All of the humans appear to be disconcerted but T'Pol is visibly unaffected.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY

Striding up the stairs and into the Capitol Building itself, the small group can't help but to notice the fact that there is much damage that could only come from small arms fire. Archer pauses before a statue of Zephram Cochrane, now nearly damaged beyond recognition from weapons fire. His expression is difficult comprehend - it is equal parts anger, sadness and disgust.

ARCHER

(soft, thick with emotion)

Look at us now.

(beat, suddenly disgusted)

How far we've come.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

Suddenly, the sound of rapidly approaching people snap their attention to a distant door. A dozen heavily armed men, many bearing still healing injuries, rush into the room, their weapons held at the ready. Neither Reed nor Chen hesitate, drawing their own weapons the moment that the soldiers appear. Travis responds nearly as quickly, drawing his own pistol as he looks around with wide eyes.

HELMETED SOLDIER

Drop your weapons! Drop them now!

We focus tight on Archer's surprised face and ...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - MAIN LOBBY

As before: surrounded by grim and heavily armed soldiers, the six crewmembers have backed up into a circle with their backs to one another. Only T'Pol has yet to draw a weapon but, from the expression on the two ensigns' faces, they won't be of much use in the event that the situation deteriorates further. The Vulcan sub-commander appears outwardly unperturbed as she studies the twelve soldiers aiming rifles at the group. Captain Archer, Major Reed, and Lieutenant Chen, however, have their sidearms out and braced - all three appear poised to defend themselves as necessary.

It's not exactly a great way to start negotiations.

For several LONG BEATS, the two groups continue to yell at one another - both sides demanding that the other lower their weapons - and, in the moment that it appears that shots will be fired, a stern voice rings out over the din.

VOICE (OFFSCREEN)

Sergeant Lunceford!

The helmeted soldier who appears to be the man in charge of the security force glances to one side as three new figures appear in the doorway. Dressed in his traditional diplomatic robes, AMBASSADOR SKON approaches, flanked by two Vulcan soldiers. Unhurried and remarkably regal in appearance, the ambassador covers the distance with a smooth and easy stride.

SKON

(calm despite the situation)

Lower your weapons, Sergeant. Captain Archer is here at my request.

Without saying a word, the sergeant balks. He frowns and glances back at Archer - who has already started to lower his own weapon. For a BEAT, it appears as if the sergeant is going to disobey the Vulcan.

SKON

(stern)

Lower your weapons.

We can't see the ambassador's face as he stares at the sergeant but the human soldier quickly breaks eye contact and looks away, broken by something he saw in the Vulcan's expression. He nods to his men, still not looking at the ambassador. At the same moment, Archer gives Reed a subtle glance and the major responds by lowering his own

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

sidearm. Following his lead, Lieutenant Chen and the two ensigns do the same. With that, the tension in the hall eases considerably.

SKON

Thank you. That will be all, Sergeant.

SERGEANT

Sir! They're still armed!

SKON

(unyielding)

Thank you. That will be all.

Once again, the sergeant breaks under the ambassador's unseen look and gestures sharply to his men. As they begin to file out, the Vulcan faces Archer and raises his right hand with the traditional ta'al hand salute.

SKON

Greetings, Captain Archer. I am Skon.

ARCHER

(a touch acerbic)

Ambassador. Thank you for the ... assistance.

There is a hint of a smile on the ambassador's face as he abruptly offers his hand to Archer. Even T'Pol reveals a flicker of surprise at the gesture as Archer slowly accepts the offered hand, not even trying to hide his own startled reaction.

SKON

It would have been ... unfortunate if there was an incident this early in the proceedings.

(beat, another hint of amusement)

And it would have ... damaged my reputation as a diplomat.

At the subtle hint of humor in the ambassador's voice, Archer forces a smile. He's in a surprisingly awkward position - his deep rooted resentment toward Vulcans seems inappropriate when faced with an individual such as Ambassador Skon who is obviously making an effort to interact with humans on a level that doesn't include the condescension that other Vulcans, like Soval, have turned into an art form. Even the paranoid Major Reed has relaxed a little bit in Skon's presence ... although he is keeping a close eye on the two Vulcan soldiers standing a short distance away.

ARCHER

(awkward)

Well ... we can't have that, can we?

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

SKON

Indeed not.

The Vulcan glances at Archer's party and the captain picks up on the hint immediately.

ARCHER

Allow me to introduce my crew.
(gesturing to T'Pol, with a tight voice)
My First Officer, Sub-Commander T'Pol.

T'POL

(in Vulcan, as she raises her hand in the traditional salute)
[Greetings, Ambassador.]

SKON

(in Vulcan, as he returns the salute)
[Sub-Commander.]

ARCHER

Major Malcolm Reed and Lieutenant Sun Chen of the UEM.
(beat, off their quick nods)
And Ensigns Travis Mayweather and Hoshi Sato of UESPA.

SATO

(in flawless Vulcan, also with the ta'al salute)
[It is my honor to make your acquaintance, Ambassador.]

Again, the subtle almost smile appears on the Vulcan's face as he returns the salute and nods to Hoshi. Amusement fades quickly, however, as he turns his attention back to the captain.

SKON

I regret to inform you, Captain, that Governor Cheet is unable to attend this first session. He has, however, provided me with a list of requirements from the United Earth representatives before he will agree to meet with you.

ARCHER

(darkening with anger)
Has he now?
(beat, with restrained anger)
And what sort of demands does the governor have?

Skon raises an eyebrow slightly as he senses Archer's temper building. Out of the corner of his eye, he can see T'Pol frown slightly at the human captain and realizes that she is clearly not comfortable with her crewmates - the humans remain clustered in a half circle

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

but she is two full steps away from them, a self imposed isolation that is entirely understandable for a Vulcan.

SKON

Please understand, Captain, that I am only relating Governor Cheet's requests.

(beat, off of Archer's tight nod)

His primary requirement for a meeting is that you offload all remaining explosive ordnance from *Enterprise*.

Reed's reaction is immediate and obvious - he frowns hard and shoots Captain Archer a telling glance but says nothing. The captain himself crosses his arms and glares at the ambassador for a moment.

ARCHER

(tight)

Is that it?

SKON

That is his primary concern.

(beat, with an understanding tone)

I suspect that the governor is simply reacting to some of the recent ... unpleasantness that occurred during the brief Tellarite occupation.

Archer's expression shifts slightly as he recognizes Skon's reference to the “Tellarite occupation” as a way to avoid referencing the previous governor's attempt at secession. Remembering his diplomatic training, *Enterprise's* captain forces a smile that he obviously doesn't feel.

ARCHER

I believe we can arrange that.

Again, Reed shoots his captain a look, this time an incredulous one, but holds his tongue. Skon's expression brightens as he realizes that Archer is more than capable and willing of playing ball.

SKON

Then shall we adjourn to diplomatic chambers? I am sure that you are ... eager to begin.

Archer shakes his head.

ARCHER

I'm not Earth's representative in this, Ambassador.

(beat, off the Vulcan's raised eyebrow)

I have orders to present Earth's official stance on this ... situation.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

SKON

And what is Earth's ... stance?

ARCHER

(frowning)

We do not recognize Governor Cheet's authority to represent Alpha Centauri in any legal capacity and still consider this to be an Earth colony.

(beat, off of the Vulcan's complete lack of response)

Governor Cheet seized power during an armed coup which makes this ... government illegal and immoral, regardless of the previous administration's actions.

(beat, off of the ambassador's continued silence)

Earth further objects to Vulcan interference in an internal matter, especially since you've gone out of your way to remind us that you won't interfere with internal matters. I understand it's something of a directive of yours.

Skon raises an eyebrow.

SKON

I see. Why are you here then?

ARCHER

I'm here to keep the seat warm until the official delegation arrives.

Archer's communicator abruptly chirps and the captain reaches for it without hesitation. He pauses before flipping it open.

ARCHER

If you'll excuse me, Ambassador...

At Skon's nod, the captain takes several steps away - as if that could keep a Vulcan from overhearing the coming conversation. We follow Archer as Skon takes a step closer to Sub-Commander T'Pol and begins speaking with her softly in their native tongue; from their body language, it appears that they already know each other.

Flipping the communicator open, Archer speaks immediately.

ARCHER

This is Archer.

TUCKER (COMM VOICE)

Tucker here, sir. We're receiving an urgent message from UESPA Command. Admiral Forrest wants to talk to you ASAP.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER

All right.

(beat, with a glance at Skon)

I think we're done here for now anyway. I'm on my way back now. Archer out.

Closing the communicator and returning it to his pocket, Captain Archer rejoins the small party, noting instantly that Major Reed and Lieutenant Chen still appear poised for action while Hoshi has eagerly joined the conversation in Vulcan and Travis looks on quietly. At the captain's approach, the conversation ends.

ARCHER

I'm sorry, Ambassador, but I have to return to *Enterprise*.

SKON

Of course, Captain. I am quite familiar with the constraints of duty.

(beat, considering)

You will be returning to attend the official mediation?

ARCHER

Absolutely.

SKON

Then I will bid you good day.

(beat)

If you do not mind, Captain, I would like to speak to Sub-Commander T'Pol for a while. I can arrange for a shuttle to return her to your ship when we are done.

Suspicion flares in Archer's eyes for the briefest of moments but is suppressed almost immediately. He forces another smile as he nods.

ARCHER

That will be fine.

(beat, tightly)

UESPA regulations require all personnel to be accompanied by at least one crewmate when on potentially hostile planets.

(wryly)

Alpha Centauri fits that bill right now.

SKON

Unfortunately, it does.

SATO

I'll stay, sir.

ARCHER

So will Lieutenant Chen.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

Both Vulcans raise eyebrows in identical fashion at the unspoken hint of distrust in the captain's assignment of a soldier but neither can counter the logic of his decision. Without further words, Archer turns away and we fade to...

INT. SHUTTLEPOD 01 - ON APPROACH

There is a subtle tension in the atmosphere of the 'pod. As before, Major Reed sits near the far end of the craft, close to the hatch but this time, it's an indication of his present state of mind as it puts at least two meters between him and his commanding officer ... especially since the shuttlepod is mostly empty this time.

With a slight frown, Archer releases his restraints and moves quickly to the back of the 'pod, stooping slightly to avoid striking his head on the low ceiling. Reed glances up as the captain eases into the seat in front of him.

REED

(coolly)
Captain.

ARCHER

(softly so Mayweather can't overhear their conversation)
Is there a problem, Major?

For a BEAT, Reed says nothing.

REED

Permission to speak freely, sir?

ARCHER

Absolutely.

REED

Off loading our missiles is a mistake, sir. It leaves *Enterprise* vulnerable to assault and weakens our ability to defend ourselves.

ARCHER

Enterprise is moored to a dry dock, Major, and she's not in any condition to do much fighting right now.

(beat, off of the major's unconvinced expression)
We still have our lasers and plasma batteries.

REED

(tight, frustrated)
Yes sir.
(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

REED (CONT'D)

(terse)

We already know that these ... rebels aren't afraid to use force to attain their goals, sir. I'm uncomfortable with weakening our defensive capability knowing that and I'm afraid that I must officially request that you reconsider.

Archer sighs. It's times like this that he remembers why he doesn't like dealing with military mindsets.

ARCHER

(half joking)

I gave my word, Major, and I hate having to go back on that.

(beat, on the major's lack of amusement)

Cheet's people are scared and just want assurances that we won't suddenly start bombing their cities. If we can prove to these people that we're not the enemy, maybe we can actually open a dialog that results in something positive being accomplished for once...

Reed pins the captain with flat look.

REED

In my experience, sir, scared people are more dangerous than any other kind.

MAYWEATHER (OFFSCREEN)

Captain, Major, we're on final approach.

Leaning back into his seat, Archer secures his restraints, obviously considering Major Reed's words.

EXT. SPACE - APPROACHING *ENTERPRISE*

The shuttlepod decelerates as it approaches the EX-01 and slides through the open launch bay door. EV-suited work crews can be seen scurrying over the hull of the *Enterprise* and flashes of light from vacuum torches is evidence that repairs are already underway.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - HANGAR DECK

Shuttlepod 01 comes to rest in its designated location and the engines slowly power down. Almost at once, the same two flight deck crewmen who checked it out prior to launch approach it, clipboards and tools in hand. The hatch opens seconds later and Captain Archer emerges, followed closely by Reed. Still seated at the flight controls of the shuttlepod, Ensign Mayweather begins his post-flight checklist.

ARCHER

I want you to oversee offloading the missiles, Major.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER (CONT'D)

(off Reed's blank expression)

I understand your concerns about defending *Enterprise* but my decision stands.

With a grudging nod, Reed acknowledges the instruction and moves away as Archer heads for the decontamination room.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - OUTSIDE DECON

Emerging from the decontamination chamber, Archer is unsurprised to see Trip waiting for him. The engineer begins speaking without preamble as he falls into step with the captain.

TUCKER

You've got about five minutes before the admiral contacts us again. I've already told the bridge to pipe it into your office.

ARCHER

Good. Any idea what this is about?

TUCKER

(shaking his head)

Not a clue, sir.

They continue down a busy corridor and the captain gives his friend and chief engineer a smile.

ARCHER

I see you managed to avoid crashing my ship.

TUCKER

(sarcastically)

Well, it was tough, sir. Us being powered down and tied off to a dry dock and all...

(beat, off Archer's chuckle)

Repair schedule is on your desk. I told Kelby to focus on the hull damage first.

(beat, heavy sigh that almost turns into a yawn)

We're running low on hull patches so if you could remind the good admiral about that supply ship...

Archer nods as they stop at the turbolift.

ARCHER

Will do.

(beat, off of Trip's appearance)

And you need to get some sleep.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

TUCKER

(smirking)
You're always tellin' me that...

ARCHER

(returning the smile)
Because it's always true.

Trip begins walking away as the lift door slides open.

TUCKER

Got work to do, Cap'n.
(beat, with a broadening smile)
Besides ... my ship needs me.

With a smile, Archer enters the lift and we fade to...

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - AMBASSADOR SKON'S TEMPORARY RESIDENCE

Walking side-by-side, Ambassador Skon and Sub-Commander T'Pol leisurely stroll around a well tended garden that is bustling with life. For the most part, this garden appears as if it could come from any location on Earth with a few minor exceptions where the colors are just ... wrong. Several meters behind them, Lieutenant Chen and Ensign Sato converse softly in the lieutenant's native Chinese.

The entire conversation between Skon and T'Pol takes place in their native Vulcan.

SKON

[I must confess to surprise in seeing you among the humans, T'Pol. Given your previously stated ... opinion of them, I would never have expected you to volunteer for a mission of this nature.]

T'POL

[I did not volunteer, Ambassador. My presence was requested.]

SKON

(flatly, with just a hint of distaste)
[Soval.]
(beat, off T'Pol's raised eyebrow)
[You allow him far too much influence on your career.]

They continue in silence for another BEAT.

SKON

[Your opinion of the humans remains unchanged?]

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

T'Pol is silent for a very LONG BEAT and the older Vulcan gives her a glance.

T'POL

[In part ... yes.]
(beat)

[Humans are primitive and irrational. They are ill prepared for the hazards of deep space exploration.]

SKON

[You judge them too harshly.]
(beat, off her silence)

[They are young but they advance both socially and technologically at a rate that we do not. It has taken them less than one hundred years to accomplish what took us one thousand.]

(beat)

[In a century, humanity will be the dominant force in this sector.]

T'Pol's expression is sour as she gives her elder a frown.

T'POL

(wryly)

[Providing they do not destroy themselves first.]

SKON

(amused)

[Of course.]

(beat, curious)

[You said “in part”. May I presume that you have observed events that have revised your original opinion?]

T'POL

[You may.]

(beat, slight frown)

[Ensign Sato, for example, has displayed a linguistic understanding that is nothing short of remarkable. And ... several of *Enterprise's* crew have displayed an exploratory attitude that is commendable.]

Something in her voice must have given her thoughts away as Skon openly studies her expression for a BEAT. The tips of her ears darken slightly as she continues.

T'POL

[Yet despite such commendable qualities, they are still driven by emotion.]

SKON

[It is their way.]

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

T'POL

(firmly)
[It is wrong.]

The ambassador stops and faces her, a frown on his face. Still meters away and yet out of hearing range, Chen and Sato stop as well.

SKON

[Is it?]
(beat, off her mild embarrassment)
[What works for us may not work for others. The humans will find their way ... or they won't. It is our duty to help them find that path...]
(beat, sternly)
[...but not to dictate that path for them. Doing so is the path to tyranny.]

T'Pol glances down, chastened. If she is thinking that she has heard similar comments from a human engineer stated in a different manner, there is no hint to it in her features.

T'POL

[I will reflect upon your words, Teacher.]

Skon offers her his almost-smile yet again.

SKON

[Surak said: Challenge your preconceptions, or they will challenge you. Few of our generation apply that wisdom to every day life.]
(beat, off her considering look)
[You should return to your ship, T'Pol. They will need your guidance and logic in the coming days.]

As both Vulcans present the ta'al salute to one another, we can see that T'Pol is seriously thinking about what Skon has just told her. And as she turns to rejoin Lieutenant Chen and Ensign Sato, we ...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

With a hiss, the door of Archer's office slides open and the captain enters, still in his "dress uniform" - although he has loosened his unnecessarily tight collar somewhat. In a glance, he takes in the office, noting the organized clutter and the mementos that are still in place. Resting atop a small shelf is a water polo ball and a picture of the captain's parents - clearly from years ago - is on the desk beside the computer terminal. A chunk of twisted metal also has a place of honor on the desk; as Archer seats himself behind the desk terminal, we can see that this metal is from a starship of some sort as there are letters emblazoned upon it. Although the rest of the metal is scorched and burnt nearly beyond recognition, the letters themselves are easy to read:

XCV-330 SS Enterprise.

Archer slides his finger across the biometric scanner at the base of terminal and it springs to life; instantly, the repair schedule that Trip mentioned in the previous act appears on the screen and the captain studies it for a LONG BEAT. Abruptly...

TSIEN (COMM VOICE)

Bridge to Captain Archer.

In a gesture that appears almost second nature, the captain depresses the 'talk' button on the comm. panel integrated into his desk.

ARCHER

This is Archer.

TSIEN (COMM VOICE)

Sir, I have Admiral Forrest standing by.

Archer straightens in his chair, readjusts his collar, then replies.

ARCHER

Put him through.

The repair schedule vanishes, replaced instantly by the face of ADMIRAL MAXWELL FORREST.

ARCHER

Good -

(beat, glancing at the chronometer on the wall)

-afternoon, Admiral.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

FORREST

Jon.
(off of Archer's uniform)
You were planetside?

ARCHER

(nodding)
Yes sir.

FORREST

How'd it go?

ARCHER

(shrugging slightly)
About as well as could be expected, sir. They postured a little bit through the ambassador and I stated our stance.
(discreet frown)
Ambassador Skon was ... not what I expected.

The admiral smiles at that.

FORREST

I've heard that before.
(beat, suddenly serious again)
I'm contacting you for two reasons. First, the president has agreed to give diplomacy a go.

ARCHER

(frowning)
Sir? I wasn't aware that diplomacy wasn't an option...

FORREST

Vanderbilt's pissed, Jon. He came damn close to ordering the military to conduct a planetary assault to retake the colony.

Archer is aghast at this.

FORREST (CONT'D)

Cooler heads prevailed though.
(beat, musing)
Never thought I'd see the day where I was siding with Sutherland...
(beat, back to business)
That said, I don't know how long the president's patience will last. The media is already having a field day with this whole situation...

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER

What are my orders, sir?

FORREST

Sit tight and don't promise anything.

(beat, off of Archer's slightly disgruntled expression)

I know you've got the training to handle it, Jon, but the president wants this handled his way.

ARCHER

(nodding)

Yes sir. And the other reason?

The admiral frowns then.

FORREST

The supply ship has been diverted to General Bernard's task force.

ARCHER

(angry)

Dammit, sir! We need those supplies!

FORREST

So do they, Jon, and their need was deemed higher than yours.

(beat, slightly sarcastic)

Besides, didn't you tell me before that Tucker was a miracle worker?

Archer tamps down his anger.

ARCHER

Yes sir.

(beat, with mostly hidden frustration)

Anything else, sir?

If the admiral notices Archer's annoyance, he says nothing about it.

FORREST

I take it you're meeting with this Titus Cheet tomorrow?

(beat, off of Archer's nod)

Then good luck, Jon.

ARCHER

Thank you, sir.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

Forrest reaches forward, touching something that causes his transmission to end. Instantly, the repair schedule Archer was looking at before once again dominates the monitor and he sighs before resuming work. With that, we fade to...

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DIPLOMATIC CHAMBERS

A vaulted ceiling and magnificent works of art lend the diplomatic meeting hall an image of opulence at first glance but a closer look reveals that it is simply that: an illusion. A flicker that travels the length of one of the paintings - an aged rendering of Voltaire - revealing the "painting" to be nothing more than a copy of the original, displayed upon a flat-screen wall monitor carefully concealed to appear to be a picture frame.

Seated at one end of a rectangular table that appears to be constructed of wood, Captain Archer is a picture of frustrated annoyance as he squirms in his dress uniform. Directly to his left is Ensign Sato - also in a dress uniform - but her eyes are focused on the speaker, Governor Cheet, at the far end of the table. With his back to the wall and sitting exactly equidistant between the two men, Ambassador Skon quietly listens to Cheet.

CHEET

The United Earth charter is predicated on the principle of self-determination and that is all that we of Alpha Centauri want for ourselves!

Archer again shifts uncomfortably - he finds himself in the uncomfortable position of actually agreeing in part with some of Cheet's complaints. Out of the corner of his eye, Archer can see Sub-Commander T'Pol - dressed in official robes quite similar to what Ambassador Skon is wearing - standing quietly near Major Reed and Lieutenant Cole; both of the UEM soldiers are in full combat regalia but appear to be acting in more of a ceremonial role than anything else. A number of Vulcan soldiers, all in resplendent robes, stand quietly at various intervals throughout the hall.

CHEET

(warming to the subject)

We were the first of Earth's colonies to support federalization when the United Earth charter was signed-

An expression of disbelief momentarily crosses Archer's face as he listens to Cheet's revised history and he exchanges a quick glance with Hoshi. The captain opens his mouth to interrupt but just as quickly closes it - he isn't the official representative, after all.

CHEET (CONT'D)

-but recent legislation has led us to this point. Our local government has no power - all of their decisions must be ratified by the Earth Senate.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

CHEET (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

The same Senate that can arbitrarily pass new laws concerning our government without even consulting us!

(beat, hotly)

The same Senate that assigns us a governor who then appoints our representatives to that same Senate.

(beat, flatly)

We're not a colony. We're a subject.

We quickly pan around the room, briefly noting the various reactions to Cheet's words. There is no visible reaction upon the faces of the Vulcans apart from the occasional eyebrow lift; similarly, Major Reed barely reacts beyond a slight shifting of his stance. Lieutenant Cole, however, frowns as Captain Archer suddenly speaks up.

ARCHER

Mister Cheet-

CHEET

Governor.

ARCHER

(coolly)

Mister Cheet ...

(beat, off the other man's frown)

I'm not disputing that you may have legitimate grievances with the United Earth Senate but an armed coup isn't the answer.

CHEET

(aggressive)

Really? It worked for the American colonies when they threw off British tyranny in the 1700s!

At that, we can see Major Reed shoot a quick glare at the governor before resuming his stoic expression. Disgust wars with annoyance on Archer's face for a moment and he struggles to maintain his diplomatic facade.

ARCHER

(slightly disgusted)

You're comparing this ... insurrection to the American Revolution?

CHEET

It's a good comparison. Many of our complaints are virtually identical to the complaints that the Americans had of the British crown. In many instances, the parallels are uncanny.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

CHEET (CONT'D)

"No taxation without representation" was a rallying cry for the Americans and it is becoming our rallying cry as well.

(beat, off Archer's growing frown)

A nineteenth-century Spanish philosopher named George Santayana said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" and it appears that the United Earth government has, in fact, done exactly that.

Archer flinches at hearing the same words that he used in an attempt to convince the Andorian and Tellarite leaders to consider peace and a flash of surprise plays across Ensign Sato's face as she glances at her commanding officer. From his station at the doorway, Major Reed reacts as well.

REED

(softly)

Ouch.

(beat, off Cole's confusion)

Long story.

T'Pol gives the major a sidelong glance, complete with inclined eyebrow, before returning her attention to the proceedings. Instead of returning to the table, however, we remain focused on the three *Enterprise* crewmembers near the door. The "discussions" taking place (which has turned into more of an outwardly polite argument) continue for a BEAT as Lieutenant Cole studies the table. Finally...

COLE

(softly)

Sir, why are we wasting time doing this? Instead of talking, we should be arresting this sonuva-

REED

(softly but firm)

Lieutenant.

(beat, upon her going quiet)

Ours is not to reason why.

(beat, off her annoyed glance)

The captain has orders and so do we. Don't question them.

The lieutenant sighs - she obviously doesn't care much for that answer. Another BEAT passes and ...

COLE

(softly)

Archer is pretty good at this...

(beat, off Reed's glance)

This diplomacy crap, I mean.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

Reed almost - *almost* - smiles at that.

COLE

(softly)

Much better this time than with the pig-faced guy.

REED

(softly with another hint of steel)

Tellarites. Don't call them "pig-faced guys".

COLE

(softly)

Yes sir.

(beat)

I thought Archer was a pilot...

Turning her head briefly toward them, T'Pol speaks, her voice pitched low enough to be heard only by them.

T'POL

(softly)

To reach the rank of captain in the United Earth Space Probe Agency, a candidate is required to be trained as a diplomat.

(beat)

It is a policy based on a similar Vulcan requirement for command rank and was adopted shortly after your most recent ... encounter with the T'zenkethi.

Reed glowers briefly and is about to respond when there is a sudden commotion on the far side of the room. A new Vulcan - this one dressed in simple ambassadorial robes instead of the ornate ones favored by Skon - enters through a door guarded by a pair of grim-looking Vulcan soldiers. Without hesitation, the newcomer makes his way to Skon and leans down, whispering something into the ambassador's ear. At once, the argument between Archer and Cheet ends, with the captain of *Enterprise* giving Reed a questioning glance.

Finally, the ambassador nods to the newcomer and addresses the two “debaters”.

SKON

I have just been informed that the official United Earth representative has arrived.

(beat, with a discreet frown to Archer)

In force.

The glare that Cheet directs at Archer is unmistakably hostile.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

CHEET

(visibly angry)

Is that any surprise? All tyrants resort to force when faced with a crisis!

Once again, it takes a visible effort for Archer to keep from responding in the manner that he'd prefer - from his expression, it would probably involve his fist - and he forces a smile that he obviously doesn't feel.

ARCHER

Ambassador, if I may make a suggestion...

The Vulcan seems to be on the same wavelength already as he rises from his seat.

SKON

Let us recess for one standard hour.

(beat)

Following that hour, if the official representative for United Earth is willing, we shall reconvene here.

Cheet is already striding from the table and Archer glares at his retreating back for a moment before glancing at Hoshi.

ARCHER

How did I do?

SATO

Well, you managed to keep from beating that blowhard to death with your fists, sir, so I'd say pretty good.

They share a smile as Sub-Commander T'Pol and Major Reed approach; the major is frowning as he listens to comm. chatter in his headset. In the background, we can see Ambassador Skon depart from the diplomatic chambers.

ARCHER

Major?

It doesn't go unnoticed that the captain addresses Reed instead of his First Officer for a status report but, beyond a flicker of some unidentifiable emotion in her eyes, T'Pol does not react. Taking offense, after all, would be an emotional reaction.

REED

It's General Bernard's strike group, sir. They arrived in-system and have taken up a holding pattern about ten million kilometers from the planet.

(beat, off information from his comm.)

We have two inbound transports.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

T'POL

Logic would dictate that these transports contain the official representatives.

Archer gives her a brief look in which we can see his annoyance before he starts heading toward the door.

ARCHER

Let's go say hello.

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - CAPITOL BUILDING

Emerging from the lobby, Archer and his crew pause at the assembled crowd that has gathered. Cheet is there along with his militia, and Ambassador Skon stands serenely in front of several Vulcan soldiers. All are looking to the sky and Archer turns his own eyes upward.

A military lander - squat and grim-looking - drops out of the clear blue, outer hull red hot from a hard re-entry. Weapon ports can be seen upon the curiously-shaped craft and it is obvious that this lander was designed for a single purpose: war.

As the lander comes to a jarring stop upon the empty street that runs by the capitol building, a second vehicle appears in the sky overhead; sleek and agile-looking, this vehicle is quite obviously a support craft designed to protect the lander during a ground offensive. The expression on Archer's face darkens as he realizes the message this sort of landing is intended to send and, as he glances at Cheet, he realizes that the “governor” understands it as well.

With a loud CLANG, the four bay doors on the lander deploy, falling forward onto the ground to create a ramp. A platoon of soldiers, all in combat gear, march from the lander, surrounding an easily recognizable figure also wearing combat fatigues and battle harness: General Petrov.

A low and angry murmur begins making its way through the assembled crowd as the general and his troops approach. People give way with sullen expressions on their face and one even spits on the ground before moving. Hiding his own discontent, Archer approaches the general slowly, flanked by his own officers.

ARCHER

General, I'm Captain-

PETROV

(interrupting)

Archer. I know.

(beat, with a not so subtle frown directed toward T'Pol)

You are relieved, Captain.

Archer hesitates, glancing briefly at the silent soldiers that surround the general.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER

(carefully)

I was under the impression that an official diplomatic team would be arriving, General.

Petrov gives him a cold glare.

PETROV

I am that team, Captain. Dismissed.

Without another word, the general begins ascending the stairs. He gives Cheet a contemptuous look before addressing Skon.

PETROV

Ambassador.

(beat, off of the Vulcan's slight nod)

I'm here to represent United Earth and am more than ready to get started.

(beat, with another contemptuous look toward Cheet)

There is much to do...

And with that, we follow him into the building. A digital wall chronometer can be seen, displaying the local time as 13:07. The numbers change and we transition to ...

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DIPLOMATIC CHAMBERS

A different wall chronometer displaying the local time of 20:19 hours. Both Cheet and Petrov appear livid, with the general looking as if he is about to go over the table. Even Ambassador Skon appears weary as he observes the two humans shouting at one another.

From a seat in the visitor's galley, Captain Archer has an unbelieving expression on his face as he stares quietly at the spectacle before him. Major Reed sits to his right, Ensign Sato to his left and Lieutenant Cole just behind him. Unsurprisingly, Sub-Commander T'Pol is several empty seats distant from the three.

PETROV

-and that is our final offer!

CHEET

That's no offer! It's an insult!

Before reply can be made, Ambassador Skon rises and speaks loudly, his stern voice echoing off of the walls.

SKON

Gentlemen.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

SKON (CONT'D)

(off the humans' sullen looks toward him)

It is late and both of you are tired. I recommend that we recess and reconvene in the morning.

Petrov nods once and spins on his heel, not even looking back as he stomps from the chamber. With a raised eyebrow, Skon watches him go and there is a flicker of disapproval on his otherwise unreadable features. As he turns back to Cheet, the Alpha Centauri governor speaks, forgetting in his frustration that there are still people in the chamber "observing."

CHEET

(angry)

That goddamned idiot is going to start a war.

(beat, with an exasperated sigh)

Why is it that these Earthers won't even listen to our complaints? Won't even try to understand our problems?

He turns away from the Vulcan, not expecting - and not receiving - an answer. As he walks toward the exit nearest his seat, he appears like a man marching toward his execution: clearly, he sees war coming and doesn't know how to avoid it.

Focus on Jonathan Archer: He studies Cheet's posture with a dark frown and a worried glint in his eyes. For a LONG BEAT, he sits quietly, thinking, deciding, planning. Finally ...

ARCHER

(softly)

Major Reed.

The major straightens slightly in his seat.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I want to look into Cheet's claims.

(beat, off the major's widened eyes)

To see if things really are as bad as he says they are.

REED

Yes sir.

(beat, considering)

May I recommend we go in disguise, sir?

(beat, off Archer's glance toward him)

I doubt the local populace is likely to talk about their troubles to the Enemy, sir.

ARCHER

Good idea. I want you and Hoshi with me. More than three would be conspicuous so Lieutenant Cole should return to *Enterprise*.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

T'POL

Captain...

Archer frowns again as he glances toward the Vulcan; she had been so quiet that he'd forgotten about her presence.

ARCHER

Return to *Enterprise* and help Trip with the repairs, Sub-Commander.

If she dislikes her instructions, T'Pol betrays no hint of it.

T'POL

Yes sir.

ARCHER

And tell Trip not to comm. me unless it's a warp core breach.

(beat, with a frown)

Let's get to work...

Archer stands and we ...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE ALPHA CENTAURI A

Still encased in the massive dry dock orbiting the planet, *Enterprise* is a positive hub of activity. Dozens of EV-suited figures can be seen hard at work on the outer hull, most using vacuum torches to secure hull patches or seal micro-breaches. Through transparent viewports on the dry dock itself, we can see numerous figures observing the ongoing work but making no effort to assist.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - ENGINEERING

The hiss of the main door to engineering opening cannot be heard over the noise of the staff hard at work. Loud bangs of metal against metal, orders relayed by shouts, and the whine of power tools all mingle, creating a cacophony of sound that is - momentarily - deafening.

Wearing an EV-suit (sans helmet and gloves) and glaring at a clipboard with actual paper on it, Trip Tucker enters his domain a half step ahead of an engineering crewman. Tucker is shaking his head and an expression of frustration is on his face.

TUCKER

Dammit. I was afraid of that.

(beat, as he hands the clipboard to the crewman)

Take this back to Rostov and tell him to check the entire section for stress fractures. The entire section. Have him pull from Taylor's crew if he needs help.

CREWMAN

Yes sir.

Tucker turns away from the retreating crewman and gives the engineering deck a quick glance. At once, his expression sours to one of anger.

His POV: Standing in front of his “office” and before the wall monitor that currently displays a schematic of *Enterprise*, Sub-Commander T'Pol is issuing instructions to several crewmen and pointing to the display. Both men nod - grudgingly in one instance - and move off.

Back to scene: His lips tight with barely repressed fury, the commander stomps forward, intent on the Vulcan. Sensing his mood, a number of crewmen scurry to get out of his way. At his approach, she looks up from the console in front of the display - from the small console screen; it's pretty obvious that she was adjusting the repair schedule.

T'POL

Commander, I have been waiting for-

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

TUCKER

(interrupting, very hostile)
What the hell are you doin'?

T'Pol appears momentarily taken aback by the fury in the engineer's voice but takes it in stride; after all, she knows full well how few aboard the ship even want her here, especially the man whose job as First Officer she took.

T'POL

I was waiting for you.
(beat, off Trip's silence)
Captain Archer instructed me to offer my assistance in completing the repairs.

TUCKER

Assistance.
(points to the console screen)
That's not assistance, Sub-Commander. That's tryin' to do my job!

She raises an eyebrow as he continues his tirade.

TUCKER (CONT'D)

No one - no one - comes into Engineering and tries to tell me how to run things! You want something done, you come to me, you don't start tellin' my people what to do!

T'POL

(coolly in the face of Trip's anger)
I am not attempting to circumvent your authority, Commander.

TUCKER

(still angry)
Really? Then can you tell my why the hell you were screwin' with my repair schedule?

T'Pol blinks, unable to come up with an appropriate response to that comment as she realizes that Trip does have a legitimate point. The engineer stands in silence for a BEAT, still glaring at her.

T'POL

My revisions were in the interests of efficiency.

TUCKER

So go through proper channels.
(beat, crossing his arms)
Like you keep remindin' me to do.
(beat, as T'Pol frowns slightly)
I don't need someone second guessin' my every move. Especially not you.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

The Vulcan nods ever so slightly in an unspoken offer of truce and Trip, overloaded with work and stress and lack of sleep, accepts with nothing more than the breaking of eye contact. Another frown appears on his face as he sees several crewmen that he doesn't recognize. Seeming to read his thoughts, the sub-commander suddenly speaks up.

T'POL

The replacement crew members were shuttled to *Enterprise* from *Lexington* while you were conducting hull repairs.

(beat, as he glances back at her)

As you were unavailable, I took the liberty of assigning them tasks.

Trip is silent for a BEAT, trying to figure out if he should be annoyed or grateful for that.

TUCKER

(grudgingly)

Thanks.

(beat, suddenly thoughtful)

Do any of them have EV training? I really need some more bodies to help with the hull patches...

T'POL

None of them have more than basic training in zero-gee operations.

(beat, off Trip's frustrated sigh)

I, however, am quite skilled in low gravity environments.

Tucker smirks abruptly.

TUCKER

(amused)

I bet you are ...

(beat, off T'Pol's raised eyebrow)

Get suited up then, Sub-Commander. I'll meet you at the aft airlock in ten minutes.

She nods once, still obviously attempting to decipher the source of his sudden humor, and turns away. Tucker's eyes briefly linger on her posterior before he starts looking over the revised repair schedule. A curious expression appears on his face as LIEUTENANT KELBY, his second, approaches with a clipboard in hand.

KELBY

Sir?

Trip glances up, accepting the offered clipboard without even giving it a glance.

KELBY (CONT'D)

I ... uh ... made a backup of your repair schedule, sir.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

KELBY (CONT'D)

(off Trip’s sidelong glance)

When I saw her adjusting it. You want me to restore the original?

TUCKER

Don't bother.

(as he gestures toward T'Pol's “suggestions”)

This one's better.

(beat, off Kelby's surprise)

Make sure all of the department heads get a copy.

Tucker looks toward the main entrance into Engineering as the lieutenant nods.

His POV: Sub-Commander T'Pol strides confidently out of Engineering.

Back to scene: Trip grunts and looks down at the clipboard Kelby gave him moments ago. With that, we fade to...

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - THE “OLD” CITY

An immense moon - significantly larger than the Terran satellite - looms overhead, bathing the darkened street in surprising luminance. The buildings here are old, dilapidated and most appear to have originally been constructed from starship hulls. Unlike the street outside the capitol building, the alleyways here are clogged with groundcars; very few appear to be less than fifteen years old. Everywhere one looks, the impression of age and poverty is felt.

From the street, we push into:

INT. BUILDING - A QUAIN PUB

His head hanging low, Jonathan Archer looks nothing like the proud UESPA captain that he is. Dressed in an old coat and older pants, he appears to be just another down-on-his-luck citizen of this colony. Sipping slowly from the mug that rests on the table before him, he studies the visitors of this small drinking establishment with hooded eyes.

His POV: Hoshi and Reed sit quietly at a table with the major's back to the wall; both of them are dressed in civilian clothes as well and chat softly with one another in low voices. At a quick glance, they could be taken as sweethearts or close friends sharing a meal; Reed's eyes, however, are rarely on his dinner companion and sweep the bar in a manner that is unmistakable.

The bar itself is filled nearly to capacity and a grim atmosphere hangs over it. Low conversations are the norm and no one appears happy. As Archer's attention shifts to various colonists, the focus on the conversations shifts as well.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

COLONIST 1

-damned ECA. Didja hear they upped the cargo tax again? How the hell am I supposed to afford that?

COLONIST 2

-don't hold with this Cheet fellow ... but he's gotta point, you know? Those Earthers keep givin' us the shaft and it's about time they pay-

COLONIST 3

-entire fleet up there. I heard that they've got orders to retake the planet by force.

COLONIST 4

-lost his whole crop. Some new strain of bacteria or something. Gonna have to sell half his land just to buy the-

COLONIST 5

-can't even pay local taxes! How're we supposed to afford this latest nonsense?

COLONIST 6

-heard Joe got caught up in the fighting. Lost his boy to those Tamarite? Tallavite? Eh ... whatever the hell ya call 'em.

Back to scene: His face troubled, Archer gives Reed a discreet look, signaling with his eyes that he's ready to leave before standing. No one notices their departure, so wrapped up in their own problems.

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - THE "OLD" CITY

Inhaling deeply of the night air, Archer barely glances at his two crewmen as they walk from the bar and toward a nondescript groundcar. Without speaking, the captain slides into the driver's seat and engages the engine. It's a wheeled vehicle, not too dissimilar from a modern car but is much quieter, indicating an electric engine of some sort. As Archer eases the vehicle onto the street, Hoshi breaks the silence.

SATO

Sir?

(beat, off his half glance toward her)

Did you get what you wanted?

Archer frowns and is silent for a VERY LONG BEAT.

ARCHER

What I wanted? No.

(beat, with a sigh)

What I needed ... maybe.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

Both Reed and Sato give him a strange look but say nothing.

ARCHER

Contact *Enterprise* and arrange a pick up.

The major pulls out a communicator and we shift to...

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI - SPACEPORT - NIGHT

An *Enterprise* shuttlepod descends from the night sky as the groundcar approaches. As he exits the vehicle, Archer gives the spaceport a long look, noting that it is remarkably busy. Boomer ships are being rapidly filled up with poorly-dressed civilians and we focus again on the captain's face. His expression is grim as he turns to the shuttlepod and its open hatch. Almost instantly, the 'pod lifts off of the ground and races into the night sky.

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE ALPHA CENTAURI A

Engines glowing brightly, the shuttlepod breaks from the planet and approaches the drydock.

INT. SHUTTLEPOD

Seated at the rear of the 'pod, his head leaning back against the metal, Captain Archer stares at the opposite wall for a LONG BEAT. Finally ...

ARCHER

Hoshi.

The ensign shoots him a startled look, her hands white from the near death grip she has on the seat restraints.

ARCHER

When we get aboard, I want you to set up a communication with Admiral Forrest. High priority.

She nods and he returns to his brooding.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - ARCHER'S OFFICE

Now wearing the UESPA sweats we saw him wear in the mini-series, Captain Archer paces back and forth in front of the small viewport. He appears to be rehearsing something - a speech perhaps, or maybe a request that he expects to be denied. Glancing up at the viewport, he frowns at the darkened planet beyond.

SATO (COMM VOICE)

Sir, I have Admiral Forrest.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

Turning back to his desk and quickly taking a seat, Archer draws a breath as if he is tensing for something unpleasant.

ARCHER

Thank you.

He reaches forward and presses a button. Instantly, Admiral Forrest's face appears on the screen before Archer.

FORREST

(annoyed and sleepy)

Dammit, Archer! Do you know what time it is?

The chronometer on Archer's wall can be seen as the captain replies: 02:36.

ARCHER

Yes sir.

At that, the admiral blinks in surprise. Realizing that whatever Archer called him for is important, he rubs the grit from his eyes.

FORREST

Then it better be worth it, Jonathan.

ARCHER

(nodding)

Yes sir.

(beat)

Admiral, are you aware that General Petrov is heading the diplomatic team that President Vanderbilt sent?

From his expression, the admiral clearly was not aware of that.

FORREST

Petrov?

(beat, frowning)

He's not a diplomat...

ARCHER

(grim)

No sir, he's not.

(beat, off of the admiral's questioning look)

Max, he's not even trying to negotiate.

The personal appeal achieves the goal as the admiral frowns hard.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER

He's gone out of his way to be as offensive as possible. It's like he wants a fight.
(frustrated)

He wore combat armor to the negotiations!

FORREST

Jon ...

ARCHER

(growing more frustrated)
Combat armor! To negotiations!

FORREST

Jon!

Archer forces himself to calm down.

FORREST

(hesitantly)
If Petrov is there, then the president sent him for a reason.

ARCHER

(flatly)
Yeah. To start a war.

The admiral's eyes narrow in reproach but he doesn't call Archer on the disrespect. He studies Archer for a long BEAT before finally sighing heavily.

FORREST

What do you need?

Archer visibly readies himself and the admiral recognizes this with a frown.

ARCHER

Talk to Vanderbilt. Get him to pull Petrov back.

The admiral's eyes widen.

FORREST

(sarcastically)
Just like that?
(beat)
I don't exactly have the president on speed calling, Jon.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER

Max, you know I wouldn't ask you to do this if it wasn't important.

(beat, off the admiral's silence)

I spent a couple hours with the locals today and a lot of Cheet's complaints turned out to be true. The new tax laws are crippling their economy and-

FORREST

(firmly)

Jon.

(off Archer's shutting up)

It's not our job to make the laws, just to obey them.

ARCHER

(flatly)

Colonel Green's people said the same thing.

Anger flares momentarily in the admiral's eyes and he glares at Archer; the captain says nothing more, however, letting his own expression express his disdain over this course of action. After a moment, the admiral sighs, recognizing the validity in the younger man's complaints.

FORREST

I'll see what I can do.

ARCHER

Thank you, sir.

FORREST

Don't thank me yet! This may just make things worse!

(beat, off Archer's still troubled expression)

And Jon? Don't do anything stupid.

ARCHER

Yes sir.

Forrest sighs again and ends the transmission, leaving Archer to sit quietly in the dark. For a long BEAT, he stares at the blank screen before finally looking to his left. Almost instantly, his features tighten.

His POV: The small picture viewer that previously held a shot of his parents has now cycled forward in its rotation of digital images. Now, it is frozen on an official photo of HENRY ARCHER receiving a Nobel peace prize.

Back to scene: Archer frowns darkly at the image before reaching for the comm. panel.

ARCHER

Archer to bridge. Connect me to the *Lexington*.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

A dark smile touches his face and a thought occurs to him: he’s going to do something stupid.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE ALPHA CENTAURI A

As before, we open with a shot of the EX-01 encased within the drydock. Unlike the previous times, however, there is no movement upon the hull of *Enterprise*.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - MESS HALL

A PADD in one hand and empty coffee cup in the other, Captain Archer enters the mostly dark dining facility, his eyes glued to the screen of the small data device. He is still wearing the sweats that we saw him in during the previous scene.

It is clearly late - the low level of ship's lighting is immediate proof of that - and he glances around the mess hall, noting instantly a halo of light surrounding a single figure at a distant table. Commander Tucker sits quietly by himself and the table is dominated by numerous clipboards and PADDs; even now, Tucker is scribbling something on one of the clipboards. With a frown, the captain approaches.

ARCHER

Why are you still up?

Trip doesn't even look up from his work and, as we get closer, we can see that he is filling out reports.

TUCKER

Couldn't sleep.

ARCHER

Again?

Trip does look up at that, shooting the older man a sour look as the captain takes a seat.

TUCKER

And there's too many damned reports to fill out. You never mentioned that when I signed on.

(beat, off the captain's smile)

Why are you still up?

ARCHER

Couldn't sleep.

The two men share a smirk before Tucker returns his attention to the reports in front of him.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

ARCHER

Just to let you know, I'll be on the *Lexington* in a couple of hours.

TUCKER

Why?

The captain sighs.

ARCHER

To see if I can't get this General Bernard-
(gesturing to the PADD)
-to rein in Petrov.

Trip looks up, pen frozen in place.

TUCKER

What's the point? Seems to me that if the president sent this Petrov guy, it was for a reason.

Archer appears momentarily troubled as he leans forward.

ARCHER

I ... I don't think the president really knows what's going on here.

TUCKER

(grinning)
Didn't you vote for him?

ARCHER

(with an amused smile)
Shut up, Trip.

Tucker gives the captain a smirk before returning to his reports. For a BEAT, they are silent as they study their respective data before...

TUCKER

Oh ... before I forget again, sign this.

He grabs a clipboard and offers it the captain.

ARCHER

(reading)
Hazardous material disposal?

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

TUCKER

Whoops. Wrong one.
(beat as he grabs the correct one and exchanges it)
Here.

ARCHER

Request for open flame in crew quarters?

TUCKER

From T'Pol. For meditation candles or something. I okayed it a couple of days ago but haven't had time to forward it to you yet.

ARCHER

Meditation, huh?

TUCKER

Yeah. According to Phlox, all Vulcans have to mediate daily. Something about keeping their emotions in check.

(beat, amused)

Who knew that they had to work at being so damned annoying?

Archer scrawls his signature on the clipboard.

ARCHER

Weren't you into meditation once?

TUCKER

Nope. I was into Natalie at the time; she was into meditation.

The two chuckle as Archer hands the clipboard back; the captain then takes a BEAT to study Trip - it's pretty obvious that the engineer is exhausted.

ARCHER

Trip?

TUCKER

Yeah?

ARCHER

Go to bed. It's after three and those reports can wait until tomorrow.

(beat, off Trip's frown)

See Phlox if you have to but I need you rested.

Trip looks up and studies the captain with narrowed eyes; it's obvious that he ... senses something unsaid.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

TUCKER

You expectin' trouble?

ARCHER

Always.

(beat)

But this ...

(beat, as he looks away)

...this whole situation worries the hell out of me. I'm afraid this idiot general is going to get us into a shooting war ...

Trip is silent for a LONG BEAT before finally nodding. They both focus on the starfield beyond the viewport and the scene presses THRU the viewport.

EXT. SPACE

We ZOOM in toward the Lexington as a line of text appears below the warship:

UEM Lexington, CH-24
United Earth Military Task Force Command Ship

Drifting toward an unshuttered viewport, we pass through it and into the ship itself.

INT. *LEXINGTON* - GENERAL'S OFFICE

To modern aesthetics, the office is small and cramped, but when compared to the captain's office aboard *Enterprise*, it is positively luxurious. Surprisingly, the walls are absent of décor with only two notable exceptions: a framed United Earth flag and a flat image of a Martian landscape.

Seated at the desk is MAJOR GENERAL APRIL BERNARD. A formidable-looking woman nearing fifty years of age, she looks to be in excellent fighting shape. A chime sounds, echoing through the small office.

BERNARD

Enter.

The hatch - and it's clearly a hatch, not a door - opens and a UEM Sergeant enters, ducking his head slightly to avoid the hatch rim. Lurking outside the office is Captain Archer.

UEM SERGEANT

Ma'am, Captain Archer has arrived.

Looking up from the reports on her desk, the general gestures to Archer.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

BERNARD

Come in, Captain.

(beat, as Archer enters – he also ducks his head)

Bring us some coffee, Sergeant. How do you take yours, Captain?

ARCHER

Black, no sugar.

The sergeant backs out of the office, pulling the hatch shut behind him, as Archer assumes an uneasy “at ease” position with his hands clasped at the small of his back. Bernard gestures to one of the two chairs in front of the desk.

BERNARD

Have a seat, Captain.

ARCHER

(as he sits)

Thank you.

(off her nod)

This is a nice ship you've got here. I think your office is bigger than my quarters on *Enterprise*.

The general smiles slightly at that.

BERNARD

Somehow I doubt that. But thank you.

(beat, as they share an awkward smile)

Now, what can I do for you?

For a BEAT, Archer hesitates as he picks his words carefully.

ARCHER

It's about General Petrov-

At this, the general narrows her eyes and frowns; leaning back in her chair, she crosses her arms as he continues.

ARCHER

I was hoping you could get him to ease up on Cheet.

BERNARD

Ease up?

Her expression reveals her incredulity.

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

BERNARD

(soft but angry)

The man seized power in a military coup! He should be arrested and thrown in a cell, not "negotiated" with!

Archer's discomfort is obvious; he clearly doesn't entirely disagree with the general about Cheet but also has the benefit of having actually seen the conditions on Alpha Centauri.

ARCHER

That doesn't change the fact that they do have legitimate grievances.

Bearing two cups of coffee, the UEM sergeant re-enters the office. Neither officer notices his presence.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

All I'm asking is that you rein Petrov in a bit ... tell him to actually listen to Cheet's complaints.

BERNARD

(slightly uncomfortable)

President Vanderbilt appointed General Petrov to head these talks, Captain, and I-

ARCHER

(interrupting)

But that's my point! There isn't any talking going on, just useless posturing!

It's a sign of how frustrated Archer is that he clenches the arms of his chair with a white-knuckled grip.

ARCHER

All I'm asking you to do is listen to Cheet's complaints. Talk to him in instead of issuing demands.

The general's face tightens.

BERNARD

General Petrov's mandate comes directly from the president.

(beat, off of Archer's frown)

I'm a soldier, Captain. I obey orders, even when I don't necessarily agree with them.

Archer glares at her, temper building. Behind them, the UEM sergeant quietly departs the office; it's pretty clear from his expression that he's really uncomfortable being in the middle of this sort of discussion.

ARCHER

And if those orders call for you to fire on your fellow humans?

FOUNDATIONS: "Rubicon"

BERNARD

(composed but soft)

Then I'll obey them.

(beat, off Archer's outraged expression)

And grieve for the dead afterwards.

(beat)

I don't expect you to understand, Captain. The training that UESPA gave you is different than what I received.

ARCHER

I understand more than you think. Petrov is not qualified to be down there, presidential mandate or not. What happens when he goes too far and a shooting war breaks out?

How many more humans will we lose over this rock?

(beat, off Bernard's continued silence)

And what about the Vulcans? Do you honestly think they'll sit by and let you retake Alpha Centauri without a fight? How many die when they retaliate?

An uneasy silence takes hold of the office for a LONG BEAT. Perhaps sensing that he's making headway, Archer continues in a calmer voice.

ARCHER

I'm not asking you disobey orders, General-

From her frown, we can tell that Bernard thinks that he is asking that.

ARCHER (CONTINUED)

-only to give actual diplomacy a try. We have an amazing opportunity to finally make things better for everyone involved.

(beat, off her conflicted expression)

You know as well as I do that General Petrov is not the man for this job.

BERNARD

That's not my call, Captain. The president has already made his decision and I have to respect his authority.

ARCHER

Even when he's wrong?

BERNARD

Especially when he's wrong.

(beat)

I swore an oath to defend Earth from enemies both foreign and domestic. That may just sound like pretty words to you, but that oath means everything to me.

(beat)

I cannot and will not go against the orders of my legally appointed superiors.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

From his expression, we can tell that Archer is both impressed and frustrated by the general's words.

BERNARD

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention, Captain. I will take your suggestion under advisement.

It's a clear dismissal and Archer stands. His expression is grim.

ARCHER

I just hope you make a decision before the shooting starts.

As he makes his way to the hatch, we momentarily focus on Bernard and her “command face” falters ever so briefly at his words.

INT. *LEXINGTON* – CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

As Archer steps through the hatch and into the corridor, we see Major Reed and Ensign Sato waiting for him. The captain's expression says everything.

ARCHER

(grim)

We're done here.

Reed doesn't hesitate, turning and starting down the corridor in a measured pace. Hoshi hesitates as the captain gives the now closed hatch to General Bernard's office one last look, a look filled with poorly hidden frustration.

SATO

Captain?

ARCHER

I'm fine, Hoshi. Just a little ... annoyed.

Her own expression tightening, the ensign falls into step with the captain as they follow Major Reed through the corridor.

EXT. SPACE

Shuttlepod 01 departs the *Lexington's* launch bay and accelerates away from the military taskforce. We suddenly shift angles so we are looking at the rear of the shuttle as it moves away. Pulling back, it is quickly revealed that we are looking through General Bernard's viewport.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

INT. *LEXINGTON* – GENERAL BERNARD'S OFFICE

Standing with her arms crossed, the general watches the gradually dwindling shuttle with an expression on her face that could only be called troubled. She glances to her desk and we follow her attention.

Her POV: On the display of her desktop computer, we can see Archer's official service record.

Back to scene: Sighing, Bernard glances again at the shuttlepod. A buzz sounds and she turns to the nearby comm. panel.

BERNARD

Yes?

BRIDGE OFFICER (COMM. VOICE)

General, we have emergency flash traffic incoming from Earth.

A flicker of alarm appears momentarily on the general's face before she responds.

BERNARD

Authenticate.

BRIDGE OFFICER (COMM. VOICE)

Yes, ma'am. Flash traffic is authenticated. I'm forwarding a copy to you now.

A soft whir can be heard from the desk and a letter-sized strip of paper slides from a slot on the top. Bernard picks it up and quickly scans it, her frown deepening with each second.

BERNARD

Recall General Petrov's team at once.

(beat, with a glance at the viewport)

And sound battle stations.

Dropping the paper onto her desk, she strides toward the hatch as a loud alarm begins to sound. We focus on the paper as she exits through the hatch. It bears a number of unintelligible numbers and digits that clearly mean something to someone trained in their meaning. The most important aspect, however, is a line of text sandwiched between those symbols:

CEASE NEGOTIATIONS WITH ACENT AND STAND BY FOR COMBOPS. MORE TO FOLLOW.

As we fade to black, a line of text appears in the lower portion of the screen.

To Be Continued...

FADE OUT.

FOUNDATIONS: “Rubicon”

END OF ACT FIVE

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