Northern Fury (Alternate Cold War History) On the 19th of August 1991, hard-liners in the Soviet leadership, calling themselves the 'State Emergency Committee', launched the 'August Coup' in order to remove Gorbachev from power and prevent the signing of the new union treaty. Although experiencing some initial setbacks and resounding world condemnation - the coup was a success. The concepts of Perestroika and Glasnost, and the economic and political restructuring they implied, were abolished overnight. Independence movements in 14 states were ruthlessly quashed, including those in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Georgia where self-rule had already been declared. Internal strife reminiscent of the 1920's lasted for just over a month but the iron rule of the reinvigorated Communist Party prevailed in all areas.

NATO watched nervously as their efforts to encourage Eastern European countries away from Dictatorship were methodically dashed. Only Poland and the re-unified Germany managed to avoid the restoration of the Warsaw Pact. Poland has declared itself Neutral and Non-aligned; however significant pro Eastern Bloc movements exist and are in a constant struggle with its emerging Capitalist economy. Germany is in a difficult position as many of its Left Wing political elements have been proposing the abandonment of collective defense as a viable strategy for the future.

Meanwhile, NATO was decisively engaged as its (original 16) various governments were attempting to realize the 'peace dividend' by reducing military forces, and employing what is left in non-traditional roles in order to justify costs. With significantly reduced Land, Sea and Air forces embroiled in the Balkans, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Rwanda and The Sudan. Resources are spread thinner than they have been since the 1940's. Tensions with Iraq are high and the threat to stability in the Middle East is extreme.

On the 9th of February 1994, a Soviet supported Coup toppled the Polish government and sent the emergent democratic state into anarchy. The UN Security council response was futile and an emergency sitting of NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) was called for the 12th of February.

In Norway - The International Olympic Committee (IOC), in consultation with the UN decided to carry on with the Winter Games which were opened in Lillehammer, on February 12th. Soviet and Eastern Bloc countries were represented at the opening ceremonies but many of their athletes were not present at the start of the actual events on the 13th, the Russian Olympic village was empty and initial investigation found that many of the athletes had simply disappeared, while only a few had flown home. Norway has called up its reserves and ordered the IOC to cancel the games and evacuate the Olympic Village. The world is in an uproar over the loss of the Olympic spectacle and TV commentators all over the Globe are criticizing Norway's decision.