

# Clear and Present Danger

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TOM CLANCY

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
*New York*

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G. P. Putnam's Sons  
*Publishers Since 1838*  
200 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

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Published simultaneously in Canada

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Clancy, Tom, date.

Clear and present danger.

I. Title.

PS3553.L245C5 1989 813'.54 89-10287  
ISBN 0-399-13440-9

*Designed by MaryJane DiMassi*  
*Printed in the United States of America*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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ALSO BY TOM CLANCY:

*The Hunt for Red October*

*Red Storm Rising*

*Patriot Games*

*The Cardinal of the Kremlin*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As always, there are many people to thank. To “The Great Geraldo” for his friendship; to Russ for his second installment of wise counsel and amazing breadth of knowledge; to Carl and Colin, who never knew what they were starting, but then, neither did I; to Bill for his wisdom; to Rich for his contemplation of what matters; to Tim, Ninja-Six, for more than a few tips on fieldcraft; to Ed, commander of warriors, and Patricia, who named the Cabbage Patch Hat, for their gracious hospitality; to Pete, former headmaster of the world’s most exciting school (the passing grade is life); to Pat, who teaches the same course at yet another school; to Harry, mentee, for his most serious irreverence; to W.H., who does his best in a hopeless, thankless job; and of course to a dozen or so warrant officers who could teach astronauts a thing or two; and so many others—would that America served you as faithfully as you serve her.



*To the memory of John Ball,  
Friend and teacher,  
The professional who took the last plane out*



Law, without force, is impotent.

—PASCAL

It is the function of police to exercise force, or to threaten it, in execution of the state's purpose, internally and under normal conditions. It is the function of armed forces to exercise force, or the threat of it, externally in normal times and internally only in times that are abnormal. . . .

[T]he degree of force which the state is prepared to apply in the execution of its purpose . . . is as much as the government of the day considers it necessary or expedient to use to avoid a breakdown in its function and a surrender of its responsibilities.

—GENERAL SIR JOHN HACKETT



# Prologue:

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## Situation

THE ROOM WAS STILL EMPTY. The Oval Office is in the southeast corner of the White House West Wing. Three doors lead into it, one from the office of the President's personal secretary, another from a small kitchen which leads in turn to the President's study, and a third into a corridor, directly opposite the entrance to the Roosevelt Room. The room itself is of only medium size for a senior executive, and visitors always remark afterward that it seemed smaller than they expected. The President's desk, set just in front of thick windows of bullet-resistant polycarbonate that distort the view of the White House lawn, is made from the wood of HMS *Resolute*, a British ship that sank in American waters during the 1850s. Americans salvaged and returned it to the United Kingdom, and a grateful Queen Victoria ordered a desk made from its oaken timbers by way of official thanks. Made in an age when men were shorter than today, the desk was increased somewhat in height during the Reagan presidency. The President's desk was laden with folders and position papers capped with a printout of his appointment schedule, plus an intercom box, a conventional push-button multiline telephone, and another ordinary-looking but highly sophisticated secure instrument for sensitive conversations.

The President's chair was custom-made to fit its user, and its high back included sheets of DuPont Kevlar—lighter and tougher than steel—as additional protection against bullets that some madman might fire through the heavy windows. There were, of course, about a dozen Secret Service agents on duty in this part of the Presidential



Mansion during business hours. To get here most people had to pass through a metal detector—in fact all did, since the obvious ones were a little *too* obvious—and everyone had to pass the quite serious scrutiny of the Secret Service detail, whose identity was plain from the flesh-toned earpieces that coiled out from under their suit jackets, and whose politeness was secondary to their real mission of keeping the President alive. Beneath the jacket of each was a powerful handgun, and each of these agents was trained to view everyone and everything as a potential threat to WRANGLER, which was the President's current code-name. It had no meaning beyond being easy to say and easily recognizable on a radio circuit.

Vice Admiral James Cutter, USN, was in an office on the opposite, northwest corner of the West Wing and had been since 6:15 that morning. The job of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs requires a man to be an early riser. At a quarter to eight he finished off his second cup of morning coffee—it was good here—and tucked his briefing papers into a leather folder. He walked through the empty office of his vacationing deputy, turned right down the corridor past the similarly vacant office of the Vice President, who was in Seoul at the moment, and turned left past the office of the President's Chief of Staff. Cutter was one of the handful of real Washington insiders—the Vice President was not among them—who didn't need the permission of the Chief of Staff to walk into the Oval Office whenever he felt the need, though he'd generally call ahead first to give the secretaries a heads-up. The Chief of Staff didn't like anyone to have that privilege, but that made his unlimited access all the more pleasant for Cutter to exercise. Along the way four security personnel nodded good morning to the Admiral, who returned the gestures as he would greet any skilled menial. Cutter's official code-name was LUMBERJACK, and though he knew that the Secret Service agents called him something else among themselves, Cutter was past caring what little people thought of him. The secretaries' anteroom was already up and running, with three secretaries and a Secret Service agent sitting in their appointed places.

"Chief on time?" he asked.

"WRANGLER is on the way down, sir," Special Agent Connor said. He was forty, a section chief of the Presidential Detail, didn't give a goddamn who Cutter was, and could care less what Cutter thought of him. Presidents and aides came and went, some liked, some loathed, but the professionals of the Secret Service served and protected them all. His trained eyes swept over the leather folder and