

Tom Clancy

THE
CARDINAL
OF THE
KREMLIN

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS NEW YORK

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G. P. Putnam's Sons
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ALSO BY TOM CLANCY

The Hunt for Red October
Red Storm Rising
Patriot Games

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If there was ever a case of casting pearls before swine, it is to be found in the efforts of numerous members of the scientific community who endeavored to explain the theoretical and engineering aspects of strategic defense to this writer. To George, and Barry, and Bruce, and Russ, and Tom, and Danny, and Bob, and Jim I owe a great deal of thanks. But so does a country, and on one day to come, a world.

Special thanks, moreover, are due to Chris Larsson and Space Media Network, whose commercially generated “overhead imagery” was good enough to make a few people nervous—and this is only the beginning . . .

For Colonel and Mrs. F. Carter Cobb

. . . Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken; . . .

Sonnet 116
William Shakespeare

[T]he operations of spies, saboteurs and secret agents are generally regarded as outside the scope of national and international law. They are therefore anathema to all accepted standards of conduct. Nevertheless history shows that no nation will shrink from such activities if they further its vital interests.

—Field Marshal Viscount
Montgomery of Alamein

The difference between a good man and a bad one is the choice of cause.

—William James

Prologue:

Threats—Old, New, and Timeless

THEY called him the Archer. It was an honorable title, though his countrymen had cast aside their reflex bows over a century before, as soon as they had learned about firearms. In part, the name reflected the timeless nature of the struggle. The first of the Western invaders—for that was how they thought of them—had been Alexander the Great, and more had followed since. Ultimately, all had failed. The Afghan tribesmen held their Islamic faith as the reason for their resistance, but the obstinate courage of these men was as much a part of their racial heritage as their dark pitiless eyes.

The Archer was a young man, and an old one. On those occasions that he had both the desire and opportunity to bathe in a mountain stream, anyone could see the youthful muscles on his thirty-year-old body. They were the smooth muscles of one for whom a thousand-foot climb over bare rock was as unremarkable a part of life as a stroll to the mailbox.

It was his eyes that were old. The Afghans are a handsome people whose forthright features and fair skin suffer quickly from wind and sun and dust, too often making them older than their years. For the Archer, the damage had not been done by wind. A teacher of mathematics until three years before, a college graduate in a country where

most deemed it enough to be able to read the holy Koran, he'd married young, as was the custom in his land, and fathered two children. But his wife and daughter were dead, killed by rockets fired from a Sukhoi-24 attack-fighter. His son was gone. Kidnapped. After the Soviets had flattened the village of his wife's family with air power, their ground troops had come, killing the remaining adults and sweeping up all the orphans for shipment to the Soviet Union, where they would be educated and trained in other modern ways. All because his wife had wanted her mother to see the grandchildren before she died, the Archer remembered, all because a Soviet patrol had been fired upon a few kilometers from the village. On the day he'd learned this—a week after it had actually happened—the teacher of algebra and geometry had neatly stacked the books on his desk and walked out of the small town of Ghazni into the hills. A week later he'd returned to the town after dark with three other men and proved that he was worthy of his heritage by killing three Soviet soldiers and taking their arms. He still carried that first Kalashnikov.

But that was not why he was known as the Archer. The chief of his little band of *mudjaheddin*—the name means “Freedom Fighter”—was a perceptive leader who did not look down upon the new arrival who'd spent his youth in classrooms, learning foreign ways. Nor did he hold the young man's initial lack of faith against him. When the teacher joined the group, he'd had only the most cursory knowledge of Islam, and the headman remembered the bitter tears falling like rain from the young man's eyes as their imam had counseled him in Allah's will. Within a month he'd become the most ruthless—and most effective—man in the band, clearly an expression of God's own plan. And it was he whom the leader had chosen to travel to Pakistan, where he could use his knowledge of science and numbers to learn the use of surface-to-air missiles. The first SAMs with which the quiet, serious man from *Amerikastan* had equipped the *mudjaheddin* had been the Soviets' own SA-7, known by the Russians as *strela*, “arrow.” The first “man-portable” SAM, it was not overly effective unless used with great skill. Only a few had such skill. Among them the arithmetic teacher was the best, and for his successes with the Russian “arrows,” the men in the group took to calling him the Archer.

He waited with a new missile at the moment, the American one called Stinger, but all of the surface-to-air missiles in this group—