

PRELUDE THE SYNOPSIS

American citizens perished in the conflagration that illuminated the dawn briefly and then cloaked the sky above Chelsea, a thick evil fog of death. Not white and pure like nature's design, but a murky crack in the dawn that ripped the clothing from its victims, seared their flesh and lungs, and poisoned the bodies of the hapless casualties of modern terrorism. They fell prey to flames and shards and radiation that enveloped the harbor, as the result of Pegasus' first act of terrorism intended to divert America's attention away from events in Europe.

The certainty of a stable world is in doubt. Using the chaos spawned by the death of Fidel Castro, a resurgence of Latin American nationalism, and a vacillating American foreign policy, Russia aspires to expand to the borders of the former Soviet Union and beyond in order to feed her population. The United States' reduction in forces has limited its military options. The Bordinshev government decides to ferment a crisis in Panama in order to further tether American forces to the Western Hemisphere and away from the real Russian target: the Ukraine.

Handed the distasteful assignment by his superiors, SVR Colonel Dmitri Litvenov elects to accomplish his task by engaging the services of Pegasus, the pseudo-family name for a mercenary terrorist whose progenitors operated internationally for a century. This *agent provocateur* applies a deadly combination of virulent pathogens and radioactive- contaminating explosions in a series of terrorist incidents. The Society of Darien, the shadow political party of Panama led by Alphonso Trujillo who lost a son during Operation Just Cause—the American invasion of Panama in 1989, is blamed for these attacks. Pegasus' covert undertakings accelerate the President's wrath when they include the assassination of religious leader Richard Cummings on national television.

To counter the growing domestic acts of violence, the American President fulfills a campaign pledge by creating the Committee on Terrorist Activity, much to the dismay of his own Chief of Staff. Martin Ringwald is tapped to head the newest federal agency, not for any expertise in the field, but because of fortune by which he became privy to a personal secret which could topple the Presidency should it become public knowledge. Despite obtaining his position through political patronage, Ringwald is not foolish enough to select a subordinate staff practicing the same criteria. Armed with a manpower priority granted by the President, he picks the best cadre he can based on past performance and future potential.

The Russian army waits until Pegasus authors the appropriate atmosphere in Panama which compels the American President to commit the United States' limited military resources to Latin American before launching their own offensive. Finding himself with European allies who want nothing to do with opposing the aggressive actions of the Russians and unable to meet all of his nation's international obligations, the President strikes a deal with the Russians through emissaries which allows Moscow a free hand in Eastern Europe in exchange for information and influence in the New World.

Spearheading the Ukrainian invasion with the ultra-modern T-92B main battle tank, the Russians bag the Kievian Army's mechanized units in a fire sack, only a few units escaping to the Crimea. At the same time the Ukraine struggles for survival, Colonel Litvenov arrives in Panama disguised as a Mossad Agent to fulfill the rest of the Russian-American agreement, the restoration of the *status quo* in Panama, which he accomplishes by coercing Pegasus to take further initiatives in the region.

During the ensuing confusion, Pegasus and Litvenov seek to escape from Howard Air Force Base, but are detected by CTA Agent Caroline Swartz who recognizes Pegasus' facial features, partially recorded during the assassination of the American religious envoy. The Russian and terrorist make good their escape, but only by sacrificing their colleagues.