

Introduction to the Watchtower Series

This is the first book in the *Watchtower Series*, introducing Team Watchtower—an elite investigative unit within the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Command (ACIC).

Most espionage thrillers revolve around the CIA. However, following the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2025, ACIC was formally elevated from a primarily intelligence-focused agency into a hybrid counterintelligence and law enforcement command. This landmark change granted its civilian special agents limited federal arrest authority for national security crimes and expanded its operational scope beyond military installations.

Today, ACIC stands as the only counterintelligence organization with both foreign and domestic jurisdiction—and the legal authority to investigate, detain, and prosecute espionage within and beyond U.S. borders.

Notes on Format and References

Because this story delves deeply into modern espionage and defense operations, it references numerous U.S. and foreign government agencies, along with military acronyms and legal codes.

Military times are displayed in 24-hour NATO format with time zone letters (e.g., 1200 Hours R, for “Romeo,” representing Eastern Standard Time at Fort Meade, Maryland).

For clarity, detailed **indices** are included at the end of the book, covering:

- Russian Space Weapons Capabilities
- Chinese Space Weapons Capabilities
- U.S. Intelligence Agencies
- Foreign Intelligence Agencies
- The Five Eyes Alliance
- NATO Military Time Zones
- U.S. Military Defense Conditions (DEFCON)
- Espionage Crimes — U.S. Codes § 792–798
- “Pay-to-Play” Bribery Laws
- U.S. Security Classification Levels
- Comparison of Title 10 and Title 50 Authorities
- NSA Advanced Network Technology (ANT)

Technical Foundations

This novel explores the battle for space supremacy, incorporating advanced science and technologies—most of which exist or are currently under development. Several references to the National Security Agency (NSA) and its programs may appear

extraordinary, but history has shown that the NSA's technical capabilities have often outpaced public imagination.

The Advanced Network Technology (ANT) division, part of the NSA's Tailored Access Operations (TAO) unit, develops specialized tools for cyber-espionage and network penetration. Its classified ANT catalog, leaked and published by *Der Spiegel* in 2013, revealed the extraordinary sophistication of these methods—custom implants, firmware exploits, and hardware beacons capable of compromising virtually any system on Earth. These realities underpin much of the cyber-espionage technology depicted throughout this series.

In the world of *Watchtower*, one such development is SYBIL—an advanced AI fusion analytics system created by NSA for the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Command (ACIC). SYBIL ingests and correlates vast multi-domain intelligence streams—signals, financial transactions, behavioral metadata, and human intelligence reports—at machine speed. Unlike traditional analytic platforms, SYBIL is built for cognitive inference, capable of identifying deception patterns, trust anomalies, and disinformation loops before human analysts can see them. It serves not as a replacement for human judgment, but as its amplifier—mirroring the way real-world intelligence systems are evolving toward autonomous pattern discovery and adversarial prediction.

For additional background material and companion resources, visit <https://spyscribe.com>.

Overview of ACIC

The U.S. Army Counterintelligence Command (ACIC) is the Army's principal organization for detecting, identifying, and neutralizing foreign intelligence entities (FIEs), espionage, terrorism, insider threats, and subversive activities targeting the U.S. Army worldwide.

Headquarters: Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

Higher Command: U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (**INSCOM**), Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Oversight: Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G-2), Department of the Army

ACIC's location at Fort Meade places it alongside the NSA, U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), and other intelligence hubs—enabling real-time collaboration on digital forensics, SIGINT, and cyber counterintelligence. Proximity to the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA), FBI Baltimore Field Office, and Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) ensures seamless coordination on insider-threat cases, contractor investigations, and shared national-level threat intelligence.

I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

— Charles M. Wayne

Dead Drop

A Cold February Morning in Maryland
The air bites at her cheeks as she runs, her pace is steady—measured. This isn't a jog for fitness; it's a cover.

In the hushed gray light, a lone figure moved along the winding path of the park. Her stride was even, efficient—not the bouncing gait of a fitness enthusiast, but something practiced. Purposeful. The kind of rhythm born not from health obsession, but necessity.

She wore runner's gear: thermal leggings, gloves, a close-fitting vest with a high collar, and a knit cap pulled low. She looked every bit the casual morning jogger, but her eyes betrayed her. They were too alert, too focused. This was no run for cardio.

The park was still the kind of quiet only found in the lull between sunrise and the city's awakening. She approached the tunnel, a squat, weather-stained underpass of stone and moss-darkened concrete yawning before her, empty and echoing. A faint scent of wet granite and earth lingered as she slipped into the tunnel.

Her shoes made soft slaps against the damp ground as she entered the tunnel. The sound of her footfalls bounced off the walls like a quiet metronome. At the midpoint, she slowed. Her eyes flicked behind her—once, twice. Nothing but silence and shadow.

Under the shelter of the arch, she reached into the tight chest pocket of her vest and pulled out a slim, semi-rigid folder, a muted shade of blue, made from durable polymer, entirely unmarked. She didn't hesitate.

She knows this place—chosen with care long ago.

A narrow crevice in the wall, half-hidden behind a bulging stone. The folder slid into the gap with a soft click.

And she was gone.

The sound of her footsteps faded down the trail as she resumed her pace, vanishing like morning mist. Another woman in her thirties out for a run before work.

Evening fell with the chill still in the air. The sun had long since sunk beneath the horizon, casting the park in steel-gray shadows. A man now took the same path, his breath rising in steady white clouds.

He ran with the familiarity of someone who didn't fear this place. His movements were efficient, economical, calm. The tunnel appeared ahead of him, cloaked in darkness.

He didn't hesitate.

Once inside, he slowed his pace, glancing behind him in the half-light. Empty.

He stopped at the crevice, his fingers reaching forward without fumbling. He knows exactly where it was. In one swift motion, he retrieved the blue folder, tucking it beneath the thermal layer of his jacket. Flattening it against his chest.

No pause. No backward glance.

He continued on, merging with the shadows.



Korolyov, Russia- Roscosmos Mission Control Center - Two Years Later

The night in Korolyov was bone-cold; inside TsUP the air smelled faintly of warm electronics. Pressure thrummed along the rows of consoles—silent, focused—while the flight director’s face sat pale and unreadable beneath the lights.

“Telemetry ready,” a controller said, flat and steady. The main wall tracked a single white line across the globe: the target satellite. Beside it, the test vehicle’s schematic blinked through a checklist—verification window, range clear, safety holdoffs, comms-blackout contingency.

The countdown slid down the display. The Glavny Operativny Rukovoditel (Chief Operating Officer (COO) nodded once to begin. “Начать,” he said.

The pulse itself - a burst of high-energy electromagnetic radiation - was almost geometric: a neat spike across the graphs, a vertical cliff that sliced power buses and comms channels. For a heartbeat the room held its breath. Then one camera feed froze into static. One telemetry stream, the target’s, stuttered and died.

“EMP signature,” someone murmured. Heads pivoted toward the screen showing induced currents climbing, then collapsing—electrical systems frying in milliseconds. The flight dynamics officer reported, voice tight: the target bus had lost attitude control and began a slow tumble. No cascade, no constellation of failures—just one quiet platform, now blind to the sky.

Alarms that had been muted rose to a measured pitch. Controllers moved into triage: isolate the affected bus, attempt power cycles, force redundant processors online. Fingers danced across keyboards, checklists crossed off with clipped Russian. The director wanted facts, not politics. “Status. Recovery window,” he said.

A junior engineer ran the diagnostics and then, quietly, the math: a narrow window for salvage, moderate chance of partial recovery if reaction wheels were intact. A comms officer queued a burst to the satellite’s last known uplink and replayed the last good telemetry. Outside the glass, a security officer rubbed his jaw and imagined the messages that would follow—embassy cables, terse calls.

When the immediate alarms steadied, relief was small and sterile. The test had achieved its—intended—effect: a single satellite hit, systems impaired. Mission patches on the far wall looked like markers on a map of choices made. The controllers began the slow accounting—hardware, trajectory, diplomatic fallout, each keystroke folding the night into consequence.

Outside, Korolyov kept its winter. Inside TsUP, the lights stayed on, and the people at their stations readied themselves for what would come next.

Georgy Viktorovich Markova, 57, Colonel Senior Military Analyst, Strategic Space Operations Command, watched intently with the eyes of a chess master.

His was a lean, austere frame honed by a life of military discipline. Ice gray, unnerving eyes in their stillness, Iron-gray hair, close cropped, always within regulation. Angular cheekbones, clean shaven, Markova carried himself with the rigid composure of someone always expecting to be saluted.

Markova exuded military rigidity. The embodiment of old-school Soviet military elitism—coldly precise, strategically brilliant, and ideologically unshakable. Markova's lips curled. He didn't smoke, but he twirled a cigarette between his fingers like a relic of habit.

The test behaved exactly as the models had promised—and if scaled and deployed across their orbital arrays, it could blind an enemy's entire space network, erase GPS guidance and severing command-and-control long enough to reshape any battlefield. There was no known defense—it was the game changer.