Government Pushes Propaganda Through Video Games

Military Recruits Young People Through Misleading Games

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Global Research, January 17, 2013

[Washington's Blog](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

We previously documented that American [movies, television and news are dominated by the CIA and other government agencies](#).

The government also spreads propaganda through video games.

By way of example, former CIA director William Colby [went to work for a video game company](#) after he retired, and a former United States marine allegedly confessed to working at a video game company which was really a CIA front to [create a game to drum up support for war against Iran](#).

The Guardian [reports](#):

> "For decades the military has been using video-game technology," says [Nina Huntemann](#), associate professor of communication and journalism at [Suffolk University in Boston](#) and a computer games specialist. "Every branch of the US armed forces and many, many police departments are using retooled video games to train their personnel."
>
> Like much of early computing, nascent digital gaming benefited from military spending. The prototype for the first home video games console, the 1972 Magnavox Odyssey, was developed by Sanders Associates, a US defence contractor. Meanwhile, pre-digital electronic flight simulators, for use in both military and civilian training, date back to at least the second world war.
>
> Later, the games industry began to repay its debts. Many insiders note how instruments in British Challenger 2 tanks, introduced in 1994, [look uncannily like the PlayStation's controllers](#), one of the most popular consoles of that year. Indeed, warfare's use of digital war games soared towards the end of the 20th century.
>
> "By the late 1990s," says [Nick Turse](#), an American journalist, historian and author of [The Complex: How the Military Invades Our Everyday Lives](#), "the [US] army was pouring tens of millions of dollars into a centre at the University of Southern California – [the Institute of Creative Technologies](#) – specifically to build partnerships with the gaming industry and Hollywood." [The Washington Times [reports](#) on the link as well.]
>
> It's a toxic relationship in Turse's opinion, since gaming leads to a reliance on remote-controlled warfare, and this in turn makes combat more palatable.
>
> "Last year," says Turse, "the US conducted combat missions in Afghanistan,

Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. There are a great many factors that led to this astonishing number of simultaneous wars, but the increasing use of drones, and thus a lower number of US military casualties that result, no doubt contributed to it."

The Christian Science Monitor noted in 2009:

In 1999, the military had its worst recruiting year in 30, and Congress called for "aggressive, innovative" new approaches. Private-sector specialists were brought in, including the top advertising agency Leo Burnett, and the Army Marketing Brand Group was formed. A key aim of the new recruitment strategy was to ensure long-term success by cultivating the allegiance of teenage Americans.

Part of the new campaign, helping the post-9/11 recruiting bump, was the free video game America's Army. Since its release, different versions of the war game have been downloaded more than 40 million times, enough to put it in the Guinness book of world records. According to a 2008 study by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "the game had more impact on recruits than all other forms of Army advertising combined."

***

That these efforts are unfaithful to war's reality has not gone unnoticed. Protesting the Army Experience Center in Philadelphia, Sgt. Jesse Hamilton, who served two tours inIraq and nine total in the military, expressed disgust that the Army has "resorted to such a deceiving recruitment strategy."

It's an approach that could have detrimental long-term effects. "The video game generation is worse at distorting the reality" of war, according to one Air Force colonel. Although they may be more talented at operating predator drones, the colonel told theBrookings Institution, "They don't have that sense of what [is] really going on."

NBC News reported in 2003:

Video games are increasingly viewed by top brass as a way to get teenagers interested in enlisting.

Games such as "America's Army," developed and published by the Army, and "Guard Force," which the Army National Guard developed with Alexandria, Va.-based Rival Interactive, can be downloaded or picked up at recruitment offices.

"America's Army" has been a hit online since its July 2002 release, attaining 1.5 million registered users who endure a basic training regiment complete with barbed-wire obstacle courses and target practice.

"Guard Force" has been less successful. Released last year, it features bland synth-rock music that blares in the background. Between video commercials touting the thrills of enlisting in the Army National Guard, gamers pluck flood victims from rooftops or defend a snowy base. In the training mission, gamers deploy helicopters, even tanks, to rescue skiers trapped in an avalanche.

Foreign Policy argued last year:

Video games would seem to be ideal propaganda tools. Where comic books and newsreels once enthralled the Greatest Generation, today's millennials are in love with video games. American consumers, for example, spent $25 billion on games in 2010, while gamers worldwide play 3 billion hours a week. Games also offer advantages over traditional propaganda mediums like television or newspapers: They are interactive and immersive, they and deliver challenge, competition, and the hands-on triumph of personally gunning down enemies.

***

Who could blame a CIA spymaster for pondering whether games could be used to demonize Iran or vilify Venezuela?

Michael Bauch writes:

Governments are increasingly trying to twist the business into a brainwashing machine to promote their agendas, just as has been done with the movie industry.

Why are video games such a perfect tool for governments and why are governments stepping up their usage of them? Because the Internet generation now have easy access to all information and points of view. Governments don't want kids using the Internet to learn about these things. So governments need to keep kids distracted and under constant brainwashing. A typical American kid might go to school all morning learning about how great America is and how dangerous the rest of the world is, then come home and play some video games like Strategy 2012.

This game was free during the Presidential campaign and tells you who you should vote for and how political campaigns are run (or at least how the government would like you to think it's done). This is the official game description: "Help Mitt Romney win the Nomination by beating his conservative rivals. Then choose Romney or Obama and fight for the presidency in Ohio."

***

Not only are government-developed games spreading propaganda. Game developers are now accepting the norms set by the government like in Scribblenaughts where the game set's a puzzle for you to solve by conjuring items. In one puzzle you get a mission called "Peacefully break up the Rioters!" What would a sane person try first? Well, I tried "Diplomat" and "Peacekeeper". Neither had any effect. So I tried "Tear Gas" and had the crowd crying and disbursing in seconds, immediately earning a gold star just as you would in school when you have done something right! You can watch the video … of me playing the mission.

***

Now that the gaming industry have been infected by government propaganda they are now constantly sending the information they want to your kids.

You might assume that only foreigners are depicted as enemy targets in the propaganda video games. But remember that peaceful protest and any criticism of the government is now considered potential terrorism.

As such, it should not be entirely surprising that the enemy target in the most popular video game series,*Call of Duty* – which is more popular than virtually any movie or musical

[album](#) – is a Julian Assange like character who is the ["leader of the 99%"](#).

And see [this](#) and [this](#).

The original source of this article is [Washington's Blog](#)
Copyright © [Washington's Blog](#), [Washington's Blog](#), 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Washington's Blog](#)