

# World in Conflict

By Jason Ocampo, GameSpot

It goes without saying that it's a good thing World War III didn't erupt between the United States and the now-defunct Soviet Union. For many of us who were children during the Cold War, the fear of being annihilated in a nuclear conflict was very real. So it's a bit strange now that we can look back at that era and have the luxury of imagining what could have been. Or we can play *World in Conflict*, Sierra and Massive Entertainment's incredible new real-time strategy game. This isn't your standard RTS game, as *World in Conflict* doesn't follow the familiar model of resource gathering, base building, and swarming armies. Instead, it feels almost like an action game masquerading as a strategy game, and it offers up a relentlessly fun and amazing new approach to the genre, one that works in single-player and even more so in multiplayer.

*World in Conflict* is set in an alternate-history version of 1989. Instead of the Berlin Wall falling and communism collapsing, the Soviet Union launches an assault on Western Europe, and the United States rushes its forces in to aid its Western allies. Four months into the conflict, after the US Navy has been attrited down, the USSR launches a surprise invasion in Seattle and pushes inland. In the 14-mission single-player campaign, you play as a company commander who is part of the meager US defense; there is no campaign from the Soviet perspective, though you can play as the Red Army in multiplayer. However, the campaign twists and weaves, letting you experience a sample of the European conflict, battle in remote areas of the Soviet Union, and bring the fight to New York City.

Yes, the story is a bit far-fetched, but *World in Conflict* does a great job of making the implausible seem believable. That's partly due to the excellent storytelling, which is spear-

headed by pitch-perfect narrator Alec Baldwin. He's backed up by a great voice acting cast that brings the principle and secondary characters to life, along with a story that offers up emotional and sometimes humorous vignettes from a world at war. For instance, you'll hear a soldier's futile battle against Army bureaucracy, the phone conversation of a husband and wife, and the deliberations of the president and his top military advisors.

This isn't a hardcore wargame or simulation. There are far too many gameplay abstractions for that, from being able to air-drop reinforcements on the battlefield within seconds to repairing equipment almost instantly. Instead, *World in Conflict* is a thrilling game about destruction.

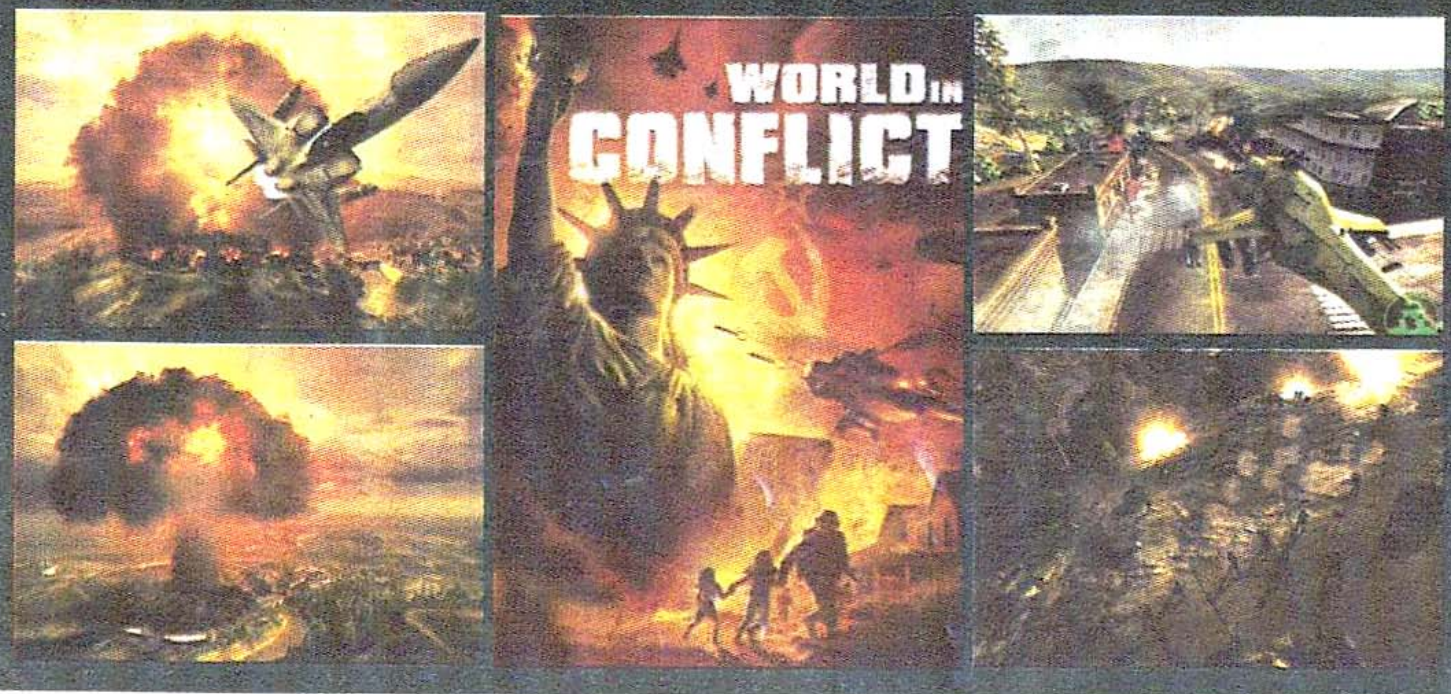
Then there's the game's excellent resource system. You're given a pool of reinforcement points that you can use to purchase units. Naturally, the powerful units cost a lot more than weaker ones, so you've got to choose quantity over quality. But it goes a bit deeper than that, as different classes of units have different abilities. For instance, light helicopters are some of the best scouts in the game, able to locate enemies from a distance, but they're extremely vulnerable. Medium helicopters are able to shoot down other helicopters with their air-to-air missiles, but they don't do a lot of damage to armor. Heavy helicopters can eat tanks for breakfast, but aren't effective against other helicopters.

The nice thing about this system is that it effectively gives you an unlimited number of resources and units to work with, so it's fairly forgiving to nontraditional strategy gamers. If that seems a bit easy, don't worry, because *World in Conflict* can also ratchet up the pressure by tossing in time limits. For instance, you might have to seize a town in less than 45

minutes, or achieve another objective in far less time. The margins for error are much smaller when you're working under a deadline.

All of this takes place on large, dynamic battlefields that come alive with the symphony of destruction. Thankfully, there's barely any worry about collateral damage in the game, so if you have to destroy a city to save it, then don't worry about the insurance bill. The destruction isn't just cosmetic, either. There can be all sorts of tactical implications. Take out a bridge and you force the enemy to go the long way around, or in a multiplayer game, to call in a tactical aid to erect a new one. If the enemy is hiding infantry in woods and buildings, making them hard to root out, call in napalm and just burn down the trees or use artillery or smart bombs to blow up the structures. Everything blows up so beautifully that there's no such thing as overkill anymore. The game looks spectacular in DirectX 9, and it's noticeably better in DirectX 10 thanks to more atmospheric lighting. If you only have a DX9 card, though, don't worry—you aren't missing out on any gameplay enhancements aside from the ability to use dual-monitor support in multiplayer games.

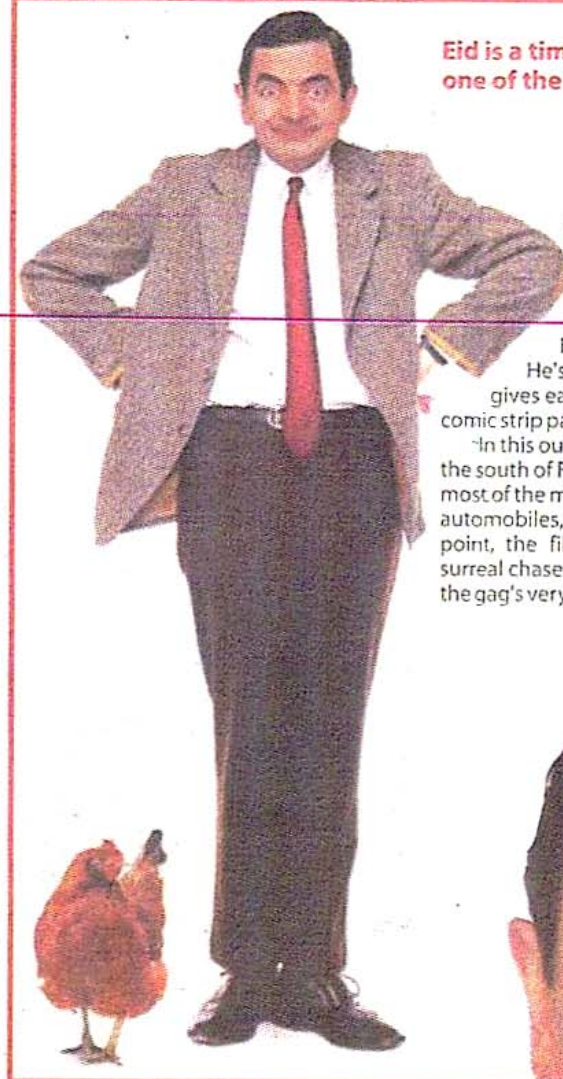
Developer Massive Entertainment has been making real-time strategy games for almost a decade now, but *World in Conflict* is undoubtedly the studio's masterwork. Everything about this game is top-notch, from the addicting gameplay to the amazing visuals. More importantly, *World in Conflict* offers up a refreshingly new approach to strategy gaming. So if you're a strategy fan, you should definitely try *World in Conflict*. And even if you're turned off by standard real-time strategy games, you owe it to yourself to try out what Massive has come up with in this exquisite package.



## Movie Review

Eid is a time for relaxing and spending time having fun. Sitting at home watching movies is not one of the things to do. But if you are so inclined, here's a couple of fun movies to check out.

### Mr. Bean's Holiday



"Mr. Bean's Holiday" is a throwback to a strain of gentle, purely visual Euro-slapstick. While many of the antics are tried and harried, we still love him making his faces for the zillionth time. He's infantile, a refined idiot and his rubbery face gives each of Bean's emotions the broad punch of a comic strip panel: proud, chagrined, sneaky, joyous. In this outing, Mr. Bean wins a church raffle vacation to the south of France, but it's the getting there that takes up most of the movie. Mishaps abound with trains, buses, and automobiles, not to mention prawns and oysters. At one point, the film detours into a prolonged, borderline-surreal chase after a chicken with a ticket stuck to its foot, the gag's very corniness part of the joke.

Along the way, Bean picks up a traveling companion in a young boy (Max Baldry) separated from his father (Karel Roden). "Mr. Bean's Holiday" courts sentimentality at times, but the winsomeness is mostly theoretical. The movie is content to unfold at a lazy summer lops, each series of gags existing as a separate cell of comic invention.

While there are plenty of old jokes and gags, there are the moments of unexpected genius: Bean and the boy acting out the aria "O Mio Babbino Caro" in a marketplace karaoke act that suddenly turns weirdly moving. Eventually "Mr. Bean's Holiday" works its way to Cannes, where the hero picks up a sort-of love interest in a pert French actress (Emma de Caunes, very fetching) while bringing the pompous film director Carson Clay (Willem Dafoe) to grief.

It's fun in a purely lazy way.



## SUPERBAD

Fogell, age 17, is a young guy who goes about by the one-named alias "McLovin" according to a fake ID that pegs McLovin as a 25-year-old Hawaiian organ donor.



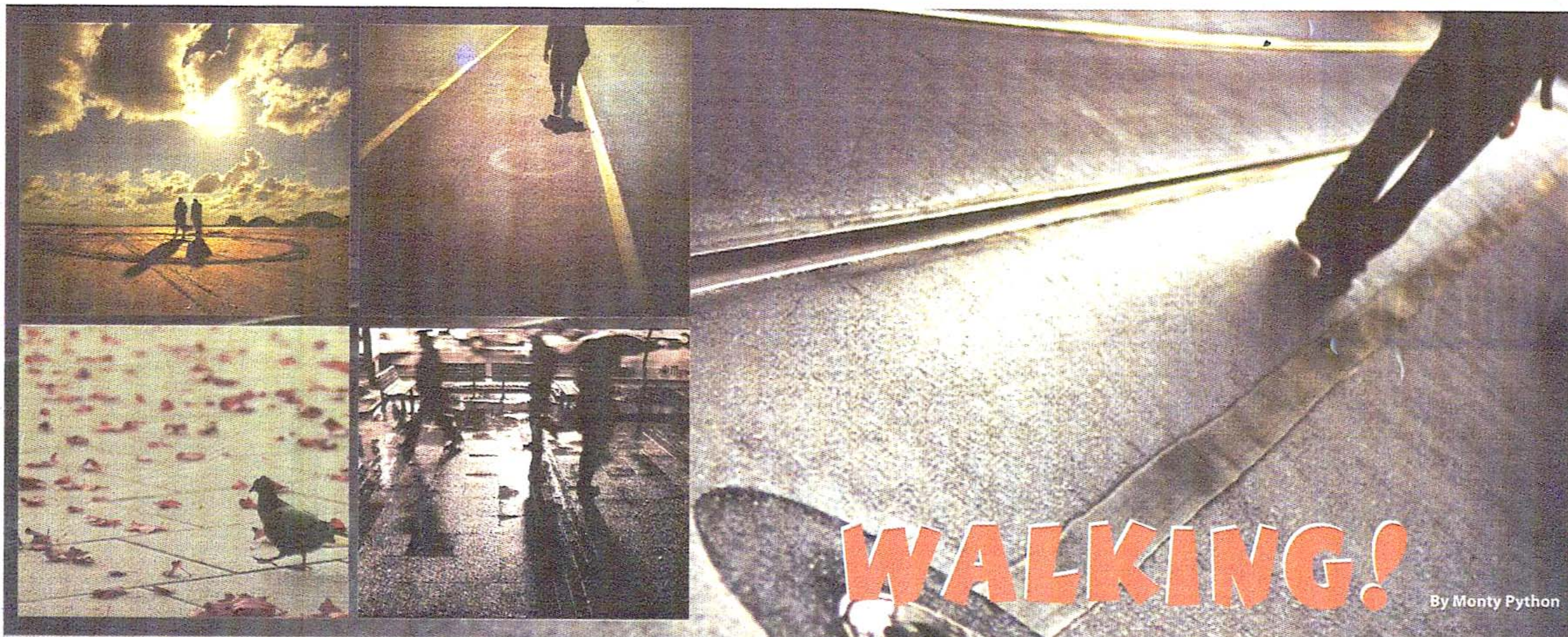
Fogell's theoretical access to store-bought liquor may hold the key to paradise for him and Seth and Evan, his fellow college-bound high school seniors played by Jonah Hill and Michael Cera.

Seth, Evan and Fogell represent a tri-cornered composite of pretty much every American male whose hormones and insecurities barely allow them to survive high school. Seth is sarcastic and verbally unstoppable. Evan is his deadpan foil, a sweeter, quieter personality. Fogell's the most prototypically nerdy as well as the sunniest character in the film. Some cool girls are throwing a party, and

the girl Seth's particularly hot for, played by Emma Stone, asks him to provide the drinks. Fogell's newly acquired fake ID paves the way to a hellishly difficult night, including a run-in with a liquor store burglar, two rather tiresome comic-relief policemen played very broadly by Rogen and Bill Hader, and a climactic series of not-quite-hookups wherein the boys learn a few things.

The "Superbad" boys are trying to balance semi-secret social lives of beer and bongos and certain things boys grow up learning.

The film wouldn't work at all if we didn't believe in the friendship between Evan and Seth, and in the unexpected threat to that friendship posed by Fogell. In this teen-boy universe, the idea of figuring out how to talk to girls without turning into a statue remains elusive. And that's the basis of the movie.



By Monty Python

FAST motorbikes, flashy cars, sporty pedal bikes...when we think about hanging about the city or going to friends place, we can only think of these amazing machines to take a ride on. For some of us less fortunate ones, it's either the CNG, the rickshaw or the bus ride. We have absolutely forgotten the main mode of transportation that God has sent built-in with us: our legs! Yes, this forgotten but effective mode of transportation can really take you from point A to B in the nimblest of possible way, and what's more, you don't have to pay for fuel or Gas, just regular healthy three meals a day. Besides, walking is good for health and it will act as the best dietary method without having to go for a diet at all.

Sure, you will argue that there aren't any places to walk in Dhaka anymore. Vehicles of all

sorts occupy the roads. The roadside pavements are either under construction or act as floating markets for floating Feriwallahs. But I used to hear from my grandfather how they used to cross miles of rough wilderness on foot. Sure we don't have much walking space now, but those with the spirit of walking will walk their distance no matter what. For those who want to take a break from the regular mechanical everyday life, here are a few ways you can enjoy your walk.

**Stroll in the Park.** This is the Dhakaite's favourite mode of walk. But the scarcity of parks has made it difficult to take a stroll in the park these days. The Dhanmondi Lake side green is still there to offer walk-a-thonners a chance to enjoy their evening. Then there is the Ramna Park in Shahbag.

Most of my evening is incomplete without a stroll in Dhanmondi lake. The objective of a stroll in the park is obviously to inhale plenty of fresh oxygen and get a view of the greeneries and flowers of the city.

**Walk in the Rain.** This is a romantic mode of walking and is best done with your beloved. Walking hand to hand, kicking in splashes of dirty water at your partner for a game. But you can tag along with your friends too. It's fun and wild. Once you get over the wet feeling or forget the need to take care of your precious jeans and shirts, getting wet can be fun. Find a puddle here and there and jump like the kid you are. But be careful not to get too wet, or a visit to the doctor is a must. Also be careful not to take your mp3 player or iPods without proper waterproof cover.

**Walk of discovery.** I often go out with the purpose of walking and discovering a new area around the city. This can be fun, as you go through uncharted territory amongst unknown people like a bohemian soul, searching for the Utopia but sure to find none. People who live in Dhanmondi can try so in places like Gulshan or vice versa. It will help you immensely later when you have to drive or go places as knowing your city can be a very important skill.

**Adventure Walk.** This is a damn good way to enjoy your walk. Pack your backpack and go for a tour of Bangladesh. Or just visit a new area of wilderness and steep mountains all on your feet along with some friends. Adventure walks may take couple of days and take you to places you haven't

imagined. It's going to tire you and sweat you, but the joy of having a day full of adventure and visiting some amazing places will leave you with a happy face at the end of the day.

**Jaywalking** Okay, this is the kind of walk I DO NOT RECOMMEND you do. Jaywalking is walking across the busy street during traffic time. Use the Zebra crossing or wait for the Red Light. In many countries Jaywalking is a crime.

You thought walking is tiring and rather take a sports car as your ride, I hope I have been able to change that thought. Doctors recommend that you walk a couple of Kilometers everyday to keep you healthy and get blood flowing throughout your body. It can also be good for those with blood pressure or tension. So folks, keep healthy and happy walking.