
I love my 1st Amendment

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While digging around on the internet, looking up how RSS works and considering implementing a simple board on the site, it came to my attention to that BBC news ran an article concerning the Chinese reaction to a pair of PC games.

The article is short.
Give it a quick read before you continue reading:

BBC Article

Now, I couldn't care less about Project: I'm Going In 2. A game with that dumb of a title shouldn't be bought anyway: banning it shouldn't even be necessary. The notice about Command & Conquer: Generals upsets me.

Granted, I've always thought that game stood 3 inches short of causing an international incident. The way that the three sides are depicted is overly stereotypical, and honestly, if I was a proud former Chinese citizen or an Arab militant, I might find the game very offensive. The lines of some of the units in the game are just horrid, and, in my eyes, the Chinese units are the worst. I mean, as an American I think they're funny, but that's because I'm viewing the lines from the same cynical, American eyes that the game's developers were using. If I look at it from another angle, I'd find the dialog of some of the Chinese units, especially the ones obsessed with being "big," offensive.

Yet, according to the BBC, that's not the part the Chinese had a problem with. No, they had a problem with there being a mission where the GLA, the game's fictitious arab-terrorist-network, seizes a missile silo and uses it to nuke Beijing.

I'd like to point out something here. In October 2000, Westwood/EA Games released

Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2, where Soviet Russia… SOVIET RUSSIA PEOPLE… you know, the nation that NO LONGER EXISTS… attacks America. Not only do they destroy Washington D.C. in the course of the game, they practically tear our nation to shreds in a few days. They destroy monuments; hell in the very beginning of the American side, there is no way for you to save the Statue of Liberty from destruction. In the Soviet campaign, you not only get to destroy the pentagon in the first mission, in the third of fourth (I forget which) you get to occupy the World Trade Center with Soviet Troops and fire from it to prevent American defenders from destroying the mind control device you are setting up there.

Then 9/11 happened.

The result: EA/Westwood WILLINGLY pulled C&C:RA2 from the shelves for a period immediately after the attack. Rumor circulates that a revised version of the game was released that removed the Twin Towers from the game, but that mission is still very much in my copy, and no effort was made by the US Government to restrict sale of the game, ban it, penalize retailers for selling the game, or seize my copy of it.

In my humble opinion, it’s a game. The story writers have to come up with some reason to motivate China to fight global terrorism like how we do to even justify the nation’s presence in the game and having the GLA do something to one of their cities strikes me as a good way to do it. The GLA are far more mobile, militant, and overtly aggressive than any real Terrorist threat we have currently. If you were to “assume” the existence of such an organization and the worst they could do to China is nuke Beijing, then crap, they’re boned. What the GLA does to China in the course of that game is nothing compared to what the Soviets do to America in C&C: Red Alert 2. And in RA2, you can play as Soviets, and destroy American with your own hands.

If China wants to be upset that the Chinese in Generals are overly stereotypical and dumb sounding, then I will back them up 100% of the way. If their reason for removing an excellent RTS from the hands of Chinese gamers and punishing those who sold the product is because of what the “bad guys” do in the country to build suspense, then that’s moronic.

I guess all I can say is I’m glad I live in a country with free speech where movie and game makers are not restricted in making titles that only show the “invincible” American army. I guess if the Chinese tried to make “World of the Worlds,” the movie would have sucked, since, you know, the aliens wouldn’t stand a chance.

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