

Sabotage

4/30/2008

Genre

3rd Person Tactical Shooter/Action

High Concept

The premise of an imminent war in China sets the player on both sides of the battlefield as either the leader of a tactical, spec-ops team in covert missions or a saboteur posing as a Chinese infantryman.

Premise

The US with allied nations and China are at each other's throats, attempting to subvert the others efforts of gaining the upper foot before an all out war begins. The US has put a man behind enemy lines, posing as a foot soldier of the Chinese army. Through his efforts he gains valuable information and wreaks havoc within the Chinese army by secretly sabotaging equipment and tactics before and during battle. The US sends a special operations task force to infiltrate enemy weak spots and remove high priority targets through opportunities made apparent by the saboteur. What results are the events leading up to an inevitable war.

You will pick one of two campaigns that play vastly different. The role of the saboteur requires cunning, planning and the ability to indirectly affect the outcome of battles. The role of the squad leader of the Special Forces unit is to make on the spot decisions as well as being able to effectively plan your attack ahead of the battle. With both campaigns, you also have the ability to play co-op with a friend where each action can directly affect the battle for the other player.

Goal

The ultimate goal is for both the Saboteur and Special Forces team to subvert the aims of China gaining the upper hand in the upcoming war and giving your side the advantage instead by taking out high priority targets.

How It Works

Campaign (single/co-op)

As the Saboteur (3rd person action), you will have a timed pre-mission in which you would discretely lay traps for the Chinese army. This can range from forcing weapons to malfunction to directing squads of Chinese into an ambush to laying actual traps. You will be able to walk the battlefield beforehand and send intelligence to the US to better prepare them for the battle ahead. Any possible information and actions can be found by finding things that start to glow a little as you get close to them. Performing the actions themselves will be short context sensitive or sneaking mini-games among other possibilities. During the actual mission, you will be forced to follow the orders of your Chinese squad leader to avoid suspicion while still being able to avoid killing or being killed by US forces and activating certain previously set up traps. Many cases may force you to make a decision between firing on the US and causing some suspicion. Too much suspicion and you may be pulled from the fight altogether where your forced to watch from the sidelines with the hopes that the US wins the battle. If you have too much

suspicion on you already, the result could be an investigation of you and your eventual demise.

As the Special Forces squad leader (3rd person tactical shooter) you will use information gathered from the Saboteur to make a plan of attack before the battle, so you may utilize the traps that will be set. You will have access to a virtual view of the battlefield where they will be able to strategically plan out an entire attack utilizing up to 50 men in multiple squads. This will mostly be done through a top down perspective, but you'll be able to go to ground level to set more specific squad orders. When the actual battle begins, the other squads will automatically follow the battle plan that you laid out, while you and your squad can either provide back up to the other squads or partake in a specific mission you set for yourself. You will have basic squad control, though for the most part your squad will stay with you and automatically move from cover to cover. Basic squad controls could be to move forward, hold, suppressive fire, hold fire, and follow.

With co-op play, the pre-mission is when the saboteur must set up as many traps and provide as much info to the Spec Forces player allowing them both to be successful in the coming battle. The Spec Forces player will begin planning out the battle, but as the other player provides more info, will be able to alter and perfect his plan. They can collaborate so that the saboteur may set up an entire diversion or secret route to allow the squad leader to flank the Chinese. During battle, it is entirely possible that both players will never come face to face, but they still must rely on each other's efforts during the fight to have a good end result. Essentially, the game play during the actual battle will be very similar to each of the single player campaigns. Given the vastly different play styles, the two players can easily switch roles between any two missions.

Multiplayer VS.

4 vs. 4, no re-spawn, team death-match with a twist. On each team is a saboteur working for the other team, randomly chosen before each game. No one, besides the saboteur themselves know who they are. For this game, the saboteur's main goal is to make their team lose and the other team win without flat out team killing. They will be able to perform actions during the game such as giving away enemy positions to the other team as well as discreetly changing out teammates magazines with faulty ones causing the weapons to jam. This will be possible using the D-pad and context sensitive situations. They will perform a simple, yet obscure animation when they do any of this, making it possible for the team to spot and kill the saboteur. They will also have to act believably, shooting at targets and so on, lest they be found out. If a saboteur does "team kill" any team members they are trying to sabotage, they will be marked as a traitor and will be unable to win that match, regardless of which team comes out on top. To further prevent team killing "for the good of the team" that person won't be allowed to play saboteur and will only be allowed to use melee attacks for the next round, likely resulting in a detriment that is not "for the good of the team" the next round.

The resulting game play would be paranoia for team members being suspicious of all their comrades, while the saboteur must be able to look just as suspicious of other members as well. The ability of the saboteur to provide the best information and cause the most chaos among the other players during the round can be the tipping point in any and every game.

Success & Failure Conditions

Each battle is essentially determined by which side can hold out the longest. If one side vastly outnumbers the other side at any point, the weaker force will be forced to retreat resulting in their loss. There will be specific objectives to complete on top of this. If it is an even fight to the end, it may be determined a draw which is then still considered a loss. It is game over and you'll have to retry the level from any given checkpoint you wish allowing you to start back where it first started to go wrong, even if that was during the planning phase. One battle can play out differently each time, and never will be the same twice in a row in order to keep the player on their toes when they retry the level.

Carrot Says:

Title: Sabotage

Written by: Smoses

Week # 4

High Concept: The High Concept somewhat gets across the main hook of the title; but it makes it sound like the player plays both sides simultaneously, or even in a turn-based fashion, which is contradicted later on in the doc. The grammar is a bit wonky in that the sentence doesn't read or flow well; a well placed comma or semi-colon could help fix that.

Critique: Destruction from within is always an interesting concept; in movies, books, television - most consumable media in fact. I find that it is very difficult to purvey the same kind of drama, possible in those forms of media, in an interactive game. It all comes down to storytelling really, an art that literature has had thousands of years to hone, while film and television has had over a century to tune an art form down to a science. Videogames haven't been around near as long and storytelling hasn't always been an important part, so we just plain aren't that good at it yet.

I'm not trying to argue that it is impossible to convey the same sense of drama, intrigue, suspense or fear in a videogame that is possible in film; just that the storytelling in a game like *Sabotage* is one of the most important aspects of the title and it shouldn't be taken lightly. The player playing as the spy in the enemy's midst must feel the sense of danger in their situation; which is a feeling that players just don't get when playing a videogame. What is *Sabotage* going to do differently to immerse the player in the story? What is *Sabotage* going to do to make players care about the characters? Those are questions that can't simply be answered in one line, they must be dissected, and there must be a clear plan in place. That is what I want to see from this game; I want to care about the spy behind enemy lines.

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The gameplay sounds very reminiscent of games like *Metal Gear Solid* and *SOCOM*, but I'm not totally convinced that the spy portions are interesting enough to play as they are now. That sense of danger I was talking about earlier feels completely absent; they spy seems to have free reign in the Chinese Armed Forces, running around the battlefield before the battle, having a good fun time with the infantry weapons and generally doing everything that would be next to impossible in the real Chinese Armed Forces. Successfully leaking useful information and generally sabotaging the enemy from within should be really difficult and pose a high degree of challenge.

Presentation could be better in regards to choice of words and sentence structure; spelling, however, is pretty good overall. I'm pretty confident that the Treatment could have been kept well within the two pages without sacrificing content.

I could see myself really wanting to play the spy portions of this game if the storytelling does well enough to draw me into the plight and cause of the character. I feel that some of the gameplay mechanics can be reworked to work more with the situation and play less like a collection of mini-games.

Fun: B-

Presentation: B-

Originality: C+