



Illustration of the Spanish video game "Shadows of War" (Legend Studios/Reuters)

Little laughter over new Spanish war video game

By Victoria Published: November 22, 2007
REUTERS

MADRID: A new video game that invites players to rewrite the course of Spain's devastating civil war has touched a nerve in a country that is often reluctant to revisit its past, let alone play with it.

- E-Mail Article
- Listen to Article
- Printer-Friendly
- 3 Column Format
- Translate
- Share Article
- Text Size: [-] [+]

"Shadows of War" bills itself as the first video game based on the 1936-39 war, which erupted after right-wing forces loyal to Francisco Franco staged a coup against the elected Republican government. It went on sale in Spain on Thursday in the midst of a bitter debate about how to deal with the country's past, prompted by a new law that would authorize reparations to civil war victims and ban monuments to Franco.

Even before it hit the stores, the game drew criticism from both sides of the political spectrum as a divisive trivialization of a war whose wounds, for many Spaniards, have yet to heal.

Manuel Contreras, a columnist for ABC, a conservative newspaper, said in an editorial that the game will "fuel political conflict and reinforce the split between the two Spains."

"It will trivialize the drama of the civil war and dissipate its legacy of horror," he added.

Today in Europe

Czech drug epidemic threatens to spread through Europe
Little laughter over new Spanish war video game

Carlota Leret, whose father, Virgilio Leret, was executed at the beginning of the war by troops loyal to Franco, said the game "will not serve to help reconstruct our historical memory, but to render death, tyranny and violence banal."

French transport strikes begin to wane after nine days

Leret's father is mentioned in the game as a victim of execution after Franco's troops captured the North African air base he commanded. In an interview with El Pais, a liberal newspaper, she said, "This is not a historical event that is buried in the past, but something that is very fresh in the memory of Spaniards."



In "Shadows of War," players can join the Nationalist or Republican forces and change the outcome of the war's defining moments, such as the Battle of the Ebro, an attempt to push back the Nationalist line that historians believe exhausted and broke the Republican Army. Managing limited supplies of fuel and gold, players battle among 50 military units, including the Italian, Soviet and German troops that fought alongside Spanish forces in what became a precursor to the World War II.

Francisco Ferrándiz, a social anthropologist at the Spanish National Research Council, said the game was a logical - although in his view undesirable - addition to a "memory industry" of plays, movies, books and articles on the civil war that has emerged in recent years.

Interest in the war is particularly strong among younger Spaniards who did not experience the war first hand and want to break the nation's silence about its past.

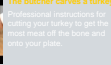
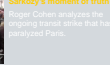
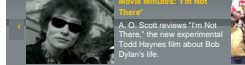
"We're in the midst of a memory boom," he said. "This game translates the civil war into a technological language that appeals to the younger generation."

Francisco Pérez, head of development at Legend Studios, which produced the game, said it made accessible a chapter of Spanish history that was often passed over in the classroom. The game includes documentary footage of the war from the British Broadcasting Corp. and two Catalan archives and a timeline of the conflict.

"There are a lot of young people in this country who don't know much about the war and this is an opportunity for them to learn," he said.

Pérez said the game's creators did not know when they started designing it in 2004 that it would be released when Spain's sensibilities were so inflamed. The question of getting the record straight over the civil war and making reparations to Franco's victims has become a leitmotif of the Socialist government of Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

Video



Most E-Mailed

- 24 Hours | 7 Days | 30 Days
- Japanese shift cash out of U.S. investments
 - Catch drug epidemic threatens to spread through Europe
 - Paris's bicycle rental system gets a baptism by fire
 - In Holland, eat, drink and be monitored
 - Gazprom deal with Eni drives new wedge into hopes for EU energy unity
 - Careers give India's women new independence
 - Little laughter over new Spanish war video game
 - Berlin style: Townhouses in a row
 - In a desolate corner of Afghanistan, a polygot Thanksgiving
 - U.S. subprime losses may hit \$300 billion, OECD estimates

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune |ht.com/
green

In a growing world, milk is the new oil

Also in Business of Green:

- China's green energy gap
- Move over cornbees, these guys run on air
- What color is a U.S. dollar bill?

Ads by Google

Boost Dial Up Speed
Boost Your Dial Up Speed Up To To 375% - Free Internet Speed Test
www.ScanYourPC.com/BoostDialUp

Increase Internet Speed
Speed up your PC by 300%. Scan Your PC Absolutely Free!
www.ErrorDoctor.com

All About Computer
Get more information about Computer. Absolutely Free!
TheTopComputer.com

But Pérez said the controversy would probably help sell the game, which cost about €1 million, about \$1.5 million, to develop.

Home > Europe

Back to top

Latest News

IHT.com Home >



Scott Nelson/World Picture Network for The New York Times

Increased training role sought for U.S. troops in Iraq

Commanders hope to shift more of the security burden to the Iraqis without giving up gains U.S. troops have made, officials said.

More Headlines

- Saudi foreign minister says he will attend Annapolis conference
- New economy in India nudges some women toward independence
- Surge brings new immigration backlog in U.S.

In Opinion: The weapon that keeps taking



- Americas
- Europe
- Asia
- Pacific
- Africa & Middle East
- Technology & Media
- Health & Science
- Sports
- Culture
- Style & Design
- Travel
- At Home Abroad
- Blogs
- Reader Discussions
- Weather
- Business Home
- Marketplace by Bloomberg
- Your Money
- Funds Insider
- Currency Converter
- Opinion Home
- Email the Editor
- Newspaper Masthead
- Classifieds Home
- Properties
- Education Center
- About the IHT
- Advertise in the IHT
- IHT Events
- Press Office
- Today's Page One in Europe
- Today's Page One in Asia
- Publishing Partnerships
- IHT Mobile
- RSS
- AudioNews
- PDA & Smartphones
- NetVibes
- IHT Electronic Edition
- E-Mail Alerts
- Twitter
- Daily Article Index
- Top 10
- Hyper Sudoku
- IHT Developer Blog

Search



Subscriptions
Sign Up |
Manage

Connecticut | Delaware | Florida | Georgia | Illinois | Indiana | Iowa | Kansas | Kentucky | Louisiana | Maine | Maryland | Massachusetts | Michigan | Minnesota | Missouri | Montana | Nebraska | Nevada | New Hampshire | New Jersey | New Mexico | New York | North Carolina | North Dakota | Ohio | Oklahoma | Oregon | Pennsylvania | Rhode Island | South Carolina | South Dakota | Tennessee | Texas | Utah | Vermont | Virginia | Washington | West Virginia | Wisconsin | Wyoming