Twitter Thread by Daniel Ahmad



Daniel Ahmad
@ZhugeEX

I don't normally do threads like this but I did want to provide some deeper thoughts on the below and why having a video game based on a real world war crime from the same people that received CIA funding isn't the best idea.

This will go pretty in depth FYI.

> I couldn't possibly guess why Six Days in Fallujah is being revived at a time when US army recruitment is at an all time low.
>
> This reboot is from the same people that worked with the FBI and CIA on training systems and is basing its game on excusing US war crimes. pic.twitter.com/5H8vVqKh9s
>
> — Daniel Ahmad (@ZhugeEX) February 11, 2021

The core reason why I'm doing this thread is because:

1. It's clear the developers are marketing the game a certain way.

2. This is based on something that actually happened, a war crime no less. I don't have issues with shooter games in general ofc.

Firstly, It's important to acknowledge that the Iraq war was an illegal war, based on lies, a desire for regime change and control of resources in the region.

These were lies that people believed and still believe to this day.

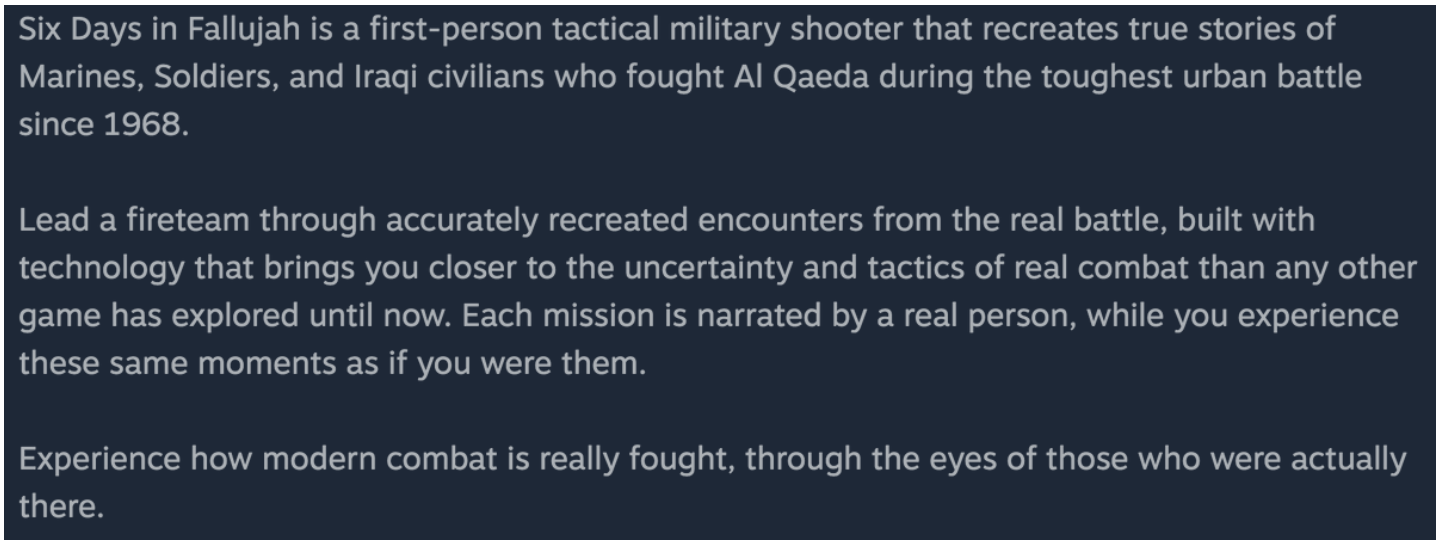
https://t.co/IJyO5G2O4R

It's also important to mention that the action taken by these aggressors is the reason there was a battle in Fallujah in the first place. People became resistance fighters because they were left with nothing but death and destruction all around them after the illegal invasion.

This is where one of the first red flags comes up.

The game is very much from an American point of view, as shown in the description.

When it mentions Iraqi civilians, it doesn't talk about them as victims, but mentions them as being pro US, fighting alongside them.



The description and trailer mentions a few red flag worthy things too.

It talks about lawlessness and fear among the Iraqi population, but not because of the US invasion and what it led to.

It talks about how the US was liberating Fallujah from under Al Qaeda's black banner.

But that's not what happened. Or how it was even described at the time. It's clear the game is already playing into the "The US were liberators in Iraq" narrative that was so pervasive in US media at the time.

https://t.co/zcWf0wHMRZ

> On the other hand, is this game going to be much more honest? The opening of the trailer talks about how the city was seized by Al Qaeda and the entire battle was about liberating it and preventing the country from collapsing as authority broke down. But out of the gate, that's an unusual reading of the battle and its immediate context.
>
> The precipitating incident of the Coalition assault on Fallujah was not Al Qaeda's presence there, but the destruction of a group of Blackwater mercenaries and the mutilation of their bodies. The battles of Fallujah are inextricably linked to the Bush administration's reliance on inept, politically connected private military contractors (PMCs) who are mostly remembered for being fuckup war criminals.

The only reason Al Qaeda in Iraq entered the war was because the country had been completely destroyed and destabilized by the US. This was long after the actual invasion itself.

So why is Al Qaeda painted as the only enemy in the description when it played a minor role here?

> This is not a particularly partisan take on the battle. Bing West, who wrote maybe the definitive (to date) account of the battle and was largely sympathetic to the military and its counterinsurgency efforts, identified George Bush's drastic overreaction to the Blackwater ambush as the catalyst for the entire engagement. It was a battle a lot of the military leadership had grave reservations about fighting in the first place because it was, on its face, a bad idea to engage a massive assault in a densely populated city in revenge for a group of mercenaries who made their own bad luck.
>
> It was such a controversial decision that the entire battle was characterized by hemming-and-hawing between the Coalition's generals and the caretaker, not-quite-puppet government of Iraq. It was also a microcosm of the logic of the War on Terror: overreaction to a predictable act of violence,

The ultimate answer is because it's a convenient enemy to have

Everyone knows Al Qaeda = terrorists = guys behind 9/11

Even though the war in Iraq was never about Al Qaeda (they weren't there at the beginning), they are mentioned here to justify illegal US actions.

What actions were those?

Well. It started with the US asking civilians to evacuate the city. That's good, right?

Not exactly. You see they also stopped any men of fighting age from leaving. Which meant entire families were still trapped in the city.

https://t.co/wN5bzHn0k6

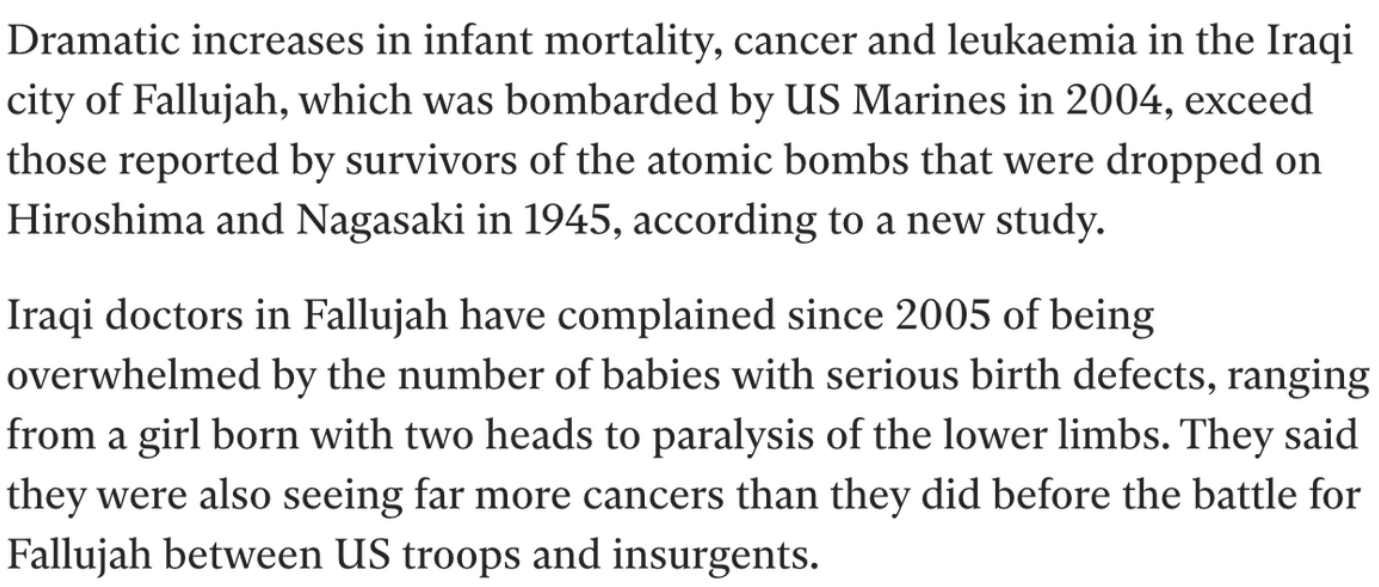
They were also indiscriminate in their violence against the people in the city, targeting and killing children and women.

Half the Iraqis killed in the US offensive on Fallujah were women, children and elderly people.

https://t.co/sezyrzUfr0

Oh and lets not forget the most egregious aspect. That the US used white phosphorus (The chemical weapon banned under the Geneva convention) against civilians. Which the US has yet to admit and apologise for.

It led to this: https://t.co/6oxMnOnZ13


Dramatic increases in infant mortality, cancer and leukaemia in the Iraqi city of Fallujah, which was bombarded by US Marines in 2004, exceed those reported by survivors of the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, according to a new study.

Iraqi doctors in Fallujah have complained since 2005 of being overwhelmed by the number of babies with serious birth defects, ranging from a girl born with two heads to paralysis of the lower limbs. They said they were also seeing far more cancers than they did before the battle for Fallujah between US troops and insurgents.

I could genuinely do another 50 or so tweets on the horrors inflicted on Iraqi civilians during that time. But I'll get back to the game for now

As this game is from the US perspective, you have to wonder how much of this will be covered. The trailer + description says not much.

Instead the trailer continues to go on about how "These terrorists had to be stopped" because otherwise the country would be "turned over to Al Qaeda".

Once again conveniently leaving out the part that the US invasion is what ultimately led to the events in the first place.

The trailer continues to focus on US perspectives (and the Iraqis who had to fight with the US) to justify the actions that it took in Fallujah.

The only time casualties are mentioned is when it pertains to US troops.

It's all about the experience of "liberating" Iraq.

The comments from Peter Tamte (the guy who was funded by the CIA back when the game was first being developed) talks about this from one side only.

It's about the courage and sacrifice of the US troops. Not about how the war itself was illegal or the war crimes there.

> "It's hard to understand what combat is actually like through fake people doing fake things in fake places. This generation showed sacrifice and courage in Iraq as remarkable as any in history. And now they're offering the rest of us a new way to understand one of the most important events of our century. It's time to challenge outdated stereotypes about what video games can be."

The issue I keep wanting to stress is that this is a real event. It's not just a video game this time. It actually happened. The US should have never been there in the first place. US troops should never have done what they did. Iraqis should not have had to go through that too.

The marketing around this game already shows that the 'battle' will be whitewashed.

Sure, it might depict what life was like for Iraqi civilians, but as per the descriptions, it will portray the situation as if the US was saving them from being trapped in Fallujah.

Could the game actually be Spec Ops: The Line and talk about all the above? Maybe. But I don't see how Tamtes history or the marketing shows any of that.

Also Spec Ops was from a German studio, not a US studio which is restricted from accusing the US of war crimes.

My overall point is that this strikes me as just another war game filled with US propaganda about the actual events that took place.

Will it encourage people to sign up to the army? Maybe.

If it makes out the US to be the good guys then i'd say yes, regardless of the message.

My final point is that having a video game about real war crimes from the pov of the people committing the war crimes and talking about how they were the courageous ones making sacrifices is over the line imo.

Just to add, I'm talking about the US govt, not individual soldiers.

But let's be real for a second. US exceptionalism is still strong and most people won't care about any of the above. Heck, just read the comments under the trailer and they're all positive.

I think Tansy E Hoskins said it best back in 2009 when the game was first in development.

> In direct contrast to his approach, however, was the Stop the War Coalition peace group, who said glorifying the Fallujah "massacre" is "sick".
>
> "The massacre carried out by American and British forces in Fallujah in 2004 is amongst the worst of the war crimes carried out in an illegal and immoral war," spokesperson Tansy E Hoskins told TechRadar.
>
> "It is estimated that up to 1,000 civilians died in the bombardment and house-to-house raids carried out by invading troops. So many people were killed in Fallujah that the town's football stadium had to be turned into a cemetery to cope with all the dead bodies.
>
> "There is nothing to celebrate in the death of people resisting an unjust and bloody occupation. To make a game out of a war crime and to capitalise on the death and injury of thousands is sick.
>
> "There will never be a time when it is appropriate for people to play at committing atrocities," added Tansy. "The massacre in Fallujah should be remembered with shame and horror not glamorised and glossed over for entertainment."