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SOCOM HITS PS3!

SOCOM: Confrontation is bigger, badder, and more realistic than ever

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- Deep soldier customization
- Upgraded clan system
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Return to Duty

Tales from the front lines of Sony's fan-servicing online PS3 shooter, **SOCOM: Confrontation**

By Joe Rybicki

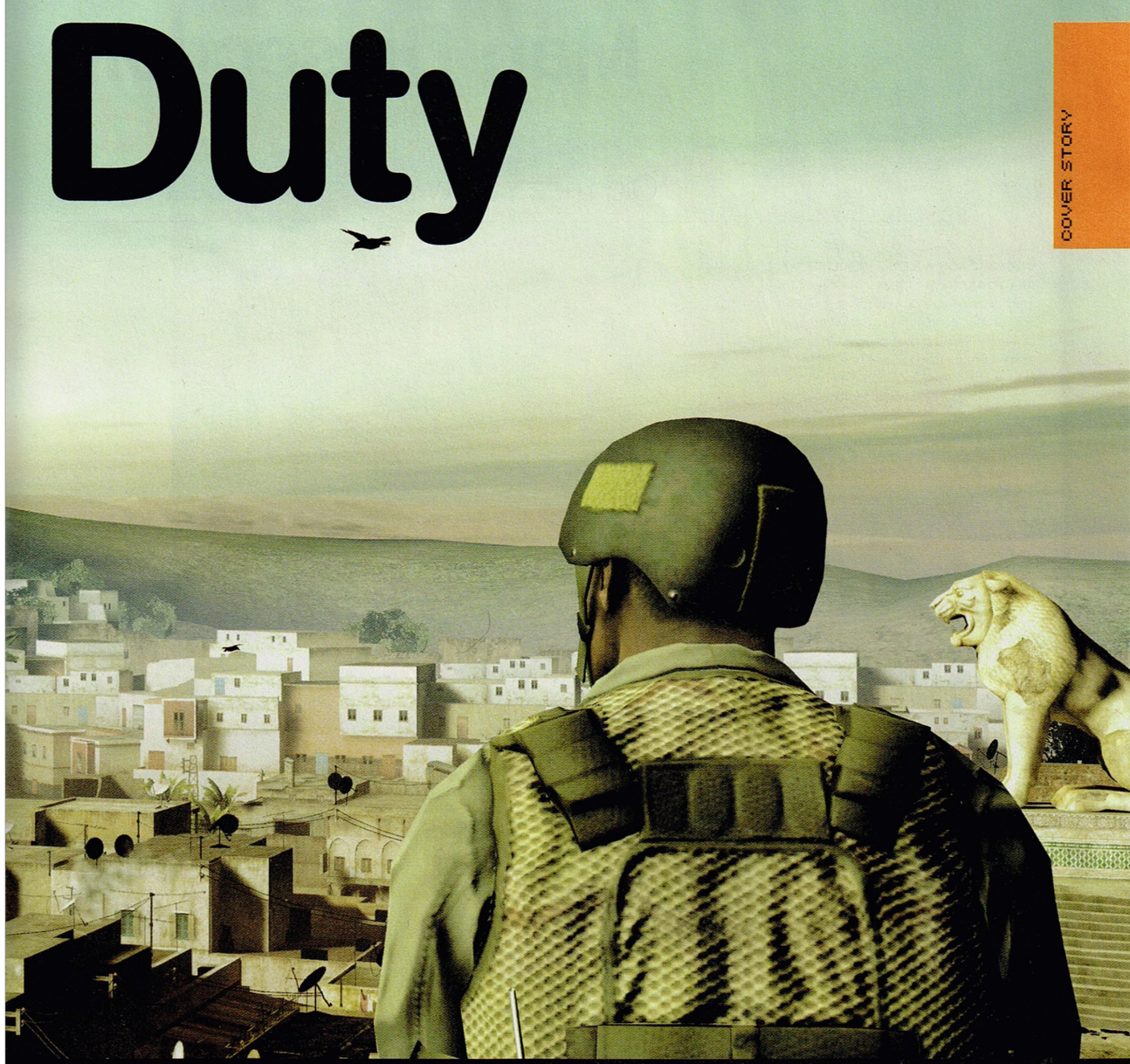


SOMEWHERE, the mother of all firefights is going down. Somewhere close. I'm crouched against the wall at the mouth of a narrow alley; the sound of muffled gunfire reverberates off the walls. I tilt ever so slightly to the left, just nudging my head into the alley. The noise gets a lot louder.

Down that alley, through the dust and blinding North African sunlight, and past the cracked walls and debris-strewn gutters, someone is getting shot at. A lot of someones, from the sound of it. This may explain why I haven't seen or heard from any of my teammates in some time; while I was carefully edging my way down stairs and around corners, they were running hell-bent for the central square to exchange lead greeting cards with the enemy.

I'd like to think I'm smarter than that, but perhaps it's just cowardice. You only get one life in a *SOCOM* game, after all—assuming you have enough self-respect to avoid respawn games—and I aim to make mine count. This is one of the most compelling qualities of the *SOCOM* franchise: Life is precious, and eating a bullet can put you on the sidelines for a damn long time, watching impotently through someone else's eyes as the round plays out. So you move with care, you stay well covered, and you try your damnedest to watch your teammates' backs so that they'll watch yours. Hopefully.

So here I am, summoning my courage to make a mad dash for the doorway at the end of the alley, when from behind I hear a chillingly recognizable "clunk"...followed by the unmistakable sound of something roundish and metallic rolling across the dusty cobblestones of this legendary Crossroads map. Even as I turn, I know it's too late. The mercenary dodges behind cover as his expertly rolled grenade comes to a stop right at my feet. And then the grenade and I both cease to exist.



Revisionist history

"The grenades are all physics-based now," says Sony's Seth Luisi, director of development for the *SOCOM* franchise. He's explaining one of the many refinements that *SOCOM: Confrontation*—incoming on the PlayStation 3 this summer as both a retail and downloadable title—introduces to the series, and he's clearly excited about it. "You'll be able to decide whether you want to roll a grenade or throw it overhand. It all uses real physics, so it'll bounce off curbs and things like that."

I've just received an illuminating demonstration of this fact, and my ears are still ringing. But this new grenade-chucking method is just one small facet of a complete overhaul of the franchise, an overhaul that takes a massive leap forward in technology—but also takes a substantial step backward in spirit, regrounding the series in the close-quarters, realistic combat that made *SOCOM* and *SOCOM II* perennial online favorites. This online-only title attempts to recreate the magic of the early games, wrap it up in a shiny package oozing with state-of-the-art technology, and deliver it to fans longing for a return to the "real" *SOCOM*.

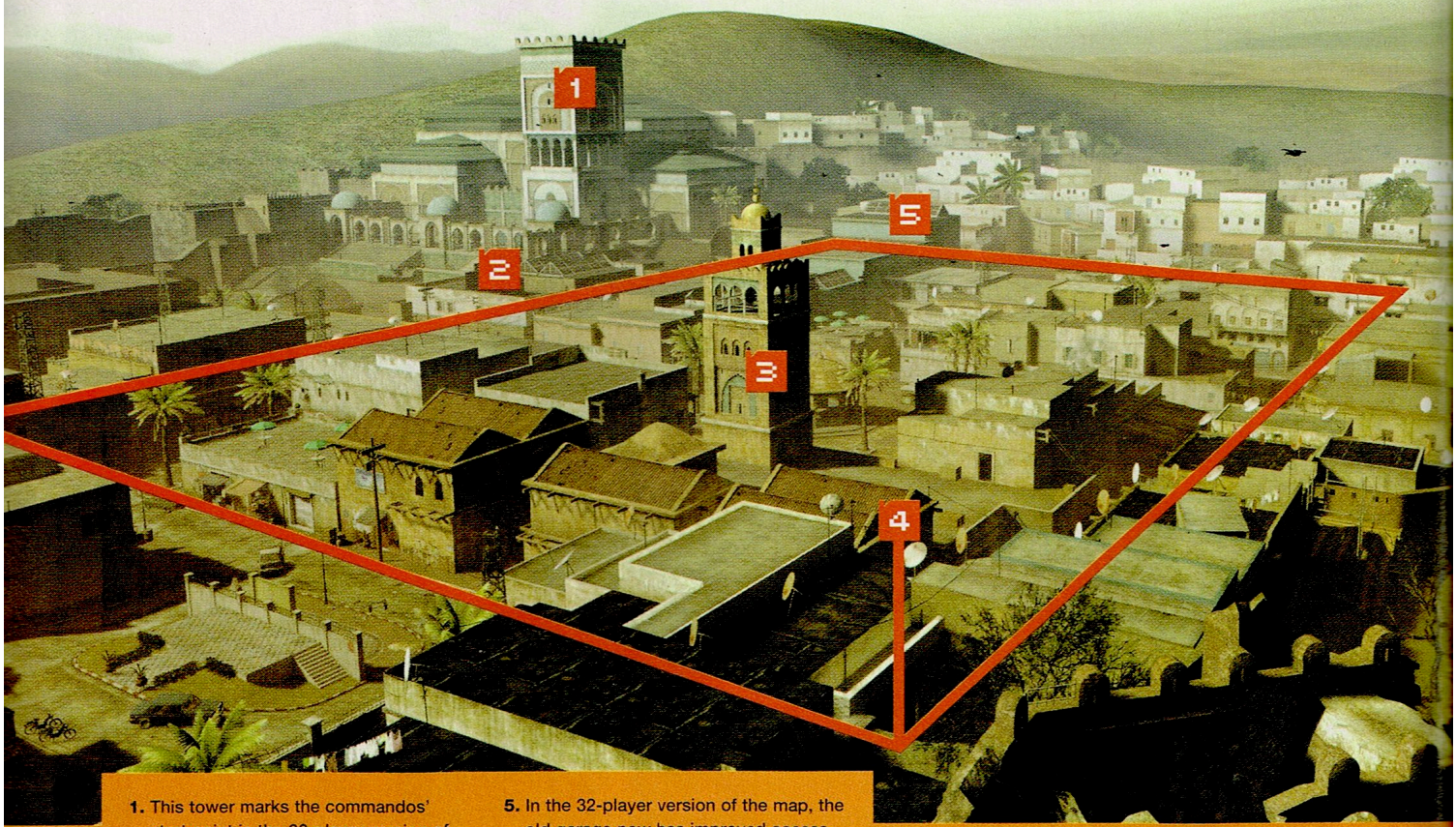
But pleasing fans is no easy feat—something Design Director David Seymour of Slant Six learned while on research detail. "When we first discussed the idea of working on a *SOCOM* game," he says, "I spent days reading forums and looking at what everyone had to say. And you realize, 'Oh, my god—there's this huge amount of expectation and love for the franchise. People want everything—they want it exactly the same as it always was, they want tons of innovation, and they want it now.'"

At this point, *SOCOM* fans might

Map Dissection: Crossroads

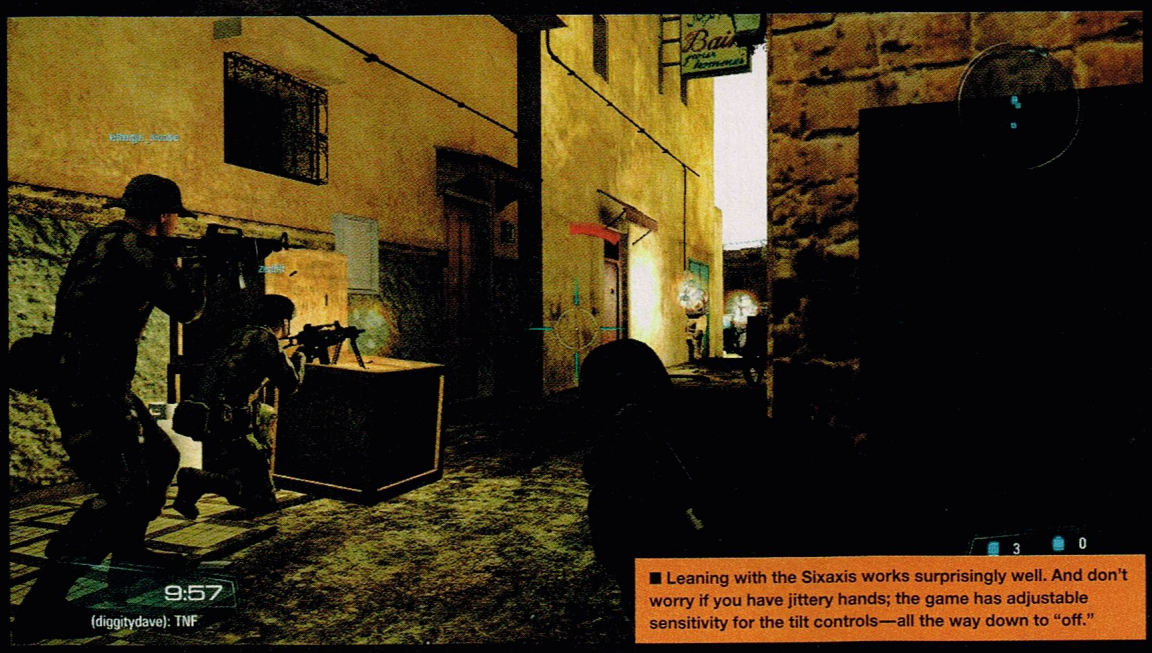
Old meets new in this expanded classic

CROSSROADS WILL BE FAMILIAR TO ANY PLAYER of *SOCOM II*. As one of the most beloved classic maps, it was a no-brainer as a candidate for a *Confrontation* face-lift. While the central core remains essentially the same as the original version, a ring of outlying areas has been added for the 32-player version.



1. This tower marks the commandos' start point in the 32-player version of the map.
2. This breach point opens up some roof access to help cover the approaches to the commandos' base.
3. The familiar bell tower at the center of Crossroads offers line-of-sight to both sides' spawn points...and vice versa.
4. This central area is virtually identical to the original Crossroads. The addition of more street-level cover helps ensure lots of close-quarters conflict.
5. In the 32-player version of the map, the old garage now has improved access, with a handful of pathways from the mercenaries' start point.
6. This lion statue stands above the mercenaries' start point in the 32-player map. In the 16-player version, the start points are identical to the *SOCOM II* version of Crossroads.
7. The highlands surrounding the core of Crossroads offer some snipe advantages, but players at street level will be generally well protected.

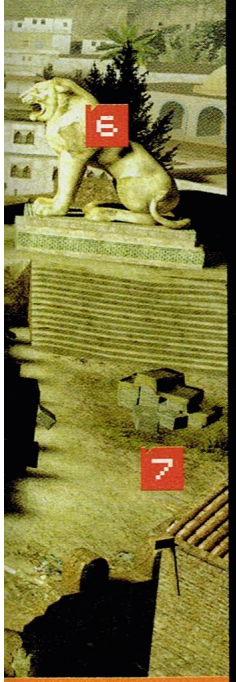


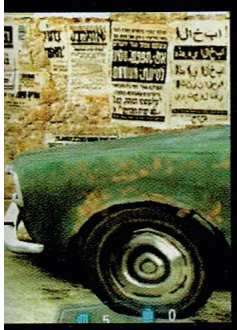


■ Leaning with the Sixaxis works surprisingly well. And don't worry if you have jittery hands; the game has adjustable sensitivity for the tilt controls—all the way down to "off."









also want to know where series developer Zipper fits into the picture. After all, *Confrontation* is the first *SOCOM* console game not developed by Zipper; instead, it's in the hands of Slant Six, maker of PSP titles *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror* and *SOCOM: Tactical Strike*. We know Zipper is helping Slant Six with *Confrontation*, and they're also working on the next *SOCOM* game. Wait, aren't they? A Sony rep confirmed to us last year that Zipper's next game was in the *SOCOM* franchise, but now Luisi plays coy. "Are they working on a *SOCOM* game?" he says when we ask about the game.

"I thought it was confirmed," I say.

"No, no," Luisi says. "They're working on *something*...."

Back to the game at hand, Luisi says the Slant Six team worked to identify what resonated with people in the previous games. "People were really into the urban environments, the tight feel of them," he says. "When the environments started to get bigger and we added vehicles, it took away from some of those elements. So it's not so much trying to re-create a previous experience as much as it is analyzing the previous games—what worked well, what people picked up on, what people really enjoyed—and moving those to a next-gen *SOCOM* experience."

So what kinds of features contribute to this "next-gen experience"? Take, for instance, the use of cover in a heated firefight. "Once my character's in a crouch position," Seymour says, "the Sixaxis lets me do what I used to do with the D-pad." He tilts the controller gently to the left, and his character leans accordingly. "It gives me all this range to lean and stretch out," Luisi adds. "It means that I can 'trim' with great precision how I'm using a wall or a piece of cover. So rather than having a 'snap-to' cover system, you can use anything as cover; this allows a lot more flexibility with how you use objects in the environment." Seymour chimes in: "Now, the term 'cover system' implies a certain type of gameplay—that sort of Whac-a-Mole, hide-and-pop-up stuff. What we like about this is that it's fluid; it's basically analog stance control, and you can use it anywhere."

Running men

These are the kinds of features the design team is looking at for *Confrontation*—not necessarily revolutionary upgrades but rather more evolutionary refinements. Whereas *SOCOM 3* fundamentally changed the gameplay with the addition of vehicles and massive-scale maps, the goal here is to return to the classic *SOCOM* experience—vehicles, for instance, are gone—but update and refine it to make best use of the current hardware.

One thing *Confrontation* will have in common with *SOCOM 3*, though, is player team size: *Confrontation* supports 32 players, 16 to a side. Now, the designers have been very clear that they're aiming for a more intimate, on-foot experience, and this fact is clear in the levels I'm running around in. The Crossroads map is every bit as close quarters as *SOCOM II* players would expect, and another map (currently known by the working name of "Urban Wasteland") features plenty of restricted space, including a network of claustrophobic underground sewers. Plus, each level offers a 16-player version that knocks the map down to a tighter central area.

But to support 32 players, the maps do need to be bigger than what players of the earlier games are used to. This brings up an issue of

Map Dissection: Urban Wasteland

A different take on urban combat

THE WORKING TITLE GIVES A FAIR INDICATION of what this map holds in store: a warren of bombed-out buildings and deadly roadways. Several of *Confrontation*'s seven maps will feature city-based battles, but each one should offer a notably different style of play. (Yes, *seven* maps—although the team originally expected to launch with five maps, they've found time to add in two more. All of the maps will still be based in North Africa, however.)



1. In the 32-player version of the map, the opposing teams spawn in these outer buildings, but the 16-player version knocks the action down to an area immediately surrounding the hotel.

2. This skybridge can be demolished, cutting off prime access from one of the spawn points to the map's central area.

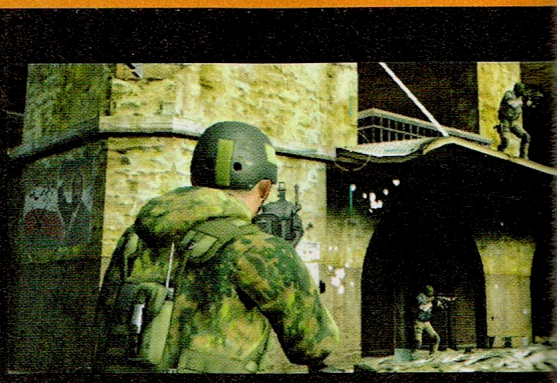
3. This bombed-out hotel is the map's center and serves as a focal point for breach and demolition games. The occupying force gets access to the first few stories, which include balconies to cover the ground-level approaches.

4. A multileveled, covered parking structure offers some protection for a team occupying the hotel...but prime sniper spots in the outer buildings have clean lines of sight into the structure.

5. Meandering down these wide-open streets would be a very bad idea due to the multitude of sniper roosts in the hotel and surrounding buildings.

6. A network of sewers and tunnels runs beneath the streets, allowing players to travel from their starting point to the center without opening themselves up to sniper fire. However, some of these tunnels can be destroyed.

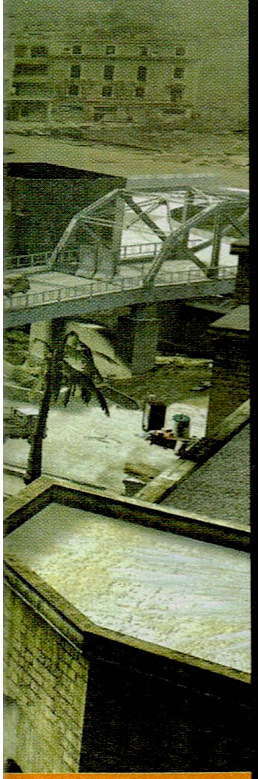
7. These raised roadways offer some cover underneath...but can also prove a serious falling hazard.

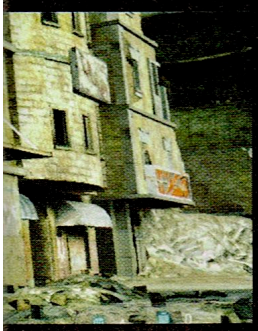












simple movement, getting from one side of the map to the other. In spite of early suggestions to the contrary, vehicles are not the answer and are never likely to be. "We really like the way it's playing without them," Luisi says. "Right now, we don't ever see the need to add vehicles. We want to make it feel like there's a gunfight right around the corner, or at least there could be. At the scale of the levels you'd need to accommodate vehicles, you lose that."

Instead, the solution is more simple: a speed boost. "These maps are a little more than double the size of the original *SOCOM*," Luisi says, "so we wanted to add in the ability to run so that people can get from place to place more quickly but still maintain that on-foot gameplay. You can't fire when you're running, and when you come out of a run, your accuracy is going to be poor. But right now, you can run for as long as you want."

"The run is inherently balanced," Seymour points out, "because your weapon's not at the ready—you have to stop running, get your weapon up, and then fire. If you're sprinting down the street just because you like to travel fast, and someone rounds the corner, you're dead. It's still practical—the running is to go from a safe place to a safe place. If you've taken out your opponent and you see the next cover, by all means, sprint there. But if you start traveling that way [all the time], you're going to get yourself in trouble really fast."

Vision quest

Quick movement will be a factor on some levels more than others, of course. Maps like Crossroads involve mainly narrow spaces and slow, careful movement while levels like Urban Wasteland place a heavier importance on the ability to sprint across the wider streets and parking lots—that is, assuming you have no interest in taking a bullet from the snipers certain to be stationed in the ruined buildings ringing the map.

But all of the maps have certain qualities in common. For one thing, they encourage the kind of close-quarters encounters that made the early games such a hit. For another, they bristle with the kind of architectural details—lots of multilevel buildings, underground tunnels, rooftop areas, and little-known pathways—that players of most of the previous *SOCOM*s could only dream of.

Arguably the most significant, though, are the characteristics that come as a result of the move to the PS3. I'm talking mainly about view distance. Head to one of the outer streets on the PS2 versions of Crossroads, and you'll find that you can barely see halfway down the map. But in *Confrontation*, you can now get a crystal-clear view >

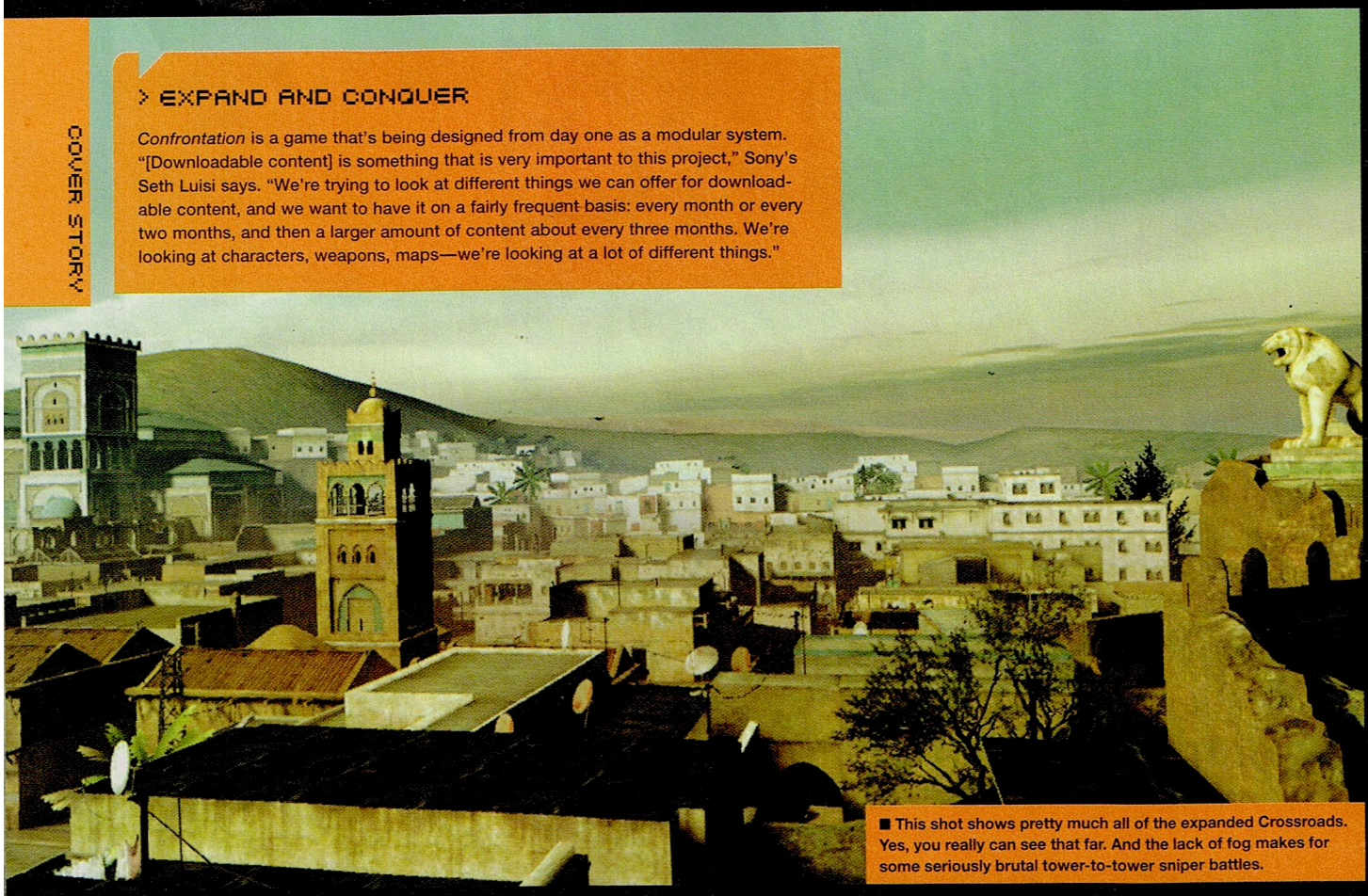
> SPECIAL DELIVERY

Confrontation will launch with six initial special forces available to clan members (with more to come). They are:

- Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEALs, United States)
- Special Air Service (SAS, United Kingdom)
- Kommando Spezialkräfte (KSK, Germany)
- Unidad de Operaciones Especiales (UOE, Spain)
- Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN, France)
- Commando Raggruppamento Subacquei ed Incursori Teseo Tesei (COMSUBIN, Italy)

> EXPAND AND CONQUER

Confrontation is a game that's being designed from day one as a modular system. "[Downloadable content] is something that is very important to this project," Sony's Seth Luisi says. "We're trying to look at different things we can offer for downloadable content, and we want to have it on a fairly frequent basis: every month or every two months, and then a larger amount of content about every three months. We're looking at characters, weapons, maps—we're looking at a lot of different things."



■ This shot shows pretty much all of the expanded Crossroads. Yes, you really can see that far. And the lack of fog makes for some seriously brutal tower-to-tower sniper battles.

across the entire battlefield—even the larger, 32-player version that expands the central core of the original Crossroads. It's like all the players suddenly got LASIK eye surgery, and you can imagine how eagle eyes will impact the role of the sniper. "It ended up changing the way the map played considerably," Luisi says, "because before, you couldn't see anybody; if you looked down an alleyway, you couldn't see the other end. Now you definitely can."

Of course, such supervision introduced the problem of snipers lying prone on street corners and dominating entire areas of the map. And this wasn't an easy issue to solve, since the team is committed to re-creating Crossroads with as much accuracy as possible. "The way we're treating classic map content is like gospel," Seymour says. "There are some tiny corrections to scale and such; as the game becomes more high-res and realistic, architectural scale becomes a very big deal. But it's essentially the same." (Incidentally, if the provocatively ambiguous phrase "classic map content" perks your ears, listen up: When pressed for details about the possibility of other classic maps arriving, Seymour is carefully noncommittal. "There's a mix of old and new in there," he says, "and people will be very happy, I think.")

Anyway, the solution to the view-distance problem was to add more objects for players to use for cover, which deprives a ground-level sniper of a wide-open shooting gallery. But in this edition of *SOCOM*, cover may not always be as safe as it appears. "There's some cover you can blow up," Luisi says. "We have exploding barrels, back by popular demand, and propane tanks you can blow up [and] garbage bags that can get destroyed. There's lots of objects that can be destroyed to give that look that you're just blowing the place to hell." Among these objects are abandoned cars and trucks that take realistic damage before eventually exploding in devastating fashion.

Contrary to some reports, however, the basic structure of the levels cannot be altered except in predetermined breach locations as seen in previous games. "We don't allow you to blow holes in walls," Luisi explains. "It's something we explored, but we didn't want to change the environment. The flow and layout of the map is so important to us, and maintaining that strategy is so important—and if you can arbitrarily blow holes in things, you can really change that."

Of course, the added cover to Crossroads (and elsewhere) was implemented to counteract a potential balance issue, not to nerf the sniper role—it moves sniper activity up from ground level. "When you're down in the streets and alleys [of Crossroads], you're fairly well covered," Seymour says. "It's pretty tough to pick off people who are at ground level. But [higher up], you get these vicious sniper battles. Most of the rooftops are accessible, so there's a second layer that takes place. Snipers definitely have more opportunity to do more—the realistic ranged use of weapons definitely has more room to stretch its legs. But it doesn't dominate the play."

Group dynamics

Not all of the refinements to the *SOCOM* formula directly affect gameplay. Slant Six is also introducing a host of new features geared at supporting and strengthening the *Confrontation* community. Many of these have to do with enhancing clan and group play. For example, every player begins the game with two characters: a commando and a mercenary. Both of these characters can be customized with different weapon

The Old Soldiers

In the trenches with the SOCOM hardcore

IN LATE SUMMER OF 2002, *SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs* launched the PlayStation 2's online initiative. It was an instant sensation, introducing hundreds of thousands of console gamers to online play via a surprisingly hardcore shooter experience. Many of these players came along for the ride when the sequel was released a year later, but when *SOCOM 3* debuted in late 2005, many fans of the original games turned their noses up at the huge maps, vehicular combat, and other changes to the beloved formula.

And yet, nearly six years after the launch of the original game, the first *SOCOM* and *SOCOM II* still enjoy a dedicated, vocal fan base. We headed into the trenches of the PlayStation online forums to find out why these hardest of the hardcore still slug it out in an all-but-forgotten war. Here's what some of them had to say.

Daviddoel: "Yes, I own a PS3, a 360, and a Wii, yet I still play both *SOCOM I* or *II* online on a weekly basis. The maps, for me, are what really stand the test of time. They are some of the most well-designed, [well-] thought-out, and unique stages that I have ever experienced in an online shooter."

SMoKeYRuN: "Heart-pounding action, highly competitive gameplay, a 'life' that actually meant something—a unique experience many shooters just don't offer."

DaT gUy: "*SOCOM I* and *II* just had a more intimate style of play, communication worked, and the games were intense. The maps were also a big part of it. Each of the maps were designed around each mode and worked perfectly for that mode."

digitalgangster: "I stayed up with my clan for 12 hours *straight* on *SOCOM II*. I've never replicated that with any other online game."

The Coathanger: "To me, it's all about the community. I met some really cool people playing those games. People I'd open my house to or help out if they were in a bind. I can't say that about any other videogame. *SOCOM* encourages teamwork and camaraderie."

Based on these words from some of the dedicated fans, you might think that the early *SOCOM*s have a larger core of players than the widely maligned *SOCOM 3* and *Combined Assault*. But it's not quite that simple. *SOCOM II*'s daily averages for online players are double those of *SOCOM 3*. But *Combined Assault* blows them both out of the water. Check out some recent stats on the online performance of the entire franchise on both PS2 and PSP....

GAME	AVERAGE SIMULTANEOUS PLAYERS DURING PEAK HOURS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PLAYERS PER DAY
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs (PS2)	200-300	1,000
SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs (PS2)	1,500-2,000	6,000
SOCOM 3 (PS2)	800-900	3,000
SOCOM: Combined Assault (PS2)	10,000	25,000
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo (PSP)	600-700	3,000-4,000
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 2 (PSP)	2,000-3,000	10,000-12,000



■ *SOCOM: U.S. Navy Seals*


■ *SOCOM II: U.S. Navy Seals*

loadouts, outfits, and gear...but you won't get access to the full range of customization options without taking the next step. "We're continuing what was in *Tactical Strike*, the idea of real special forces—six in the first release, and more to come," Seymour says. "But you can only play as a special forces character once you join a clan. This basically upgrades your commando character into a Navy SEAL or other special force. So there's a great incentive to join clans."

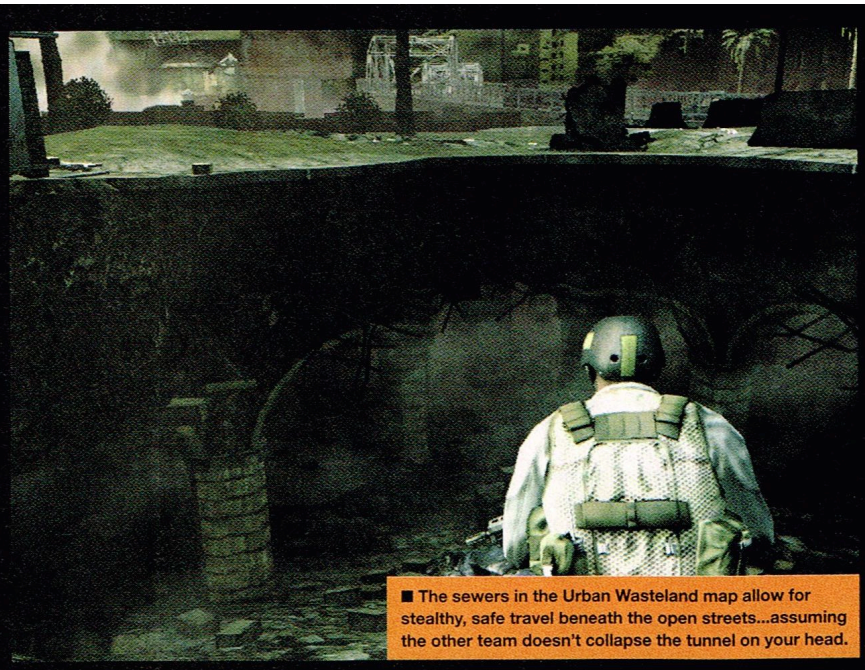
"Having the special forces," Luisi adds, "also allows us to have different equipment items—different camo patterns, different helmets, things like that—that are available only to that special-force team. So they'll look unique. And each special force is also going to have a couple of unique weapons that only they get." The clan leader (or designated subordinates in the new "chain of command") decides which special force the clan chooses, and he has access to additional customization features such as special camouflage patterns and team insignias. And while individual players can still customize their appearance within that framework, the result is clans who *look* like teams.

Clan management is also more accessible thanks to the launch of SOCOM.com, a website devoted to the *Confrontation* community. On the site, you can make changes to your clan's schedule and roster, exchange info with clan members and other clans, and even scout new recruits

> SOUNDING OFF

Confrontation offers a novel audio system that takes into account the position of the source of the sound, the position of the player, and any obstacles in between. As a result, gunfire that's happening around a corner *sounds* like it's happening around the corner; you hear a slightly muffled tone and lots of echoing reverb. As you approach the source, the sound changes dramatically, becoming much sharper and more distinct. The engine even goes so far as to model sounds differently depending on whether the source is in an indoor location and the listener is outside, or vice versa. With the game's 7.1 surround sound support, this can make pinpointing the source of gunfire easier for the observant player.

But that's not all. In the course of researching different weapons, the team discovered that no two guns sound exactly alike; minute differences in the barrel can make a difference in tone even among otherwise identical weapons. So when two or more players have the same weapon equipped, each individual gun will sound just a tiny bit different from the others. It's a subtle touch that has a surprisingly noticeable effect.



■ The sewers in the Urban Wasteland map allow for stealthy, safe travel beneath the open streets...assuming the other team doesn't collapse the tunnel on your head.





thanks to an exhaustive stat-tracking system. (How exhaustive? Plans include a "heat map" for each player that shows how frequently the player lands shots on the different parts of enemies' bodies. *That* exhaustive.) This kind of management is key, because boosting your clan's ranking won't be as easy as in previous games. "Ranked matches are now automatched," Seymour says. "You can no longer set up a match exactly defined to your team's exact strengths and create a honeypot to raise your clan ranking. For your clan to have a global ranking, you now have to be a rounded team with good strategies for dealing with all the maps. Now, you can build all the custom games you want—the room system is still there, which I know is really important to *SOCOM* fans. You can do all your clan tryouts and trainings in those rooms. And even playing within those games aggregates different stats, because we track a lot of information about the player. But it doesn't directly go into the global clan ladder."

Alongside this evolution of clan management comes an evolution in clan communication. *Confrontation* introduces a party system that allows players to group up for communication and socialization purposes. As in other games with party systems, your group sticks together from game to game rather than getting broken up when switching games or lobbies. But more importantly, your group also has open-mic chat within games. You can still communicate with the rest of your team with the push-to-talk function of the L2 button, and you can still talk to anyone within virtual earshot with proximity chat (including the enemy, if you're not careful). But the party system allows both socializing and strategizing in groups smaller than the 16-player teams.

Oh, you don't have a reliable headset for your PS3? That's another issue *Confrontation* looks to rectify. Like *Warhawk*, the game will be available both as a download from the PlayStation Network and as a retail product (and most likely at a comparable price). And like *Warhawk*, the game will include a Bluetooth headset with the retail version. But "it's going to be different from the one included with *Warhawk*," Luisi says. "Since we had more time before the release, we've been working to create a high-quality Bluetooth headset that we're really excited about and hope to be able to talk more about soon."

> The spirit of *SOCOM I* and *II* is the guiding principle we use when making design decisions.

—Slant Six Design Director David Seymour

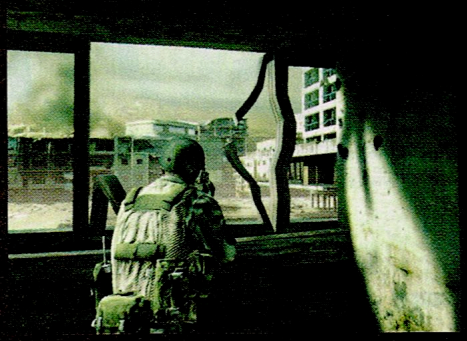
War memorial

It's easy to look at all of these changes and think that Slant Six is running roughshod over the franchise. But look again, and you'll see that these refinements and additions are being undertaken with an eye toward ensuring that *Confrontation* is very much a *SOCOM* game. The goal is to maintain the fine balance of realism and fantasy, of tension and action, that made the first two games so powerful.

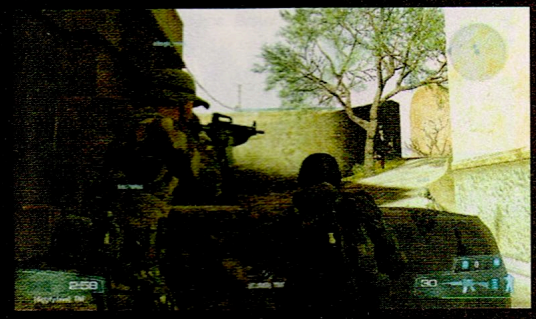
Part of this mission involves bringing back some of the more subtle elements of the franchise that fell by the wayside with *SOCOM 3* and



■ Urban combat is not for the weak.







> DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

When Sony first showed off *Confrontation*, some fans were incensed by the apparent move to a close-up, over-the-shoulder camera. But this move wasn't without its reasons: "The old viewpoint was a little dated," Sony's Seth Luisi says, "because it was more centered toward 4:3 TVs, and now, going to 16:9, we have a lot more area off to the sides. But as soon as we showed that, immediately all the old fans said, 'I want the old camera back!' So we have that in there as well as an option."

To be absolutely clear, we quote Slant Six's David Seymour, who posted the following on the PlayStation blog (blog.us.playstation.com): "There *is* an option to use [the] classic *SOCOM* camera! It looks and feels like the original classic camera!" Only he said it three times in a row. Apparently this is a touchy subject.

Combined Assault. Player health, for example, is closer to the early games in regard to the number of hits a player can take. The detailed (but underused) bullet-penetration system returns with a more lifelike simulation of how well different types of cover can protect you against incoming fire. All the game types of the first *SOCOM* and *SOCOM II* return as well—suppression, demolition, extraction, breach, and escort—plus control from *SOCOM 3*. Fans of the first game, however, will likely be most excited about a new game type: elimination. This is essentially a reprise of the suppression rules from the first game, which require the winning team to completely eliminate all the players on the opposing team in order to win the match; anything less than complete extermination results in a draw. This is hard*core*.

If this sort of thing doesn't interest you, don't forget about the inherent customizability of the game-creation system. Players looking for a fast-action, low-pressure fragfest can set up 32-player every-man-for-himself matches with infinite respawn. Conversely, anyone looking to re-create the feel of the original games can set up no-respawn matches on the reduced 16-player maps and even tweak the available loadouts (to restrict explosives, for example). The point is that *Confrontation* is most definitely *SOCOM*—only more so. Even with the new features, it feels like an evolution of the franchise rather than the drastic departure brought about by *SOCOM 3*.

But of course, the game is still early in development. With an amorphous release of "summer," there's still plenty of tweaking to do to get the game looking clean and smooth. For example, while some areas of Crossroads look almost startlingly detailed, others seem to have surprisingly low-resolution textures. And although the game ran smoothly for most of my hands-on time, an occasional stutter or period of slowdown was not unheard of.

Naturally, the designers attest that these issues will be cleaned up—and given how much better the game looks now compared to its unveiling a year ago, it's easy to believe them. But you don't necessarily have to take our word for it—or theirs. The team plans for an invite-only beta test as early as right now or May with a public beta soon afterward. Want to get in on the top-secret beta? "We're rolling out a blog site fairly soon," Luisi says. "And we want to use that site to identify some of the community leaders. And then we'll invite them into the private beta, just so we can get feedback from those hardcore *SOCOM* guys—probably only a few hundred people."

If that doesn't make you confident that the designers are serious about making a game for *SOCOM*'s true fans, well, it's likely nothing will. But the team wants fans to believe. "The spirit of *SOCOM I* and *II* is the guiding principle we use when making design decisions," Seymour says. "So whether it's the decision to leave vehicles out of the game, or the focus on more intimate maps and features that help with the tactical, close-quarters combat, that was our guiding principle. There's a lot of new stuff, for sure, but for those really hardcore fans who are scared of change, I think they'll be OK."

EGM Extras: *Stay frosty, SEALs: Our coverage of* SOCOM: Confrontation *carries on at* EGM.1UP.com. *We dive into the trend of big downloadable games like* Confrontation *to see if the days of boxed, store-bought titles are numbered.*