

## = Soviet Strike =

Soviet Strike is a helicopter @-@ based shooter game developed and published by Electronic Arts for the PlayStation in 1996 and the Sega Saturn in 1997 . The game is a sequel to the Strike games which began on the Sega Mega Drive with Desert Strike : Return to the Gulf . Soviet Strike is the series ' first installment for a 32 @-@ bit console and was first conceived as 32 @-@ bit Strike . Early on , it was intended for the 3DO console , before development changed to the PlayStation .

Soviet Strike is set after the disintegration of the Soviet Union , and takes place in a fictionalised Russia , Eastern Europe and around the Caspian Sea . The player pilots an Apache helicopter and battles with the forces of Shadowman , a renegade ex @-@ Communist figure . Like its predecessors , the game features shooting action mixed with strategic management of fuel and ammunition , but has more authentic 3D graphics , as well as a modified overhead - as opposed to isometric - perspective . The game also features a more realistic enemy artificial intelligence and environment . Critics received the game positively , praising the graphics and full motion video , while commentary on the gameplay and difficulty was more mixed .

## = = Gameplay = =

Soviet Strike is a helicopter @-@ based shooter game . As in its predecessors , the player views the action from outside his craft , using one of two available viewpoints . These are similar to the isometric perspective of the previous games , but are improved " overhead " versions . This removes the predecessors ' problem of buildings occasionally obstructing the player 's view ; and unlike the previous games , the player can no longer collide the helicopter into structures , instead always flying over them . The first camera system fixates on the Apache , while the second " allows you [ the player ] to rotate the screen around the helicopter " . The Apache is armed with a machine gun , Hydra rockets and Hellfire missiles , which vary in power and payload . The Sega Saturn version includes two hidden power @-@ up weapons : doubled machine guns and Maverick missiles . The craft has finite ammunition , fuel , and armour , and the player must manage the payload by collecting limited supplies .

The game has five large levels , each divided into several missions . Mission objectives include seeking and destroying enemy personnel and structures such as radars , training camps and ships ; rescuing prisoners @-@ of @-@ war and other persons ( including , in one mission , Boris Yeltsin ) , as well as recovering intercontinental ballistic missiles and capturing enemy commanders and agents . Soviet Strike employs a relatively realistic , fluid virtual battlefield and sophisticated artificial intelligence , which will put in motion set pieces even if the protagonist has not arrived to take part . The opposing intelligence can track the player using radar and reinforce positions accordingly . As such the player must sometimes pre @-@ emptively destroy radars . Enemy troops may also flee once they have lost a battle . Some missions require set piece solutions , including " starting an avalanche to crush a tank battalion and sealing a nuclear reactor core in a salt mine . " The game is " very tightly structured " , yet the player has the ability to roam the battlefield attacking enemies at will .

## = = Plot = =

## = = = Characters = = =

The player is a helicopter pilot in STRIKE , a special covert operations force of the US military designed for preemptive action to prevent " wars that never happen . " STRIKE 's commander is General Earle , who has electronics expert Hack and agent Andrea Grey ( whose cover job is a news reporter ) working for him . The other protagonists are STRIKE asset Nick Arnold , guerrilla fighter Amad , and former Soviet Army pilot Ivan Uralia . The game 's antagonists are former KGB Chairman Uri " Shadowman " Vatsiznov , Ireki dictator Sadissa Savak , and disgraced Soviet

scientist Dr Grymyenko Ukrainian .

A series of voiceovers called STRIKE Files outline the origins of STRIKE . One such file has General Earle detailing the organization 's mandate to US President Bill Clinton after his inauguration in January 1993 . In the tape , Clinton is unaware that STRIKE prevented a civil war in Mexico in 1982 which could have turned the country into a secret Warsaw Pact member @-@ state .

= = = Plot = = =

The end of the Soviet Union leaves a power vacuum in Eastern Europe that former KGB Chairman Uri Vatsiznov , AKA the Shadowman , is willing to exploit for his own ends . In the first mission , which takes place in the Crimea , the player must rescue a captured spy named Nick Arnold to retrieve intelligence on the game 's antagonist . The second level is set in the Sea of Azov : the player must battle the elements of the Black Sea Fleet which is preparing to invade Europe . The mission also involves the rescue of guerrilla fighter Amad .

STRIKE 's victory in the Black Sea leads them to the Caucasus , where Sadissa Savak , leader of the fictional state of Irek , begins aggressive overtures against local fighters . In the mission ( which is supposedly north of the main battle area where Desert Strike took place ) , the player and Amad join forces with a militia run by Amad 's relatives in stopping Ireki troops from capturing an ex @-@ Soviet chemical weapons plant . With STRIKE killing Savak ( and passed off as the victim of a car crash ) , the group goes to a heavily irradiated Transylvania to rescue Nick once more , this time from Dr Grymyenko Ukrainian , who wields an arsenal of ballistic missiles . The player is also tasked to kill the Shadowman 's lead armor commander , Vila , who operates a special red @-@ turreted T @-@ 80 , and aid in the destruction of an abandoned nuclear reactor the Shadowman is planning to use .

The final mission takes place in Moscow , with Shadowman 's unleashing his minions in the KGB , the military and the Russian mafia in attempting a coup against President Boris Yeltsin 's government . The player must prevent a bombing on the Kremlin before seeking out and killing Shadowman . The game 's end sequence depicts Andrea delivering a televised news report blaming the destruction on an earthquake and consequent gas fires .

= = Development = =

Soviet Strike began development as a game for the 3DO under the working title of 32 @-@ bit Strike . Strike series creator Mike Posehn assisted in early programming and the design but otherwise did not wish to work as part of a large team , necessitated by the move to a more advanced console . The development team , who had already spent several months working on the 3DO version , decided to rework it instead as a PlayStation game when it was clear that the 3DO 's demise was inevitable ; an additional two years ' labor time was the result . The team re @-@ evaluated the basics of the 16 @-@ bit games and aimed to create more lifelike environments and enemy behaviour . The 3D engine - created by the Road Rash 3DO team - used satellite images of real topography , imposed on polygonal maps . It also modified the preceding isometric viewpoint - which caused buildings to obstruct the player 's view - to an overhead perspective with which the player could move and see over terrain and structures . Unlike some of its predecessors , Soviet Strike features only a helicopter - albeit with power @-@ ups in some levels - and the team also abandoned the unpopular on @-@ foot levels found in Urban Strike . The developers aimed to include more humour in the game , with other additions being voice @-@ overs and full motion video .

The later Saturn version featured a number of changes : an optional easy difficulty setting ( providing the player with twice the fire @-@ power and slower fuel consumption ) , adjustable brightness on the heads @-@ up display ; two hidden powerful weapons ; hundreds of bug fixes from the PlayStation version ; extra sound effects added to helicopters ; improvements to the graphics of control and menu screens and compass ; stereo and mono versions ; cow sound effects

; and more improvised fuel added to level 4 . It was also compatible with the Saturn 's then @-@ recent analogue controllers . The game was followed by a further sequel , Nuclear Strike , released for the PlayStation in late 1997 .

### = = Reception = =

Reviewers said the terrain graphics were " realistic " , " nearly photo @-@ realistic " , " photo @-@ realistic " and " Superb " . Others called them " gorgeous " . Reviewing the Saturn version , GameFan said the terrain " looks amazing " . Next Generation said : " the game makes a giant leap forward in terms of the environment " but called the explosions " average " , while those of the Saturn version impressed reviewers . GamePro said the " explosions are satisfying eye @-@ candy " . Jeff Gerstmann said the vehicles " look good " , while another reviewer called the structures " highly realistic " . Next Generation felt the structures and vehicles together with the terrain formed an " impressive " environment . The magazine felt the animation to be " average " ; Gerstmann called it " choppy " but overall felt the graphics an improvement over the game 's predecessors on older systems . GameFan 's Saturn review summarised the graphics as " first @-@ rate " , while Russian magazine Great Drakon also praised them .

Critics called the full motion video " stylish " , and praised the acting . Gerstmann said the FMV had " some of the best CD @-@ ROM acting seen in a long time " and called it the game 's " only real plus " . Edge noted the new video but felt it was " over @-@ the @-@ top " and intrusive , while others disagreed . GamePro compared the FMV to Desert Storm if reported by MTV , saying its " hip new attitude " was " part of the charm " , while another critic said the sequences " spice up the proceedings a fair bit " . Great Drakon also praised the FMV . Reviewing the Saturn version , GameFan noted a poorer quality of FMV than the PlayStation version . Gerstmann felt the sound to be " dull " , while Next Generation called it " exemplary " . Others praised the quality of the gunfire sound effects , and noted humour in the enemy troops ' utterances .

Gerstmann noted " a raw collection of messy operations " , while Edge praised the game 's " inventiveness " - saying it " makes Soviet Strike " - as well as the variety added by the games artificial intelligence . The magazine also felt that while the collecting of supplies added strategy to the action , the limited amount restricted the paths the player might take through the level . Another critic said the " real @-@ time , living battlefield enhances the urgency of the missions and the player 's involvement " and also noted " practically no load time . " GameFan complained of a high difficulty and a steep curve , long levels which return the player to the beginning should he die , infrequent opportunities to repair armour and the enemies ' tendency to attack the player from beyond his limited viewpoint , and was thankful for the Saturn version 's optional easier difficulty setting . Next Generation also criticised the player 's restricted view , calling it the game 's " worst problem " . One reviewer said revisiting levels to discover missed set pieces aided the game 's longevity ; Sega Saturn Magazine had " some reservations " about the game 's replay @-@ value , with only 5 missions , but said it was " very playable and enjoyable " , while another reviewer called it " a load of fun " . Gerstmann criticised the poor scrolling , erratic motion and imprecise control , Great Drakon praised the controls , while GameFan noted they had improved in the Saturn version . The reviewer also enjoyed this version 's new weaponry . Another reviewer pointed to some " minor flaws " , saying the HUD " smacks of 16 @-@ bit era graphics " ; The game impressed Great Drakon 's reviewer , who praised the attention to detail and the reviewer found the story convincing . IGN said : " Everything about this game is great . Excuse me for gushing , but when you come across a game that 's as fun to play as Soviet Strike , and great looking , you really sit up and take notice . "

Gerstmann called the quality FMV " a small victory in a larger conflict " , saying the game had " too many little problems to recommend it " and that it " simply doesn 't play as well as the old 16 @-@ bit Strike games . " Sega Saturn Magazine called it a " worthy addition " to the series and also noted improvements to the Saturn version . GameFan said the game " is everything you could wish for from a 32bit Strike " and that " it plays brilliantly , and exercises both your trigger finger and grey matter . " The magazine later reflected that the Saturn version was somewhat better but

nevertheless very similar to the PlayStation original . It recommended the game to Strike fans but felt it would be an " in at the deep end " introduction for newcomers to the series . Edge summarised : " this is a fairly well @-@ engineered continuation of the four @-@ year @-@ old Strike series " , which retains the gameplay of the original but updates the graphics to true 3D . GamePro felt the game might be too slow for fans of faster paced action games , but recommended it for players of previous instalments in the series . Allgame later felt : " The series peaked with the release of Soviet Strike . "