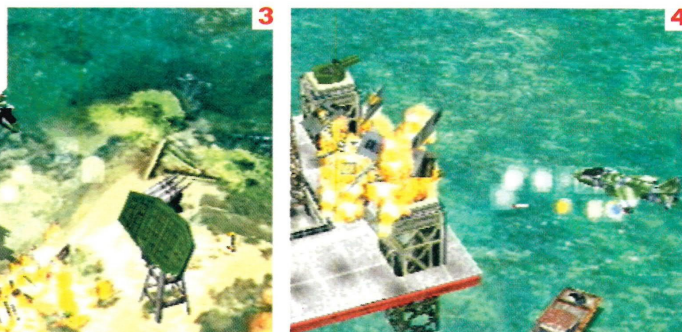


■ PUBLISHER: **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER: **In-house**
 ■ RELEASE DATE: **September** ■ ORIGIN: **United States**
 ■ PRICE: **£44.99** ■ STYLE: **Helicopter sim**



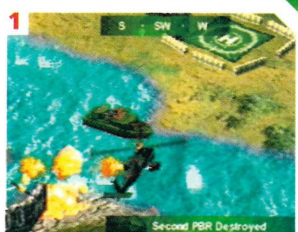
[1] Danger: Alert Zone. This is where you get ambushed. Knock out the receiver before they can call for back-up. **[2] A variety of introductory videos** add to the personalities of non-player characters. **[3] Destruction is a good thing** when you're saving the world from total devastation. **[4] It's important to prioritise your targets** and eliminate counter-attack possibilities.



Nuclear Strike

It's not much of a simulation, but it is an **intriguing strategy game**. This is your chance to **kill lots of people** and blow up their cars. All in the name of peace, of course

[1] Coming in to land from the north-east.
[2] A nuclear explosion mushroom cloud. Yesterday. Just what we're trying to avoid.



by the scenario – you fly for a peace-keeping force that tries to avert potential wars by equalising the balance of power between the two opposing factions. You measure your success in terms of wars that don't happen. And how, exactly, is that objective achieved? By blowing seven shades out of the superior party before they launch a nuclear offensive, of course. The result is some perfectly wholesome fun, politically justified, and all in the name of peace. Just like the Vietnam war. It now only remains for you to kill the baddies and save the goodies, including several key ground operatives who've got themselves into a pickle at the hands of the enemy, er, potential aggressor.

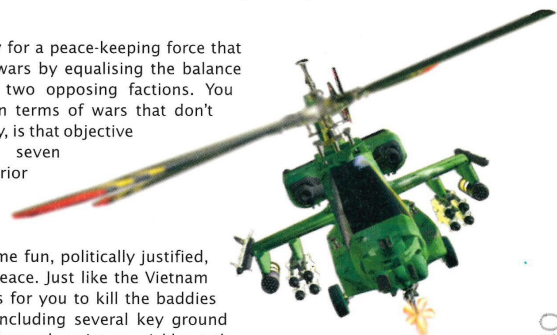
You are given a series of cleverly integrated missions, some of which you can combine. To succeed in any of them, you will need information. At first, a little will suffice, like 'where are they? Let me at them', but later you'll require much more detail concerning your target's location, number, weaponry and objectives. This graduated introduction to the intricacy of the game is well done – you're not bombarded with boring stuff you'll never need to know. Rather, you will learn that you need to find things out, and then you'll go looking through the menus for the information you require.

This strategic side of the game is by far what's ►

Helicopter simulations, on a very basic level, give you the power to do two things: fly a helicopter about and, hopefully, shoot things and/or people. *Nuclear Strike* allows you to fly in four directions and provides you with up to four types of weaponry to shoot things with – one for each button. That doesn't sound like a lot of options for a game and, in itself, it's not, but the strength of this game lies not in learning how to fly a helicopter (that's easy; just open the throttle and steer), but in the intrinsic need to collect and collate information in order to succeed in your 'missions' – as we helicopter pilots like to call them.

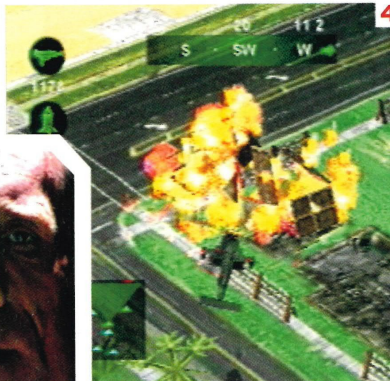
Nuclear Strike takes you to a political tinderbox in the imaginary county of 'Indocine', which is located, unsurprisingly, in Indochina, and more specifically, Burma. The combat is straight out of Vietnam, though, as are the combatants. The game is politically justified

You'll be spending more time sifting through the menu options and thinking about killing people than you will actually shooting them



PlayTest

(1) The compass bar at the top of the screen is only one of the information options available to you. (2) A flying machine of some description. (3) This man is your friend and ally. He gets very upset with anybody bent on nuclear destruction. Rightly so, too. (4) Another satisfying explosion. (5) Some villages are friendly, some aren't. Check your radar.



As well as making things explode...

you'll be escorting allies, rescuing innocents, collecting ammo and receiving messages from your superiors

► best about it. There is a big shoot 'em up element, but *Nuclear Strike* is very much designed with the strategy gamer in mind. At first you won't notice this, but soon you'll be spending rather more time sifting through the menu options and thinking about killing people than you will actually shooting them. There is considerable variety in the tasks you'll get, too. As well as making things explode and using your immense firepower on virtually defenceless humans, you'll be escorting allies, rescuing innocents, collecting fuel, armour and ammo and receiving messages from your



(1) A beautiful pagoda. It would be such a shame to see it razed to the ground under a rain of missiles and rockets. (2) You can centre your craft on the screen by pressing the Start button.

superiors. All of which you will obey, because you are a soldier. And a damn fine one, too. Or at least you will be by the time morning comes around again because once you've got into this game, it's difficult to put it down. Not just because it's good, but because you'll be worried that if you leave it alone for a while, you'll forget what you've learned about your next objective.

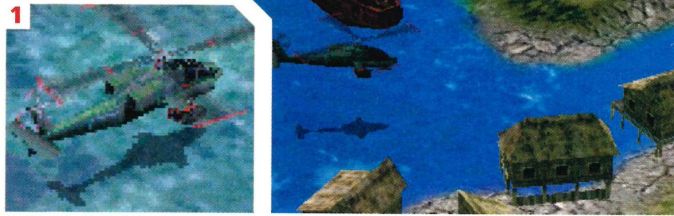
But there are three criticisms that should be made that may affect your decision to add this simulation to your collection. Firstly, although we thought that one of the big advantages of being in a helicopter in a combat zone was that your aerial position afforded you considerable advantages in having an increased field of vision, in *Nuclear Strike* you are usually dependent upon your radar systems to view your targets' locations. This doesn't restrict you too much in terms of being able to play the game, once you've understood how to read this information, but you often feel that you just can't see far enough. Perhaps it's all just a question of scale, but in terms of gameplay, this restriction is a fault.

Secondly, you have very little control over the speed of your craft – you're either moving along at a steady, though hardly exhilarating pace, or you're coming to a standstill, which isn't wise as you are constantly reminded that 'a sitting duck is a dead duck', either by game prompts or the more pressing problem of a hail of



Nuclear Strike

(1) Sometimes the sea is the safest place to be. **(2)** That boat is equipped with missiles aimed directly at you.



Once you've got into this game it's difficult to put it down... because you might forget what you've learned about your next objective

game just won't let you – your 'copter will come to an invisible wall and start sliding along sideways until you give up and return to the fray. When this occurs, it's hard to suspend our disbelief. It's an inevitable problem, perhaps, but if the combat zone were based on an island, there would be no temptation to go wandering. As it is, you will want to see what's on the other side of that hill.

Still, this remains an intriguing simulation with many levels of gameplay, depending on how deep you want to go and how badly you want to succeed. We can only assume that all the technical information concerning vehicles is correct as we were too young to fight in Vietnam, and not nearly American enough. This is fortunate for us because this is one case where the simulation is much more fun than the real thing. By some way, according to the films.

Alternatively...

| | | |
|----------------|------|-------|
| Thunderhawk 2 | 8/10 | PSM8 |
| Nuclear Strike | 7/10 | PSM24 |
| Soviet Strike | 7/10 | PSM13 |
| Strikepoint | 6/10 | PSM6 |



enemy fire. Consequently, you find yourself just plodding around at the aerial combat equivalent of 30mph. Perhaps that's realistic, but it would make a better game if you had, at least, a power boost option to get you out of trouble. As it is, all you can do is jink from side to side to avoid incoming fire.

The third and final criticism is that the game is spoiled by the fact that you are always operating within a restricted area. Try to go outside that area and the

'Information is power', you're often reminded, and there's a lot of information here to collect and collate, giving you plenty of levels to operate on.

7
out of 10

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 24

VERDICT

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| ■ GRAPHICS: | Limited view 4 | ■ GAMEPLAY: | Tricky 6 |
| ■ SOUND: | Good explosions 7 | ■ PRESENTATION: | Up to scratch 5 |
| ■ LIFESPAN: | Very involved 9 | ■ ORIGINALITY: | Hardly 2 |

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