

The Big 10



Stories everyone's talking about

Vita Launch
We look at Japan's Vita launch list. Which games will make it here?
▶▶Page 13

Banner Year
We reflect on 2011's impact on the PlayStation family.
▶▶Page 16

Crossing the Line
After more than a year of silence, Spec Ops: The Line resurfaces.
▶▶Page 19

Ground War
CCP Games shares plans for a FPS integrated with EVE Online.
▶▶Page 20

The Great Debate
Can Crytek save Homefront? PTOM editors weigh in.
▶▶Page 22

1 Combat comes home

Ubisoft sets the stage for Rainbow 6: Patriots

With its focus on brief, tense firefights and tactical strategy, the *Rainbow Six* series has always managed to scratch an itch that most shooters choose to ignore. But after three years of no Team Rainbow, well, let's just say we could really use some virtual Calamine lotion. So naturally, we're ecstatic Ubisoft is hard at work on *Rainbow 6: Patriots*, which is slated for a 2013 release—and after checking out the announcement trailer and chatting with the devs, 2013 can't come soon enough.

Rainbow has seen a bit of a transformation since the Sin City shootouts of the *Vegas* games. We play as an operative under the command of James Wolfe—a Rainbow veteran who's willing to take ethical shortcuts to combat a new terrorist uprising within the United States. "Terrorism is not about taking hostages and hijacking airplanes anymore," says creative director David Sears. "Terrorism—the *new* terrorism—is all about sending a message: 'We just don't like you.' There's no warning, there's no hostage situation, there's no demands. Right now there is a tremendous amount of political energy in the United States. It lacks a channel for expression. Americans are very distressed. Domestic terrorism is the greatest threat we face."

Domestic terrorism indeed—our foes here are the True Patriots, a terrorist cell composed of political radicals and disenfranchised Americans.

A charismatic man by the name of Tredway controls the organization and aims to galvanize a revolution to overthrow the U.S. government. It's all pretty dark when we think about just how close to home *Patriots* really hits; it draws some very obvious parallels to the current state of our world, touching on America's plummeting economy and civil unrest.

This, according to Sears, serves to humanize the enemy. "How can terrorism be powerfully felt by the player if every character that you shoot and kill seems pretty flat or one dimensional?" he asks. To ensure we have a better understanding of the people whose lives we're going to end, we'll be playing from the perspective of multiple characters throughout the game, including members of the True Patriots and civilians caught in the cross fire. It's a lot more difficult to pull the trigger on a man when we've just learned he joined the terrorists because they were holding his family hostage. It's pretty powerful stuff.

Of course, the real substance of the game is found in its tactical strategy. As opposed to the snake cam in *Vegas*, we now have access to an augmented reality mechanic that lets us see through walls to more effectively plan our attacks. Controlling our squad's movement is a breeze thanks to a one-button command interface, and marking targets for execution or distraction is equally simple. *Patriots* plays like an enhanced *Vegas*; there are a variety of new

door-breaching and room-clearing methods, including stealth infiltration and the ability to literally kick down doors (an effective tool for taking out any unsuspecting terrorists standing on the other side). Teamwork is as important as ever, and improved squad accessibility means we're always in complete control.

We closed out our demo with a brief look at *Patriot's* multiplayer offering. Fans of the granular map strategizing in the early *Rainbow Six* titles will be pleased with the inclusion of a similar 3D map layout, known as the Sand Table. Here, gamers can draft a plan of attack prior to a multiplayer match by placing waypoints and markers to

highlight points of interest, including potential sniping perches and designated regrouping spots. These markers remain in place once a match begins, visible only to the team that set them. We don't know what kind of multiplayer modes we'll be seeing, or how big a role the Sand Table will play in the success of competitive games—but it's certainly an intriguing approach to online play.

Patriots has quickly become our most anticipated shooter thanks to its marriage of tactical strategy and high-stakes firefights. Considering it's still more than a year away from launch, we're pretty impressed with what we've already seen.

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