



INTERACTIVE PROPAGANDA, DIGITAL MILITARISM, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN WAR VIDEO GAMES

Adhitya M. Maheswara^{1*}, Zeffry Alkatiri² and Agus Setiawan³

¹Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia, E-mail : adhitya.maheswara09@gmail.com

²Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia, E-mail : zeffryalkatiri14@gmail.com

³Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia, E-mail : agus.setiawan62@ui.ac.id



©2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License-(CC-BY-SA) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

DOI : [10.30983/islam_realitas.v12i1.11100](https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v12i1.11100)

Submission: April 09, 2026	Revised: June 10, 20256	Accepted: Agust 30, 2025	Published: Sept 03, 2026
----------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Abstract

This article examines how digital militarism shapes representations of Muslims, Arabs, and the Middle East in war video games. Using a qualitative approach combining textual, representational, and gameplay analysis, the study examines *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 1 & 2* (2007, 2009), *Medal of Honor* (2010), and *Six Days in Fallujah* (2023). Drawing primarily on Stuart Hall's theory of representation, complemented by concepts of procedural rhetoric and player agency, the analysis focuses on visual environments, character portrayals, narratives, spatial representations, player roles, objectives, and enemy classifications. The findings show that these games reproduce recurring distinctions between legitimate Western military forces and threatening Muslim, Arab, or Middle Eastern actors and spaces, while presenting military intervention as an intelligible response to insecurity and conflict. The study argues that war video games operate as forms of interactive propaganda, in which geopolitical meanings are communicated not only through images and narratives but also through the rules and actions required of players. By conceptualizing interactive propaganda as the incorporation of ideological meanings into playable systems, this study extends existing discussions of Muslim representation beyond visual stereotyping toward the procedural and participatory dimensions of digital militarism.

Keywords: Digital Militarism; Interactive Propaganda; Military-Entertainment Complex; War Video Games.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana militerisme digital membentuk representasi umat Muslim, masyarakat Arab, dan Timur Tengah dalam gim video perang. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang menggabungkan analisis tekstual, representasional, dan gameplay, penelitian ini menganalisis *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 1 & 2* (2007, 2009), *Medal of Honor* (2010), dan *Six Days in Fallujah* (2023). Dengan berlandaskan terutama pada teori representasi Stuart Hall, yang dilengkapi dengan konsep retorika prosedural dan agensi pemain, analisis difokuskan pada lingkungan visual, penggambaran karakter, narasi, representasi ruang, peran pemain, tujuan permainan, dan klasifikasi musuh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gim-gim tersebut mereproduksi perbedaan yang berulang antara kekuatan militer Barat yang diposisikan sebagai pihak yang sah dan aktor maupun ruang Muslim, Arab, atau Timur Tengah yang dikonstruksikan sebagai ancaman, sekaligus menampilkan intervensi militer sebagai respons yang dapat diterima terhadap ketidakamanan dan konflik. Penelitian ini berargumen bahwa gim video perang beroperasi sebagai bentuk propaganda interaktif, di mana makna geopolitik dikomunikasikan tidak hanya melalui gambar dan narasi, tetapi juga melalui aturan serta tindakan yang diwajibkan kepada pemain. Dengan mengonseptualisasikan propaganda interaktif sebagai penyisipan makna ideologis ke dalam sistem yang dapat dimainkan, penelitian ini memperluas diskusi mengenai representasi Muslim dari sekadar stereotip visual menuju dimensi prosedural dan partisipatoris dalam militerisme digital.

Kata Kunci: Militerisme Digital; Propaganda Interaktif; Military-Entertainment Complex; Gim Video Perang.

Background

Contemporary conflicts in the Middle East, particularly the escalation of the Israel–Palestine conflict, tensions between Iran and the United States, and the persistence of regional instability following the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to shape global political discourse and media representation. Within this context, digital entertainment media—especially war video games—have increasingly become spaces where

narratives of terrorism, security, patriotism, and enemy construction are reproduced and normalized. Through immersive and interactive gameplay, video games do not merely reflect geopolitical realities, but actively participate in circulating and structuring particular ways of representing Muslims, the Arab world, and



contemporary warfare regarding Muslims, the Arab world, and contemporary warfare¹.

War video games have evolved alongside the dynamics of global conflicts, particularly conflicts in the Middle East. Recently, the *Epic Fury* operation promoted by Donald Trump has been seen as an example of how the visual logic and narrative style of video games are increasingly shaping the way war is presented to the public. The US government was perceived as framing its military operation against Iran through the aesthetics of war games such as *Call of Duty*, complete with dramatic visual effects, fast-paced montages, combat perspectives, and communication styles resembling gameplay footage². This approach demonstrates how war is no longer presented merely as a political and humanitarian event, but also as a digital spectacle designed to capture public attention and construct a sense of heroism.

The connection between the military and video games has become a common phenomenon in the United States, considering the long-standing relationship between military institutions and the digital entertainment industry that has developed since the 1950s³. This connection grew even stronger alongside the advancement of computer technology, military simulations, and the interactive entertainment industry, eventually giving rise to what is known as the *military–entertainment complex*⁴. As part of the broader military–entertainment complex, war video games function not only as commercial entertainment

products, but also as forms of interactive propaganda capable of embedding ideological narratives through participatory digital experiences⁵.

Previous studies have demonstrated that military video games can reproduce militarism, geopolitical narratives, and particular representations of the Middle East. Power (2007) links post-9/11 war games to the militarization of popular culture, while Šisler (2008) shows how Arabs and Muslims are frequently represented through simplified associations with terrorism and violence. Robinson (2012; 2015) further argues that military video games can reinforce narratives of the War on Terror, American exceptionalism, and the legitimacy of military force. Similarly, Payne (2012) and Valeriano and Habel (2016) examine military realism and the construction of enemies in digital games⁶.

Extending these discussions, Payne (2025) argues that contemporary militarization operates not only within individual games but also across the wider culture surrounding gaming. His distinction between *military realism* and *military reality* is particularly significant: military shooters may reproduce weapons, uniforms, combat environments, tactics, and battlefield sounds with considerable visual and technical accuracy while

¹ Adhitya Mohammad Maheswara and Nur Fatwa, 'Representation of Middle Eastern Islamic Locality in Video Games', *IBDA' : Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya*, 19.1 (2021), pp. 141–51, doi:10.24090/ibda.v19i1.4427.

² Louis Lapeyrie, "'Call of Duty, Epic Fury': Why the White House Is Portraying the Iran War as a Video Game", *Illiberalism*, 30 March 2026 [accessed 24 May 2026].

³ Steve L. Kent, *The Ultimate History of Video Games. Volume 2. Nintendo, Sony, Microsoft, and the Billion-Dollar Battle to Shape Modern Gaming* (Crown, 2021).

⁴ Tanner Mirrlees, 'The Military-Entertainment Complex, US Imperialism And', in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (Springer International Publishing, 2019), pp. 1–17, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6_48-1.

⁵ Adhitya M. Maheswara, Zeffry Alkatiri, and Agus Setiawan, 'SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES Interactive Propaganda and Jingoism Through Militaristic Video Games Post-9/11 Terrorist Attacks', *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, published online 17 July 2026, doi:10.47836/pjssh.34.4.05.

⁶ Marcus Power, 'Digitized Virtuosity: Video War Games and Post-9/11 Cyber-Deterrence', *Security Dialogue*, 38.2 (2007), pp. 271–88, doi:10.1177/0967010607078552; Vit Šisler, *Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games* (2008), doi:10.1177/1367549407088333; Nick Robinson, 'Videogames, Persuasion and the War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding the Military-Entertainment Complex?', *Political Studies*, 60.3 (2012), pp. 504–22, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2011.00923.x; Nick Robinson, 'Militarism and Opposition in the Living Room: The Case of Military Videogames', *Critical Studies on Security*, 4.3 (2016), pp. 255–75, doi:10.1080/21624887.2015.1130491; Matthew Thomas Payne, *Playing War: Military Video Games After 9/11* (New York, 2016); Brandon Valeriano and Philip Habel, 'Who Are the Enemies? The Visual Framing of Enemies in Digital Games', *International Studies Review*, 18.3 (2016), pp. 462–86, doi:10.1093/isr/viv007.



simultaneously omitting civilians, moral ambiguity, political complexity, and the human consequences of warfare⁷. Such selective realism can consequently make military conflict appear technically authentic while reducing its political and humanitarian complexity.

Among the many war video games, titles such as *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* series (2007–2009), *Medal of Honor* (2010), and *Six Days in Fallujah* (2023) are considered the games most closely connected to the US military, either through institutional support or the use of official military narratives. These three games not only present simulations of modern warfare, but also represent the geopolitical perspective of the United States on issues such as terrorism, global security, and conflicts in the Middle East. In many cases, players are positioned as American soldiers or Western forces confronting groups constructed as threats to international stability.

Stuart Hall's theory of representation is particularly relevant to this study because it emphasizes that media representations do not merely reflect social reality but actively construct meaning through recurring signs, images, symbols, and discourses⁸. In this research, the selected war video games are treated as primary sources, with particular attention to their visual environments, character portrayals, narrative structures, symbols, dialogue, and representations of armed conflict. Recurring depictions of desert landscapes, armed militias, Arabic scripts and symbols, Muslim or Arab combatants, and conflict-ridden Middle Eastern settings are therefore examined not simply as aesthetic or narrative elements, but as representational practices through which particular meanings about Muslims and the Arab world are produced and circulated.

Hall's framework provides an appropriate analytical lens for identifying how these repeated visual and narrative codes may reproduce Orientalist associations between the Middle East, violence, instability, extremism, and terrorism. By closely examining the games themselves as primary cultural texts, this study demonstrates how such representations construct particular images of the "enemy" and position players within specific geopolitical perspectives. Consequently, war video games can be understood not merely as entertainment products, but as ideological and cultural sites in which meanings about contemporary Middle Eastern conflicts, military intervention, security threats, and Muslim and Arab identities are continuously produced, negotiated, and potentially normalized⁹.

Building on these discussions, this study examines war video games not only as representations of geopolitical conflict but also as interactive cultural systems in which political meanings are produced through visual imagery, narratives, spatial environments, rules, objectives, and player actions. Accordingly, this study addresses two main questions: 1) How do selected war video games construct representations of Muslims, Arabs, and the Middle East within narratives of terrorism, security, and military intervention? and 2) How do the interactive and procedural structures of these games transform such geopolitical representations into forms of interactive propaganda?

To address these questions, this study employs a qualitative approach using textual, representational, and gameplay analysis. *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 1 & 2*, *Medal of Honor*, and *Six Days in Fallujah* are treated as primary cultural texts and purposively selected because they represent different engagements with post-9/11 warfare and conflicts in the Middle East.

⁷ Matthew Thomas Payne, *The Militarization of Video Game Culture* (2025).

⁸ Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media and Identities Series)*, ed. by Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon, 2nd ed. (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013).

⁹ Maruful Hasan, *ARAB REPRESENTATION IN VIDEO GAMES A Comparative Analysis of Call of Duty 4 Modern Warfare and Under Siege* (Tampere, 2026) <<https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/237326/HasanMaruful.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>> [accessed 16 August 2026].



The analysis examines visual environments, character portrayals, narrative structures, dialogue, symbols, spatial representations, player roles, mission objectives, enemy classifications, and gameplay procedures. Stuart Hall's theory of representation is employed to examine how meanings surrounding Muslims, Arabs, the Middle East, terrorism, security, and military intervention are constructed, while procedural rhetoric and player agency are used to analyze how such meanings are embedded within the rules, objectives, and actions required of players.

Digital Militarism and the Transformation of War Video Games

The historical relationship between the military and the video game industry should not be understood merely as a continuous technological collaboration, but as a transformation in the cultural and ideological function of digital games¹⁰. From the 1960s through the early 1990s, this relationship was primarily characterized by military simulation, in which computer technologies and interactive systems were developed, financed, or sponsored by the United States armed forces for training, strategic planning, and operational purposes¹¹. The military's sustained investment in technological innovation subsequently facilitated the transfer of simulation technologies, interfaces, and design principles into the commercial video game industry. As these technologies moved from military institutions into popular entertainment, however, their function also changed. What had initially been designed to simulate combat for professional military purposes increasingly became commercialized militainment: a form of popular entertainment in which warfare, military technology, combat operations, and geopolitical

conflict were repackaged as consumable and marketable experiences. This shift marked an important transformation in the military–entertainment relationship, as militarism was no longer confined to institutional training environments but became embedded within everyday popular culture and accessible to mass audiences through commercial video games¹².

The political significance of militarized video games becomes clearer when examined in relation to United States foreign policy and contemporary conflicts. Following Operation *Desert Storm* in 1991, titles such as *Super Battletank* (1992) and *Desert Strike* (1992) transformed Gulf War imagery and military narratives into playable entertainment. This trend intensified during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as warfare increasingly became a commercially accessible interactive experience. At this stage, *militainment* developed beyond the representation of war toward *interactive ideological participation*.

Unlike film or television audiences, players actively operate within rule-based systems that define objectives, enemies, and legitimate forms of violence. Through Ian Bogost's concept of *procedural rhetoric*, these mechanics can be understood as constructing arguments through rules, objectives, and player actions. The ideological significance of war video games therefore lies not only in what they represent, but also in what they require players to do, positioning players as active participants in particular military and geopolitical logics.

Importantly, this transformation does not imply that the earlier military functions of video games have disappeared. Rather, military simulation, commercialized militainment, and interactive ideological participation increasingly coexist within the broader military–entertainment ecosystem. Video games continue to be incorporated into the military sphere as tools for recruitment, training, and combat simulation, while their commercial counterparts

¹⁰ Richard Godfrey, 'The Politics of Consuming War: Video Games, the Military-Entertainment Complex and the Spectacle of Violence', *Journal of Marketing Management*, 38.7–8 (2021), pp. 661–82.

¹¹ Frank Lyndall III, *The Effectiveness of Virtual Simulation as a Training Tool* (2020) <<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/nco-journal/images/2020/July/Virtual/Virtual%20Simulation.pdf>> [accessed 20 August 2026].

¹² Mark J. P. Wolf, *The Video Game Explosion: A History from PONG to Playstation and Beyond* (Greenwood Press, 2008).



simultaneously circulate military values and experiences among civilian audiences.

War video game titles such as *Call of Duty*, for instance, illustrate how the visual language, mechanics, and experiential qualities of military simulation can move between institutional and commercial contexts. Within military training environments, game-based and simulation technologies can familiarize personnel with high-pressure situations that require simultaneous threat assessment, coordination, and rapid tactical decision-making¹³.

Within popular culture, however, similar interactive structures enable civilian players to experience simplified forms of military decision-making, combat objectives, and threat identification. The significance of this continuity lies precisely in the permeability between military simulation and commercial entertainment: technologies and procedural logics originally associated with military training can be translated into commercially accessible experiences, thereby extending militarized ways of seeing, acting, and interpreting conflict beyond the institutional boundaries of the armed forces¹⁴.

The rise of war video games marked a new form of propaganda that blended patriotism with interactive immersion. Titles such as *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* series, *Medal of Honor*, and *Six Days in Fallujah*, functioned not only as entertainment products, but also as ideological instruments that constructed heroic representations of American soldiers.

Heroic and resilient protagonists reinforce ultra-patriotic narratives, while collaborations between the military and the entertainment industry contribute to the rise of “militainment”—a fusion of militarization and commercial entertainment that transforms warfare

into an immersive and commercially consumable interactive experience¹⁵.

Although video games often present fictional scenarios, many of their narratives and visual elements draw upon real-world events and geopolitical conflicts¹⁶. Rather than directly determining players’ political attitudes, these representations may contribute to the normalization of particular ideological perspectives, including the assumption that conflicts in regions such as Iraq and Afghanistan are primarily understandable through military frameworks. By repeatedly presenting armed intervention and violence as central mechanisms for resolving conflict, such games may also reinforce representational patterns that legitimize militarized responses while marginalizing alternative political, diplomatic, or social approaches.

Despite the controversy, the procedural rhetoric in war video games reinforces alternative versions of reality and history that help legitimize support for military intervention¹⁷. In many cases, these representations simplify Middle Eastern identities into stereotypical images associated with terrorism, instability, and violence, contributing to a broader form of digital militarism through which particular understandings of contemporary geopolitical conflict are reproduced and normalized.

Video Games as Interactive Propaganda

The United States has long utilized globally influential forms of popular culture, particularly Hollywood cinema, as instruments through which American political values, military power, and

¹³ Yelim Mun and others, ‘Serious Gaming for Adaptive Decision Making of Military Personnel’, *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, 2017-October (2017), pp. 1168–72, doi:10.1177/1541931213601776.

¹⁴ Chad Garland, ‘Marines Turn to Modified Call of Duty 4 to Train New Sergeants’, *Star Stripes*, 26 May 2026 [accessed 24 May 2026].

¹⁵ Tim Lenoir and Henry Lowood, *Theaters of War: The Military-Entertainment Complex* (2005) <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110201550.427/html?srsltid=AfmBOorLh5uYhfckJfroZs7s_6TQXziIVXD8CWll_VpC8x0-SW-pCbRd> [accessed 16 August 2026].

¹⁶ Matthew Spokes, ‘The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Procedural Rhetoric and the Military-Entertainment Complex: Two Case Studies from the War on Terror’, *Media, War & Conflict*, 13.2 (2020), pp. 153–69, doi:10.1177/1750635219828761.

¹⁷ Robinson, ‘Videogames, Persuasion and the War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding the Military-Entertainment Complex?’



cultural narratives circulate internationally. Within this broader media environment, war and military intervention are frequently transformed into cultural narratives and commercially accessible forms of entertainment. Media culture provides representational spaces in which relations of power, political identities, conflict, and legitimate forms of authority can be constructed and contested¹⁸. Militarized popular culture can therefore be approached not simply as entertainment, but as a cultural site through which particular understandings of warfare, security, enemies, and political legitimacy are represented.

Video games, however, introduce an important distinction from film and other primarily audiovisual media. Whereas film audiences generally encounter political narratives primarily through spectatorship, video game players are required to participate in the progression of those narratives through gameplay. Video games are fundamentally constituted through actions rather than images alone, while interactive or ergodic media require users to perform actions in order for the experience to unfold¹⁹.

This participation, however, does not necessarily imply that players accept or internalize the ideological meanings presented by a game. Players remain capable of interpreting, negotiating, resisting, or appropriating the meanings embedded within game systems²⁰. Rather, the distinctive characteristic of the medium lies in the way players must interact with predetermined rules, objectives, spatial environments, character roles, and systems of reward and punishment in order to proceed.

¹⁸ Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern* (2020).

¹⁹ Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature Introduction: Ergodic Literature* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) <http://cv.uoc.edu/~04_999_01_u07/aarseth1.html>; Alexander R. Galloway, *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (2006).

²⁰ Miguel Sicart, 'Against Procedurality', *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 11.3 (2011) <https://gamestudies.org/1103/articles/sicart_ap> [accessed 16 August 2026].

Player agency therefore operates within boundaries established by game design: players may determine how particular actions are performed, but the game system frequently determines which actions are possible, which objectives are necessary, who is designated as an enemy, and what constitutes success or failure²¹.

This relationship between player agency and designed constraints provides a theoretical basis for understanding video games as a form of interactive propaganda. Through the concept of procedural rhetoric, video games can communicate political and ideological assumptions not only through visual imagery, dialogue, or narrative representation, but also through the rules and procedures that organize player action. Procedural rhetoric refers to the capacity of computational systems to construct arguments through rule-based processes and representations, making gameplay itself a potential site of political meaning²².

In war video games, for example, players may be required to identify designated enemies, secure contested territories, protect particular political or military actors, and employ armed force in order to complete assigned objectives. The ideological dimension therefore emerges not simply from what the player sees, but also from what the game requires the player to perform within its procedural system²³. Gameplay consequently transforms political representation from something that is primarily observed into something that is enacted through interaction.

From this perspective, the term interactive propaganda refers to the incorporation of ideological meanings into a playable system in which players participate in the performance of particular political, military, or geopolitical logics. The significance of interactivity should therefore

²¹ Galloway, *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*; Sicart, 'Against Procedurality'.

²² Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames* (2010).

²³ Earl R. Aguilera, *Theorizing Whiteness as a Proceduralized Ideology in Videogames Journal of Games Criticism Volume 5, Bonus Issue A, no. 1* (2014) <<http://www.gamescriticism.org>>.



not be understood as evidence that video games are necessarily more persuasive or politically effective than films.

Without audience-reception data, such an effect cannot be assumed. Instead, their distinctiveness lies in their representational and procedural capacity to position players within structured scenarios in which particular enemies, objectives, forms of violence, and solutions to conflict are repeatedly made operational. Through this process, war video games may contribute to the normalization of specific ways of imagining warfare and geopolitical conflict, while still allowing for varied interpretations, negotiations, or resistance among individual players.

In line with this perspective, ideologically charged video games may contribute to the normalization of particular political perceptions, as developers embed ideas through engaging gameplay that encourages players to see the world through specific ideological lenses²⁴. In this sense, video games have become an influential medium for circulating political representations and ideological frameworks through interactive forms—as skilled developers, much like Hollywood filmmakers, craft titles based on major global issues. The high level of interactivity, combined with embedded narratives, has led such products to be categorized as forms of interactive propaganda²⁵.

Militarism, Terrorism, and Enemy Construction in *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Series*

The releases of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* (2007) and *Modern Warfare 2* (2009) marked a turning point in gaming, sparking widespread debate over their intense depictions of modern conflict, civilian casualties, and morally ambiguous warfare. These game series adopt an entertainment-driven approach that arguably helped normalize interventionist and

securitization narratives among global audiences in the context of conflicts in the Middle East.

Video games that promote political agendas often generate tension and controversy, as players engage with strong ideological messages while simultaneously questioning the extent of their real-world influence²⁶. The *Modern Warfare* series immerses players within militaristic ideologies by encouraging them to adopt the ethos of soldiers operating within systems of sanctioned violence. Through highly visualized combat scenarios, players are positioned to participate in acts of warfare that are often brutal, disturbing, and emotionally charged.

The *Modern Warfare* series employs visuals and narratives heavily inspired by contemporary warfare—particularly the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan—to construct fictional stories that nevertheless reflect ideological perspectives on the conflict in the Middle East. The first *Modern Warfare* portrays a fictional Middle Eastern regime possessing and deploying weapons of mass destruction, presenting such weapons as unquestionably real prior to military intervention. In doing so, the game reproduces and retrospectively legitimizes pre-invasion Western narratives surrounding Iraq's alleged weapons programs, despite the absence of credible evidence in the historical record.



Figure 1. The Middle East is represented through a chaotic landscape populated by enemy figures often associated with terrorism, illustrating the game's

²⁴ Ali Hossein and others, 'Representation of Islam and Muslims' Image in Computer Games', *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 7.1 (2015), pp. 1–10.

²⁵ Ed Halter, 'Interactive Propaganda', *The Believer*, 1 September 2006 [accessed 21 October 2025].

²⁶ Phillip Hammond and Holger Pötzsch, *War Games, Militarism and the Subject of Play* (2021).



reliance on post-9/11 stereotypes (Author's personal archive).

Anthony Burch (2007) argues that the game presents a virtual version of the Iraq War as imagined by the Bush administration—featuring clear-cut villains, unquestionably righteous heroes, and persistent visual associations between racialized Middle Eastern identities and weapons of mass destruction²⁷.

In this way, *Modern Warfare* visualizes Iraq through a lens aligned with Western political leadership during the intervention, while reinforcing the idea that modern warfare is inherently “dirty” and requires morally ambiguous actions by an elite military operative.

The gameplay frequently casts Muslim characters as villains, often directing players to shoot Arab figures—an approach that, as Ismail argues, reinforces the idea that Muslim lives are treated as expendable. These representations rely on recurring orientalist stereotypes that portray Muslims and Middle Eastern societies as inherently violent, irrational, and closely associated with terrorism and instability²⁸.



Figure 2. The fictional character, Khaled Al-Asad, represented with stereotypical Middle Eastern features

²⁷ Anthony Burch, ‘Narrative Brilliance and Social Irrelevance in Call of Duty 4’, Destructoid, 3 December 2007 [accessed 21 October 2025].

²⁸ Seung Lee, “‘Just Shoot the Arab’: How Muslim Representation in Video Games Perpetuate the Terrorist Stereotypes”, Newsweek, 30 May 2016 <<https://www.newsweek.com/how-muslim-stereotypes-video-games-perpetuate-terrorist-stereotype-438593>> [accessed 16 August 2026].

such as a moustache, beard, turban, and military gear (Author's personal archive).

Video games occasionally allow players to assume the role of terrorists, potentially humanizing such characters and providing insight into their motives and ideological perspectives. However, mainstream media—including video games—often rely on stereotypes, portraying terrorists as irrational religious extremists instead of showing more complex perspectives. These simplified portrayals are widely shared and can shape how people around the world understand terrorism.

Hall argues that representation is not simply a reflection of reality, but a process through which meaning is produced and circulated through language, images, signs, and cultural practices. Within this process, difference often becomes central to the construction of identity, particularly through binary oppositions that distinguish between categories such as us and them civilized and uncivilized, or safe and threatening. Hall further explains that stereotyping reduces individuals or groups to a limited set of simplified and recognizable characteristics, thereby fixing difference and reinforcing unequal relations of power.

This representational structure is evident in *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* series, where Western military forces predominantly occupy the position of playable protagonists, protectors, and legitimate agents of violence. Through narrative perspective and gameplay, players are repeatedly positioned alongside American and British military forces, encouraging identification with their objectives and interpretations of global conflict.

In contrast, characters and spaces associated with the Middle East are frequently represented through instability, violence, terrorism, and political disorder. Such representations establish a binary distinction between the Western military subject and the threatening “Other,” reproducing what Šisler identifies as recurring cultural stereotypes in digital games that associate Arab



and Middle Eastern identities with hostility, conflict, and danger²⁹.

From Hall's perspective, the significance of these representations lies not merely in whether individual characters are portrayed positively or negatively, but in the broader system of meaning through which particular identities become intelligible. In both *Modern Warfare* titles, Western military intervention is frequently situated within narratives of protection, security, and crisis management, while opposing forces are primarily constructed as sources of instability that must be confronted or eliminated. This representational imbalance grants Western military actors greater narrative legitimacy and agency while restricting opposing groups to relatively narrow roles as enemies, insurgents, terrorists, or threats.

The glorification of militarism in the two *Modern Warfare* installments can therefore also be understood as part of this politics of representation. Military power is repeatedly associated with technological superiority, professionalism, sacrifice, and the restoration of order, while conflict-ridden environments outside the West are frequently depicted as spaces requiring military intervention³⁰.

Rather than simply presenting warfare as an objective reality, the games construct a particular meaning of military violence in which Western armed forces become associated with security and stability. Through Hall's framework, these recurring representational patterns contribute to the normalization of a worldview in which Western military authority is positioned as legitimate, while certain non-Western actors and spaces are constructed through difference, danger, and instability.

Medal of Honor and the Representation of the Afghanistan War

Medal of Honor is one of the longest-running war game franchises in the Western video game

industry. Its popularity can be considered comparable to that of the *Call of Duty* series, with both franchises emerging as major rivals in the war game genre since the early 2000s. Similar to the narrative innovations introduced by the *Call of Duty* series, *Medal of Honor* also underwent a significant transition from its earlier reputation for depicting World War II to portraying contemporary warfare. The 2010 installment of *Medal of Honor* adopted a markedly different approach from its predecessors by presenting a story set against the backdrop of military operations in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2002.

The publisher, Electronic Arts (EA), explicitly promoted the game as the first *Medal of Honor* title to leave the World War II and enter “war-torn Afghanistan”, presenting the conflict primarily through the perspective of elite American Tier 1 Operators. This shift was significant because, unlike the World War II settings of earlier installments, the War in Afghanistan was still an ongoing military conflict when the game was released in 2010.

The game was unusual because it transformed battles associated with Operation Enduring Freedom into playable historical events while the broader conflict itself was still taking place. Consequently, the game blurred the distinction between historical representation, contemporary military politics, and commercial entertainment³¹.



²⁹ Šisler, *Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games*.

³⁰ Nick Robinson and Marcus Schulzke, ‘Visualizing War? Towards a Visual Analysis of Videogames and Social Media’, *Perspectives on Politics*, 14.4 (2016), pp. 995–1010, doi:10.1017/S1537592716002887.

³¹ Laquana Cooke and Gaines S. Hubbell, ‘Working Out Memory with a Medal of Honor Complex’, *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 15.2 (2015) <<https://gamestudies.org/1502/articles/cookehubbell>> [accessed 16 August 2026].



Figure 3. The controversial portrayal of Taliban forces as playable characters (CNN).

The most prominent controversy concerned the multiplayer mode, which originally allowed players to fight either as Coalition forces or as the Taliban. This meant that players could not only fight against Taliban combatants, as commonly occurs within Western military games, but could also assume their position and virtually kill American and allied soldiers.

The decision generated criticism from military families, political officials, and sections of the military community. Following the controversy, EA changed the multiplayer faction's name from "Taliban" to the more generic "Opposing Force". Executive producer, Greg Goodrich, explained that the decision was made following concerns expressed by friends and families of fallen soldiers. Significantly, however, EA stated that this change did not fundamentally alter the gameplay, the primary alteration was the name assigned to the opposing faction³².

Representation should not simply be understood as the reflection of an already existing reality. Rather, meaning is produced through systems of representation involving language, images, signs, and discourse. In other words, media do not merely show objects, people, or events as they objectively exist, they participate in constructing the meanings through which those objects, people, and events become intelligible within a particular culture.

This approach is particularly relevant to *Medal of Honor* because the game does not simply reconstruct military operations in Afghanistan, it organizes those events through a particular representational structure. The American soldiers occupy the narrative center of the single-player campaign. They are individualized through names, dialogue, military identities, personal relationships, sacrifice, and emotional experiences.

Their actions are additionally legitimized through the game's emphasis on military professionalism and authenticity. EA worked with actual Tier 1 personnel as consultants, while the game incorporated military terminology, weaponry, procedures, and elements derived from official accounts of Operation Anaconda.

These elements foreground the experiences of American soldiers and construct a form of "official memory" in which players participate in the military culture represented by the game. They go further by arguing that this memory structure effectively glorifies aspects of Operation Enduring Freedom and what the game presents as the everyday work and virtues of the US military³³.

In contrast, Taliban combatants largely occupy the structural position of the enemy against whom the player's military competence is exercised. This distinction can be interpreted using Hall's discussion of difference and stereotyping. Hall argues that stereotyping works by reducing individuals or groups to a limited number of recognizable characteristics, exaggerating those characteristics, and fixing difference into seemingly stable categories.

This representational structure reinforces a clear distinction between the American military as the legitimate and heroic subject of the conflict and the Taliban as the threatening "Other". In this sense, *Medal of Honor* does not merely depict the War in Afghanistan, but also reproduces unequal relations of power through the way each side is represented.

War Memories through *Six Days in Fallujah*

In addition to war video games such as the *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* series and *Medal of Honor*, which are categorized as controversial war games, another military video game had already generated considerable debate over the representation of the War on Terror. *Six Days in Fallujah* was originally developed by Atomic Games, a video game company based in Texas,

³² Leigh Alexander, 'EA Removes Medal of Honor Taliban Name Out Of "Respect"', Game Developer, 1 October 2010 [accessed 8 August 2026].

³³ Cooke and Hubbell, 'Working Out Memory with a Medal of Honor Complex'.



United States, and announced in 2009 as a game based on the Second Battle of Fallujah in Iraq.



Figure 4. *Six Days in Fallujah* gameplay (Author's personal archive).

Rather than depicting a fictional military conflict, the game sought to reconstruct a real battle fought between United States forces and Iraqi insurgents in November 2004. Atomic Games promoted the project as an attempt to provide a realistic representation of combat based partly on the experiences of US Marines who had participated in the battle. However, the game immediately attracted criticism from anti-war groups, veterans, and members of the public, who questioned whether such a recent and controversial conflict could appropriately be transformed into interactive entertainment. In April 2009, Konami withdrew as the game's publisher following the public backlash, and the original project was eventually left unreleased³⁴. The game was later revived by Victura and Highwire Games and eventually released in Early Access in 2023.

Applying Hall's perspective to *Six Days in Fallujah* shifts the analysis from questions of historical accuracy toward the ways in which the game constructs and organizes meanings surrounding the Battle of Fallujah. The representation of American soldiers, Iraqi insurgents, civilians, and the urban environment is shaped by particular narrative, visual, and cultural codes that influence how the conflict is presented and understood. The analytical focus, therefore, is not simply on whether the game accurately

recreates the events in Fallujah, but on how its representational choices construct particular meanings of the battle and, more broadly, the Iraq War.

The positioning of the player is particularly significant in this process. Much of the combat experience positions the player within the perspective of US military personnel, requiring the player to enter buildings, identify potential threats, coordinate with fellow soldiers, and confront insurgents. As a consequence, Fallujah becomes understandable primarily through the operational logic of the American soldier. Houses, alleys, rooftops, streets, and religious buildings are not merely represented as elements of an Iraqi city but are transformed into spaces that must constantly be evaluated according to their potential military threat. This spatial construction is significant because representation also operates through the organization of places and environments.

Furthermore, virtual representations of Middle Eastern cities can function as "affective maps" through which Muslim territories become associated with particular feelings of danger, hostility, and uncertainty³⁵. A broader historical shift can also be observed in Western video games, where representations of the Middle East have gradually moved from exoticized imagery toward portrayals increasingly associated with militancy, armed conflict, danger, and, particularly in the post-9/11 context, Islamist terrorism³⁶.

In this sense, *Six Days in Fallujah* illustrates how war video games can extend beyond the representation of past conflicts and contribute to broader ways of understanding contemporary warfare. By repeatedly framing military intervention, hostile territories, and culturally marked enemies through particular visual, narrative, and interactive conventions, such games

³⁵ Giuseppe De Riso, 'Affect and Agency in Modern Warfare Videogames: Feeling the Muslim Enemy', *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*, no. 26 (November 2013), p. 143, doi:10.14198/raei.2013.26.11.

³⁶ Ahmed Al-Rawi, 'The Development of Video Game Representations of the Middle East', *Games and Culture*, 21.3 (2026), pp. 383–406, doi:10.1177/15554120241255425.

³⁴ Alaa Elasaar, 'This Video Game about the Iraq War Is an "Arab Murder Simulator," Critics Say', CNN, 9 October 2021 [accessed 8 August 2026].



may reinforce interpretations that legitimize or normalize similar forms of violence in ongoing conflicts. From Hall's perspective, these meanings are never fixed, yet their repeated circulation can make certain political and military narratives appear more familiar, acceptable, and even justifiable to players.

The Continuation of War on Terror Narratives in Contemporary Conflicts

The influence of the War on Terror on video games did not disappear with the decline of large-scale US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rather, its central narrative structures have been transformed and incorporated into broader representations of contemporary security threats³⁷. In this sense, the continuity of the War on Terror should not be understood simply as the continued appearance of terrorism in video games, but as the persistence of particular ways of representing security, military intervention, the Middle East, and the construction of political enemies.

Several elements demonstrate this continuity. War video games frequently position Western military forces as primary agents of security, construct armed intervention as a necessary response to instability, and represent particular territories as spaces of persistent danger. The binary distinction between security and threat that characterized post-9/11 political discourse therefore remains visible within contemporary war games. The relationship between military institutions and digital entertainment contributes to a broader military–entertainment complex in which warfare becomes normalized through popular and interactive culture³⁸.

However, this continuity does not mean that the War on Terror narrative has remained unchanged. While its earlier forms were closely associated with post-9/11 counterterrorism campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, similar

narratives of terrorism, security, and enemy construction have been adapted to contemporary geopolitical conflicts. Recent tensions surrounding the Israel–Palestine conflict, Iran–United States relations, and broader instability in the Middle East demonstrate how these frameworks continue to circulate within transnational media discourse. They are reproduced not only through political rhetoric and news media, but increasingly through digital entertainment, including contemporary war video games³⁹.

Recent titles illustrate how these representational structures can be detached from the immediate historical context of 9/11 while retaining elements of its security logic. *Six Days in Fallujah*, for example, reconstructs the 2004 Battle of Fallujah for contemporary players, transforming a controversial episode of the Iraq War into an interactive site of historical memory. Similarly, *Call of Duty: Black Ops 6* returns to the geopolitical context of the Gulf War and Saddam Hussein while combining historical events with fictional intelligence operations. Such games demonstrate that contemporary military gaming does not simply move beyond the War on Terror; it repeatedly revisits, reconstructs, and recontextualizes earlier Middle Eastern conflicts for new generations of players.

The significant transformation, therefore, lies in the expansion of the narrative rather than its disappearance. The earlier binary of the United States versus terrorist organizations has evolved into a broader discourse of permanent global insecurity. Terrorism becomes one element within a wider landscape involving geopolitical rivalry, intelligence operations, militias, unstable states, and transnational threats. Nevertheless, military force continues to be frequently presented as an intelligible and legitimate response to these conditions. In this respect, contemporary war games preserve important assumptions inherited

³⁷ Daniel Bos, 'Popular Geopolitics "beyond the Screen": Bringing Modern Warfare to the City', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39.1 (2020), pp. 94–113.

³⁸ Robinson, 'Videogames, Persuasion and the War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding the Military-Entertainment Complex?'

³⁹ Alfie Bown, 'How Video Games Are Fuelling the Rise of the Far Right', *The Guardian*, 12 March 2018 [accessed 24 May 2026].



from the *War on Terror* even when their narratives no longer explicitly refer to 9/11 or Al-Qaeda.

The interactive character of video games makes this continuity particularly significant. Players do not merely observe representations of military intervention but participate within systems that determine objectives, identify threats, establish permissible actions, and define conditions of success. Through these procedural structures, representations of security and conflict can become embedded within gameplay itself. The significance of contemporary war games therefore lies not simply in their depiction of geopolitical conflict, but in the way they allow players to perform particular roles within militarized interpretations of that conflict.

This does not mean that players automatically accept the political meanings presented by these games. Players may engage with military games for competition, entertainment, narrative immersion, or gameplay mechanics, and their interpretations can be dominant, negotiated, or oppositional. Nevertheless, the persistence of particular representations remains culturally significant. Repeated associations between the Middle East, Muslim identities, instability, and military violence can contribute to a broader cultural environment in which securitized interpretations of these groups and regions become familiar and normalized⁴⁰.

Thus, the contemporary legacy of the *War on Terror* in video games is characterized by both continuity and transformation. What continues is the construction of external threats, the privileging of Western military perspectives, the association of particular regions with insecurity, and the normalization of military intervention as a response to crisis. What has changed is the increasingly diffuse character of the enemy and the expansion of terrorism into a broader narrative of permanent geopolitical insecurity. Contemporary war video games therefore demonstrate how the representational logic

developed during the *War on Terror* can survive beyond its original historical context by adapting to new conflicts, adversaries, and forms of global insecurity.

Conclusion

Contemporary war video games demonstrate how narratives associated with the War on Terror continue to operate within changing geopolitical contexts. Games such as *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*, *Medal of Honor*, and *Six Days in Fallujah* reproduce militarized representations of security, terrorism, and geopolitical conflict through recurring distinctions between legitimate military forces and threatening enemies. These representations often simplify complex conflicts and reproduce familiar portrayals of Muslims, Arabs, and Middle Eastern spaces as closely associated with violence, instability, and security threats. The persistence of similar narrative structures in more recent military-themed games indicates that such representations have not disappeared, but have been adapted to contemporary geopolitical concerns.

The main contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing war video games as forms of interactive propaganda. Unlike film and other primarily audiovisual media, video games require players to participate within systems of rules, objectives, spatial environments, enemy classifications, and reward structures established by game design. Political and militaristic meanings are therefore communicated not only through narrative and visual representation, but also through the procedures that structure player action. From this perspective, interactive propaganda does not imply that players automatically accept the ideological messages embedded within games; rather, it describes how ideological assumptions can be incorporated into the very mechanisms through which players experience and interact with representations of war. This perspective contributes to broader discussions of digital militarism and the military–entertainment complex by emphasizing the

⁴⁰ Robinson, 'Videogames, Persuasion and the War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding the Military-Entertainment Complex?'



distinctive role of interactivity in contemporary representations of geopolitical conflict.

This study, however, is limited by its focus on textual, representational, and gameplay analysis of selected war video games and does not empirically examine how different players interpret or respond to these representations. Consequently, the study cannot determine whether exposure to militaristic narratives directly changes political attitudes or perceptions of Muslims, Arabs, or contemporary conflicts. Future research could therefore combine game analysis with interviews, surveys, reception studies, or experimental approaches to investigate how players negotiate, accept, or resist these ideological narratives. Such research would further clarify the relationship between interactive media, militarized popular culture, and public understandings of contemporary geopolitical conflict.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank their academic colleagues for the insightful discussions and contributions that supported the development of this manuscript. This study was conducted without any external financial support.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

The first author was responsible for the entire research process, including conceptualizing the study, designing the research, conducting the literature review, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting the findings, drafting the manuscript, revising it critically, and approving the final version for submission. The second and third authors served as academic supervisors, offering guidance, intellectual contributions, and critical feedback throughout all stages of the research—from initial conceptualization to the final revision—and also approved the manuscript for publication.

Funding Statement

The authors declare that this research did not receive any specific funding or financial support from public, commercial, or non-profit funding agencies.

Data Availability Statement

All data used in this study are publicly available. The video games analyzed can be accessed via the Steam platform. No restricted or confidential data were used,

and all sources have been appropriately cited in the manuscript.

Declaration of Interests Statement

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

AI Use Statement

[1] In preparing this manuscript, the author used Grammarly and DeepL Translator exclusively for language editing, such as improving grammar, clarity, and readability. All changes were thoroughly reviewed and confirmed by the author, who bears full responsibility for the final content.

[2] ChatGPT (OpenAI) was utilized as a language support tool during the initial stages of drafting and organizing the manuscript. All AI-assisted material was carefully reviewed, revised, and validated by the author, who remains fully responsible for the content, interpretation, and overall integrity of the work.

Additional Information

Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to: [adhitya.maheswara09@gmail.com]

[Adhitya M. Maheswara] [0000-0001-8262-5757](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8262-5757)

[Zeffry Alkatiri] [0000-0003-3636-0561](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3636-0561)

[Agus Setiawan] [0009-0002-5456-8809](https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5456-8809)

References

- Aarseth, Espen J., *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature Introduction: Ergodic Literature* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) <http://cv.uoc.edu/~04_999_01_u07/aarseth1.html>
- Aguilera, Earl R., *Theorizing Whiteness as a Proceduralized Ideology in Videogames* *Journal of Games Criticism* Volume 5, Bonus Issue A, no. 1 (2014) <<http://www.gamescriticism.org>>
- Alexander, Leigh, 'EA Removes Medal of Honor Taliban Name Out Of "Respect"', *Game Developer*, 1 October 2010 <<https://www.gamedeveloper.com/game-platforms/ea-removes-i-medal-of-honor-i-taliban-name-out-of-respect->> [accessed 13 August 2026]
- Al-Rawi, Ahmed, 'The Development of Video Game Representations of the Middle East', *Games and Culture*, 21.3 (2026), pp. 383–406, doi:10.1177/15554120241255425
- Bogost, Ian, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames* (2010)



- Bos, Daniel, 'Popular Geopolitics "beyond the Screen": Bringing Modern Warfare to the City', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39.1 (2020), pp. 94–113
- Bown, Alfie, 'How Video Games Are Fuelling the Rise of the Far Right', *The Guardian*, 12 March 2018 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/12/video-games-fuel-rise-far-right-violent-misogynist>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Burch, Anthony, 'Narrative Brilliance and Social Irrelevance in Call of Duty 4', *Destructoid*, 3 December 2007 <<https://www.destructoid.com/narrative-brilliance-and-social-irrelevance-in-call-of-duty-4/>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Cooke, Laquana, and Gaines S. Hubbell, 'Working Out Memory with a Medal of Honor Complex', *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 15.2 (2015) <<https://gamestudies.org/1502/articles/cookehubbell>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Elasaar, Alaa, 'This Video Game about the Iraq War Is an "Arab Murder Simulator," Critics Say', *CNN*, 9 October 2021 <<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/10/09/us/six-days-in-fallujah-iraq-video-game>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Galloway, Alexander R., *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (2006)
- Garland, Chad, 'Marines Turn to Modified Call of Duty 4 to Train New Sergeants', *Star Stripes*, 26 May 2026 <https://www.stripes.com/branches/marine_corps/2026-05-22/call-of-duty-4-marines-sergeants-school-21738481.html> [accessed 10 August 2026]
- Godfrey, Richard, 'The Politics of Consuming War: Video Games, the Military-Entertainment Complex and the Spectacle of Violence', *Journal of Marketing Management*, 38.7–8 (2021), pp. 661–82
- Hall, Stuart, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media and Identities Series)*, ed. by Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon, 2nd ed. (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013)
- Halter, Ed, 'Interactive Propaganda', *The Believer*, 1 September 2006 <<https://www.thebeliever.net/interactive-propaganda/>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Hammond, Phillip, and Holger Pötzsch, *War Games, Militarism and the Subject of Play* (2021)
- Hasan, Maruful, *ARAB REPRESENTATION IN VIDEO GAMES A Comparative Analysis of Call of Duty 4 Modern Warfare and Under Siege* (Tampere, 2026) <<https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/237326/HasanMaruful.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Hossein, Ali, and others, 'Representation of Islam and Muslims' Image in Computer Games', *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 7.1 (2015), pp. 1–10
- Kellner, Douglas, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern* (2020)
- Kent, Steve L., *The Ultimate History of Video Games. Volume 2. Nintendo, Sony, Microsoft, and the Billion-Dollar Battle to Shape Modern Gaming* (Crown, 2021)
- Lapeyrie, Louis, "'Call of Duty, Epic Fury": Why the White House Is Portraying the Iran War as a Video Game', *Illiberalism*, 30 March 2026 <<https://www.illiberalism.org/call-of-duty-epic-fury-why-the-white-house-is-portraying-the-iran-war-as-a-video-game/>> [accessed 10 August 2026]
- Lee, Seung, "'Just Shoot the Arab": How Muslim Representation in Video Games Perpetuate the Terrorist Stereotypes', *Newsweek*, 30 May 2016 <<https://www.newsweek.com/how-muslim-stereotypes-video-games-perpetuate-terrorist-stereotype-438593>> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Lenoir, Tim, and Henry Lowood, *Theaters of War: The Military-Entertainment Complex* (2005) <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110201550.427/html?srsltid=AfmBOorLh5uYhfckJfroZs7s_6TQXziIVXD8CWll_VpC8x0-SW-pCbRd> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Lyndall III, Frank, *The Effectiveness of Virtual Simulation as a Training Tool* (2020) <<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/nco->



- journal/images/2020/July/Virtual/Virtual%20Simulation.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2026]
- Maheswara, Adhitya M., Zeffry Alkatiri, and Agus Setiawan, 'SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES Interactive Propaganda and Jingoism Through Militaristic Video Games Post-9/11 Terrorist Attacks', *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, published online 17 July 2026, doi:10.47836/pjssh.34.4.05
- Maheswara, Adhitya Mohammad, and Nur Fatwa, 'Representation of Middle Eastern Islamic Locality in Video Games', *IBDA': Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya*, 19.1 (2021), pp. 141–51, doi:10.24090/ibda.v19i1.4427
- Mirrlees, Tanner, 'The Military-Entertainment Complex, US Imperialism And', in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (Springer International Publishing, 2019), pp. 1–17, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-91206-6_48-1
- Mun, Yelim, and others, 'Serious Gaming for Adaptive Decision Making of Military Personnel', *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, 2017-October (2017), pp. 1168–72, doi:10.1177/1541931213601776
- Payne, Matthew Thomas, *Playing War: Military Video Games After 9/11* (New York, 2016)
- , *The Militarization of Video Game Culture* (2025)
- Power, Marcus, 'Digitized Virtuosity: Video War Games and Post-9/11 Cyber-Deterrence', *Security Dialogue*, 38.2 (2007), pp. 271–88, doi:10.1177/0967010607078552
- Riso, Giuseppe De, 'Affect and Agency in Modern Warfare Videogames: Feeling the Muslim Enemy', *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*, no. 26 (November 2013), p. 143, doi:10.14198/raei.2013.26.11
- Robinson, Nick, 'Militarism and Opposition in the Living Room: The Case of Military Videogames', *Critical Studies on Security*, 4.3 (2016), pp. 255–75, doi:10.1080/21624887.2015.1130491
- , 'Videogames, Persuasion and the War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding the Military-Entertainment Complex?', *Political Studies*, 60.3 (2012), pp. 504–22, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2011.00923.x
- , and Marcus Schulzke, 'Visualizing War? Towards a Visual Analysis of Videogames and Social Media', *Perspectives on Politics*, 14.4 (2016), pp. 995–1010, doi:10.1017/S1537592716002887
- Sicart, Miguel, 'Against Procedurality', *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 11.3 (2011) <https://gamestudies.org/1103/articles/sicart_ap> [accessed 16 August 2026]
- Šisler, Vit, *Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games* (2008), doi:10.1177/1367549407088333
- Spokes, Matthew, 'The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Procedural Rhetoric and the Military-Entertainment Complex: Two Case Studies from the War on Terror', *Media, War & Conflict*, 13.2 (2020), pp. 153–69, doi:10.1177/1750635219828761
- Valeriano, Brandon, and Philip Habel, 'Who Are the Enemies? The Visual Framing of Enemies in Digital Games', *International Studies Review*, 18.3 (2016), pp. 462–86, doi:10.1093/isr/viv007
- Wolf, Mark J. P., *The Video Game Explosion: A History from PONG to Playstation and Beyond* (Greenwood Press, 2008)