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# **About This Game**

"Us And Them - Cold War" is a turn-based strategy game about cold war that you can play either as CIA or KGB.

Although it is a game of territorial expansion, the rivals do not attack their opponent using military force. Instead they are using an army of Spies, Assassins and Experts of various kinds (like economy, technology etc.) in order to destabilize the enemy's countries socially, economically, politically and finally to change their governments' ideology and attach them in their own political block.

The player will have to manage resources like money, oil and technology. He must place his units strategically on the map and create a series of spy networks waiting for the right moment to unleash a series of sabotages, assassinations, bribes, revolutions, arrests and interrogations of enemy units. Since most of the units are hidden to the enemy, the collection and interception of crucial information about the countries, the units' attributes and their whereabouts is essential for victory.

# Features:

Take advantage of great Cold War personalities like Che Guevara, Henry Kissinger, Mao Ze Dong, Fidel Castro the Pope and

# many many more!

Research and develop spy gadgets right out of James Bond's laboratories and some famous equipment of real life spies.

Take part in the historic Space Race

Use your nuclear arsenal to intimidate the opponent.

A series of special rules will allow you to deploy special strategies like the "Domino Effect" and the "Communist sandwich".

All units, as a representation of actual persons, have their own skills and attributes that make them unique.

The game features a series of random events that in the most part are real events of the cold war era.

Title: US and THEM Genre: Strategy Developer: Icehole Games Publisher: Strategy First

Release Date: 8 Mar, 2010

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English, German, Greek, Russian







#### Good concept.

But the end turn management of each... individual... freaking operative REALLY breaks my focus on the game. If there was a single menu for each major event.... "New spies detected", "Lost spies", "How your spies feel" then it would be FAR more manageable, faster paced, and can enjoy it SO much more. But it breaks my entire immersion experience.. This is a pretty terrible port/update for one reason: It's not really designed to be played on different-sized monitors. This means the text doesn't fit into the boxes it's supposed to fit into, and frequently bleeds out past the edges of the screen.

Since this is a spreadsheet-style strategy game, this makes the game pretty much unplayable.

Shame. Hopefully this will be fixed at some point.. Not really intuitive. A good idea that requires a cleaner V more intuitive interface and realization. Until they fix the interface, this game is not playable. It's like the images and templates are all formatted for 4:3, the text for 16:9.. This game definitely had potential and i was looking forward to some cloak and dagger strategy while using my knowledge of the history during this period to my advantage, but the shotty game mechanics really ruined it for me and others.

My review is simple, don't buy it. Since its release no other form of patches, upgrades, or communication has been posted. the 3.5 hours I have logged into the game were frustrating and included many resets.. \u201cUS and THEM\u201d is Icehole\u2019s attempt at developing a turn based strategy game based on the Cold War. You get to choose to play as either the Capitalist United States or Soviet Russia. Your goal is to deploy special agents to the various countries around the world and, through various acts of subterfuge, sway their governments to your particular political ideology(Communism if you\u2019re playing as Russia and Capitalism if you\u2019re playing as the US.) When your special agents are deployed, they can perform a wide range of nefarious acts ranging from carrying out assassinations, stealing technology, sabotaging a nation\u2019s economy and inciting revolts. Various historical \u201cheroes\u201d appear such as Che Guevara and Henry Kissinger and each have their own unique special abilities to help their respective sides. The player has to manage their financial income, vaguely defined \u201cresources\u201d and technological abilities. The game features a decent tech tree featuring tools that make your agents more effective, the space race and nuclear arms development(no, you don\u2019t get to actually use nukes at any point.) Grainy Cold War era propaganda videos add to the game\u2019s atmosphere and serve as both your introduction to and reward for a game well played. Altogether, it makes for a very intriguing concept if executed properly.

Unfortunately, it\u2019s in the execution where \u201cUS and THEM\u201d starts to fall apart. The game\u2019s major problems stem from the user interface and some design choices range from questionable to downright horrible. For starters, the world map that takes up more than half of the screen can be neither scrolled nor zoomed. In a game where your interaction heavily relies on clicking various nations, this becomes a problem. While larger countries like Canada, the US and Russia are easily accessible, smaller nations require pixel perfect accuracy to interact with. Try clicking on Cuba, Ireland or Hungary and you\u2019ll find yourself maniacally clicking shades and outlines and a handful of visible pixels in the area of these countries in vain hope that the game will acknowledge your actions. The developers attempted to reconcile this problem by including a drop down menu with every nation listed, for quick and easy navigation. Unfortunately, the ONLY way to place units into nations is by clicking the nation on the map.

The agents themselves pose problems as well. When you first try to get a grasp on the agents at your employ, you begin to realize that this game desperately, desperately needs the implementation of tool tips(desperately.) Agents are divided into 6 classes: Spies, Assassins and Political, Resource, Financial, Military and Tech Experts. They each perform duties that are pretty self explanatory, but for any inexperienced player it\u2019s nearly impossible to distinguish the classes from each other. When you view your roster of active agents, they\u2019re sorted by class. However, they\u2019re not labeled by name, but rather solely by character portrait. While you can go to the purchase units screen and see the class\u2019s name that each portrait represents, new players will need either amazing memories or a few hours of gameplay before they\u2019re positive which are which.

On that same roster screen, you have the ability to \u201ctrain\u201d any agents not in a foreign country. To do this, you click an oval to the right of the agent\u2019s name. So what happens when you click the oval? Does it get a check mark? Does it display the words \u201cin training?\u201d Nope. The oval simply changes color from orange to green. Or was it green to orange? Either way, you better remember which means \u201cin training\u201d because there is no other distinguishable way to

tell which agents at home are training. This again could all be fixed with a simple tool tip, but they simply don\u2019t exist. Even better, the game SHOULD automatically have inactive agents at home go into training rather than just consuming a salary every turn until you remember to do something with them.

The most glaring problem with the interface happens every time you click \u201cend turn.\u201d First, you\u2019re met with individual pop-up news boxes displaying all the actions your opponent took against nations under your control. That\u2019s fine. That\u2019s important information. You need to know what areas your opponent is targeting so you can adjust your strategy accordingly. What ISN\u2019T important information, however, also pops up. Bundled in between the important information are morale updates for every agent you have deployed in a foreign nation. These updates go one of two ways: 1) Your agent is having a \u201cgreat time\u201d in whatever luxurious nation you sent him or 2) Your agent protests having to be stuck in some miserable place. As you play the game longer, you naturally end up having more and more agents in the field. As things heat up, you can have upwards of 2-3 dozen agents working in foreign nations at any given time. A separate window will pop up that you HAVE to click through for each.and.every.one. Each.and.every.turn. It\u2019s beyond monotonous and incredibly unnecessary. To rub salt in the wound, you have the option of adjusting your \u201cnews\u201d settings.

Frustratingly, however, while you can turn off notifications for enemy actions, random events and the like, you can\u2019t do anything about the morale updates. Apparently your opponents actions are trivial and optional information, but reading the same more updates 20-30 times in a row is so absolutely vital that the option to turn them off isn\u2019t included.

There are other gripes to be had with \u201cUS and THEM\u201d, including but not limited to the inability to save your preferences(they reset to default upon EVERY reboot), an almost intentionally inaccurate RNG(you\u2019ll find yourself failing tasks that display a 75% + success rate far too often), nations randomly deciding to revolt on their own and failing(and potentially killing every agent you have in that nation in the process), horribly implemented \u201cfeatures\u201d(such as the ability to \u201cname\u201d your individual agents: Here, the game DOESN\u2019T turn off hotkey functions while you type, so a plethora of letters can\u2019t be used, such as \u201cC\u201d and \u201cT\u201d) and certain \u201cheroes\u201d being far, far too overpowered(for example, sending Che Guevara and a Political Expert into any enemy nation guarantees a revolt in your favor in 2-3 turns.) Even these complaints seem trivial when compared to the final stab in the eye.

The game simply lags far, far too often. When playing other strategy games, it\u2019s acceptable if the game hangs up momentarily from time to time. Games like Crusader Kings are processing actions of over a hundred Al\u2019s in real time, so it\u2019s to be expected. Games like Civilizations V have comparatively advanced graphics including waving flags, hammering workers and wavy oceans, so it\u2019s ok if it doesn\u2019t scroll as quickly as you\u2019d hope. However, when this game lags, it\u2019s absolutely unforgivable. The game occasionally lags during routine clicking during YOUR turn. While this is going on, the software has absolutely no other processing to do. There\u2019s only one AI and it\u2019s completely inactive during your turn. There are no immediate effects of placing a unit, clicking the word \u201ccancel\u201d or any other user operation that warrant any type of system hang up. The lag is reminiscent of what you see on an old computer system during a windows update and it happens often enough that I\u2019ve found myself wondering if the program is doing something on my computer in the background that I really don\u2019t want it doing. It\u2019s completely unacceptable.

The saddest part is that almost every one of these problems could be fixed with a decent patch. Don't expect one from this developer though(look at their website, this game came out in 2010 with no updates.) So save your money.

okay i would like to say that i really gave this game a fair chance but i am actually so annoyed that i have taken the time to write a review: here are my problems

- 1) This game does not work on the proper resolutions
- 2) There is no tutorial for this game, it constantly tells you to read the manual... which does not contain any additional information either. i tried to look up some youtube videos but i could find only one person explaining the game...
- 3) The chance system makes no sense... i had a 91% chance of succes to do something and yet it managed to fail 5 times in a row... (statistically the chances of that happening are really verry low: 0,0000059%) i have no problem playing a game based on statistics but if you make such a game... then make it properly.
- 4) There is no way to save your game.. you can only use autosaves
- 5) You cannot skip any of the movies (and they take a really long time)
- 6) When i first played this game a while ago it would not even start properly

In a nutshell... the topic of this game is pretty cool and i would understand peoples attraction to it.... however it is a waste of time.... you spend more time watching the movies then actually playing... and for most of the time you really have no idea what you are doing

. I got the game when it was on an 80% sale for \$2. At that price, it's worth it. Anymore... I dunno.

I didn't experience any glitches in the game, so I dunno what others are talking about.

However, the game still really isn't that great. The concept seems awesome, but it's a big letdown. The game is very simple and repetitive. You buy spies, assassins, and political advisors over and over to influence smaller countries before bigger countries to get the domino effect, and focus on countries that are rich in income and natural resources. The tech, resource, and military advisors are situation specific. Space race? Forget it. Nuke research? Forget it. Just zero them out and pour all your research into spy tech. Lose a spy from an assassination or revolution gone wrong? Buy two more to replace it. Heck, buy four more so you can train them in advance. Also, buy finance, tech, and resource advisors to boost your economy where it counts too.

What really stinks is the in game spreadsheet of all your spies doesn't hone in where agents are located if you click on their row. In other words, you have to remember where your hundreds of agents are on the board. If any go passive from completing a mission, but you forget about them, you'll be stuck paying upkeep for nothing for the rest of the game.

The game does give you a master plan button that automatically executes missions if they're successful within a certain probability, but still, you're just doing the same thing over and over again. The hardest part of the game is upkeep since agents cost \$15k per turn in the field. You'll buy a bunch of agents since you have so much to do, but then you won't be able to afford more towards the game's end where you're mopping countries up. I guess the capitalist campaign was easier since you didn't have to do as much of this though, and you already start with the Middle East which gives you a boatload of resources. As the commies, I just influenced Iran, Iraq, Saudis, then Argentina and Brazil at the same time that I mopped up the Middle East. Then I took Japan, Pakistan, Thailand, Norway, Finland, France, Mexico, Italy, Britain, South Africa, Indonesia, Australia, and Canada. The computer took Poland, Czechoslavkia, Hungary, Vietnam, Angola, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Laos from me, but who cares? I even got spontaneous revolts in Greece, Turkey, Algeria, Peru, Bolivia, Burma, Malaysia, Mozambique, and Chile.

I dunno... I beat the game by 1970 both as capitalists and communists. It just wasn't that much of a challenge even if it's harder to take Belgium than Britain. South Korea and West Germany are a pain in the butt to influence also. China's a pain in the butt to take as Capitalists, but you just have to surround it with capitalist countries and let the domino effect work out. The communists don't start with many lands, so it's all about picking them off one by one until the Soviet Union and China are all that's left standing. When the computer spies on your homeland too, all you have to do is assassinate its agents one by one every game month. That kills its treasury very fast since it has to train skilled spies over and over. Without spies, Canada stops flip flopping too since assassins can kill the Pope and Kissinger so Che can get down to business.

The computer tried to kill me with Chernobyl in 1967, but did that work? Nope. This would be GREAT as a multiplayer game, but there's no option.. Actually a very interesting concept allthough not perfectly executed (even considering it's based on a board game). I bet if there was a second game of the series it would be way better and vary enjoyable but considering it's a game from a Canadian publisher and Greek developers, yeah that's quite unlikely.

PS: If anyone knows the name of the movie that plays at the soviet victory, please tell me, I'm SO gonna watch it !!. Good game, but frustrating at times when countries rebel and join the opponent. VERY hard to get them back in the fold. Micromanaging is indispensable to remember which agents are where. Just finished 1 compaign in 7 hours. Great price\function function although not a big game, its not a casual game, lots of depth.. Although a cool concept, its UI is terrible, it cant run on native screen resolutions leaving some of the Ui offscreen!! Also although you can edit which messages you want to see, you still have 132503 popup messages all the time since if you close em you ll miss important pop ups. NOT recomended.. Many of these reviews are a mess and don't talk about the game itself. The game is very... interesting. I think its best to do pros and cons

#### Pros:

Good theme: The game really feels like a struggle against the enemy.

What is simulated right, is simulated right: The system does a great job of simulating lots of concepts from the war, such as the domino effect, the communist sandwhich, the iron curtain, etc. Also the heroes that are simulated decently well.

#### Cons:

Horrible UI: Probably one of the worst I can remember. Some things are so absent that you wonder if they even put any thought about it at all.

Confusing Concepts: Why doesn't weapons seem to help arrest attempts? What does the military score really mean? Why do the chance percentages seem to be weird? How do I even stop Che? Why would I ever intervene militarily? I've read the manual, and I still don't even understand half of the game.

...And then there's what's not simulated right at all: Or just plain absent. Why are my agents of the CIA being arrested, IN AMERICA? Why is Che an unstoppable monster? Why isn't there anyone else fighting for my block? I very much remember much of the cold war was spend secretly funding other revolutionary groups. In this one it seems like there's no element of any one else, just you and them, but it seems like you are just playing political leveraging, and less covert operations. Lots of stuff just feels wrong.

Random Access Memories: The random events just feel weird. The events work and make sense, but their random nature makes it really weird. Chernobyl had a meltdown in 1967. Its just weird.

Real, Real-time simulation: As nice as it is progressing one month at a time, it makes the game drag on and on and on. Its excruciating when there's nothing to do but press end turn.

Overall: Just wait for Twilight Struggle PC. It'll probably be better.. I really can't recommend this game as long as it is in this state. There are tons of bugs, I can't get a resolution higher than 1024x768 (WTF), the interface is pretty awful...I really like the concept of this game, however. It just suffers from very poor production values and poor programming. If this was made by a studio other than one dude in his basement during his spare time, it could truly be a spectacular game. However, as it is, do not waste your \$10.. Personally I have never been able to get this game to work on any computer I own. There is no real support and if you check the steam forums you'll see that several people have gotten nowhere trying to contact any company.

Wish I had my \$10 back.

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