



TERRORBULL GAMES

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BBC LABELS WAR ON TERROR BOARD GAME 'HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT'

Cambridge, UK, 15 December 2009 – **As the first decade of the new millennium draws to a close, an underground, satirical board game lampooning the 'war on terror' is emerging as one of the defining games – possibly one of the key cultural icons - of the 2000s.**

Individuals and publications alike have identified *War on Terror, the boardgame* - the first release from small, British publishers, TerrorBull Games – as uniquely important to the present era. Dr Nick Megoran, lecturer in geopolitics at Newcastle University, applauds the game as a “cleverly crafted satire” and uses it regularly “to provoke students to think critically about one of the most important issues of our time”. Recently, the second largest daily newspaper in Spain, El Mundo, claimed that *War on Terror* is “perhaps the best board game in the world and maybe of all time”¹.

Certainly, *War on Terror* has achieved a level of cultural recognition that is rare for any product, especially a board game. From appearing in TV sitcoms², to being branded an offensive weapon by the Kent police³; from being displayed in the Berlin Academy of Arts⁴, to drawing admiration and praise from respected journalists like John Pilger⁵.

Last night, historian Benjamin Woolley, speaking in the second programme of the three-part BBC documentary series 'Games Britannia', went one step further and hailed *War on Terror, the boardgame* as the culmination of over 2000 years of gaming history. At the same time, Woolley asserted that *War on Terror, the boardgame* is “unlike anything that has gone before” in exploring the “battles that are shaping our history” in a satirical way⁶.

The trio of friends behind the company responsible for *War on Terror, the boardgame* are continually amazed at the penetrating resonance their game has, especially considering TerrorBull Games' rocky start.

Started in 2005 to publish what was back then an elaborate private joke, the company was immediately vilified by the tabloid press for making a “sick” and “pro-terrorist” game. This made it difficult to find businesses willing to work with them and even attracted death threats. The games industry also didn't want to know, banning TerrorBull Games from several major international toy fairs.

Several years later at the end of the decade, things have dramatically turned around for the independent publishers. They have accumulated a fiercely loyal fan base around the world and have a second success on their hands: *Crunch – the game for utter bankers*, a satire on the financial crisis, was released earlier this year and has already sold over 5000 copies and also been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish and Estonian.

War on Terror meanwhile continues to draw accolades from across the spectrum. Amnesty International, a regular stockist, called the game “genius satire” and recently it was ranked #5 in The Independent's “50 Best Board Games” list⁷. Last but not least, the BBC have now recognised TerrorBull Games' contribution to games as historically important.

Co-inventor, Andrew Sheerin commented:

“I think people gradually got used to the idea that you can use games like any other medium to engage, ask questions, provoke thought and discussion... even about very difficult subjects. Why not?”

So what does the future bring? TerrorBull Games are now hard at work on game no.3. While the subject of the new game is strictly hush-hush, you can expect that it will get people talking, thinking and, most importantly, having fun.

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Editor's notes

- i. Hi-res images and press pack available at: www.waronterrortheboardgame.com/presspack/files.php
 - ii. Inventors, Andrew Sheerin and Andy Tompkins and illustrator Tom Morgan-Jones, are available for interview and comment: +44 (0)845 643 1513 or info@terrorbullgames.co.uk
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1. 'Desde el mas alla - Navidades paranormales' - El Mundo, 09/12/09
2. *War on Terror* has been part of the set of the 'IT Crowd' for two seasons and was played by Moss & Roy in S02E04
3. 'War on Terror board game seized by police' – Cambridge Evening News, 11/08/08
4. *War on Terror* was used as part of the 'Embedded Art' exhibition, looking at art in times of security and war – Jan 2009
5. "Through the fog of an often collusive and compliant media comes this extraordinary game, achieving, with its black humour, its own truth about the pernicious War on Terror" - John Pilger, June 2009
6. 'Games Britannia', episode 2, 'Monopolies and Mergers' – BBC4, 14/12/09
7. 'The 50 best board games' – The Independent, 07/11/09