

Discovery Channel Show Glorifies Warfare Technology: Discovering the Hidden Politics in “Future Weapons”

By [Gouthama Siddarthan](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

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The Discovery Channel has been doing a yeoman's service in visually capturing day-to-day activities of dangerous animals and rare birds in forests untouched by human footfalls, animals living in depths of oceans and animals facing extinction threat. It has been winning laurels for reconstructing the life of tribals and the tribals living in dwellings built on trees, piercing into the areas unknown to the world and untouched by the sunny rays.

(By the way, we can set aside the criticism made by certain media that the channel is stage-managing such rare scenes in their studios and sets.)

However, the magnificence of such rare depictions of animals and tribals cannot camouflage the channel's failure to speak about animal rights and analyse the reasons for the miseries of the tribals, political factors behind their woes and about the tribal rights.

Recently, I was stunned by its show “Future Weapons” which looked like a precursor to the future war. The programme just unfolded warfare technologies, a massive line-up of new weapons and a wonderful demonstration of their range and power of throwing humanity in a tailspin. Moreover, it beamed attractive talks by the hero who introduced the weapons and by the experts of the new weapon technology. All set in Tamil, the phantasmagoria cast a spell and stirred a psychological lure towards weapons.

Just hear the eloquent talk given by former Navy SEAL (United States Navy, Sea, Air and Land Forces) Mr. Mack Machowicz.

“Now begins the next phase of warfare. A deadly array of new weapons is coming towards you. There is no place for hiding. The deadly weapons ranging from revolving guns to the supersonic jet fighters are surging ahead, leaving you no place at all to hide. More gripping is the fact that you cannot anticipate from where the enemies attack you. If you think you can be safe either in bunkers or behind shielding metal sheets or behind walls, you will have to reconsider your complacency for you are falling straight under the eyes of the targeting Panzer Howitzer.

“Do you know how more ingenious and more lethal the weapons of tomorrow will be? There are highly skilled and dangerous warfare technologies that have started dominating the warfare of the 21st century. And there are missiles which could find and attack their targets on their own”.
([Discovery.com/Future Weapons](http://Discovery.com/Future_Weapons)).

For whom are all these? I was left confused.

“These future weapons have an unimaginable range, power and precision. They would spy on the enemy’s hide-outs with an alacrity and spotting them in a flash, smash them beyond recognition. The weapons would remain undefeatable in any war “

Thus flow the glories of the new warfare technology.

Who is the so-called enemy?

While it is obvious that anybody can buy these sublime weapons, it goes without saying that only those who cannot afford such weapons are the enemies. Hence, it boils down to the fact that the Discovery Channel has set up a weapons’ market.

Feeling restive, I began searching for more details about these weapons in the Discovery Channel Website called Future Weapons. There a gigantic mine of weaponry kept staring in my very face.

In the website <http://dsc.discovery.com/tv/future-weapons/weapons/zone2/>, the technological expertise and advancement of the ‘Future Weapons’ are shown in greater detail with the help of a special software of the Discovery Channel. And, with the help of a virtual screen designed by X-Ray-like accessories, the in-and-outs of weapons and missiles are shown and the data of the specific computer technology used in the making of the ‘future weapons’ , their finesse and intricacies are all being laid bare on the small screen. The length, breadth, width, height, weight and appearance of these weapons and missiles from different angles and in different postures are all colourfully and meticulously displayed.

The dissolving scenes in quick succession teach the viewers the ways and means of handling the weapons and instill in us a sense of satisfaction as if we have learnt it very well and have become experts in weaponry. When we see with our own eyes the heroic, fabulous deeds of the ‘future weapons’ we are given the choice of selecting a suitable site(!) for us – the Land or Water or Space – and there the actions of the future weapons would take place ‘so magnificently’ right in front of your eyes.

These are no shadow fights or the likes of video games or computer games. They represent the real wars that are taking place around us. It is a psychological fantasy whereby your soul is fixed in the ‘warfare’ and the battle-zones become our own and not of someone else; they happen not somewhere else, but in our very midst.

Let the Internet allow anything to happen. We have no qualms. But, television is something which has become part and parcel of ordinary people’s lives and hence screening such deadly programmes on the small screen is highly condemnable.

From that day on, I was gripped by the frenzy of a thirst for rare matters.

Everyone must have his or her own childhood driven crazy by frenetic ideas about gun. So, quite naturally, I too was driven by zeal to watch and read the programme on the Discovery Channel every week. It is very evident that this programme has been designed in such a way that it attracts the viewers’ attention at once and also stirs the minds of those who have just elementary and superficial knowledge of war.

The show gives a detailed account of advantages and benefits of the technical expertise of these deadly weapons and they also highlight at length the differences and similarities

between the weapons of the present and the weapons of the future.

To drive home the destructive power of a particular weapon, its capability of withstanding destructive onslaughts and its power of causing colossal damage, scenes of targets lying in a shambles are shown. Instead of offering mere numbers and data, the host and makers of future weapons present life-like demonstrations and explain at length the physics of attacking strategies or withstanding capacities of the weapons.

The host's attractive speech casts a spell on viewers.

Modern warfare is about creeping up on your target unseen. To be invincible, it's good to be invisible. The notorious predator, the silent aerial assassin, has taken possession of the skies.

You just watch what happens when the formidable Barrett M107 rifle, loaded with new military-grade munitions, outsnipes the sniper from a distance of nearly two miles.

In a breathtaking display of firepower, this episode of 'Future Weapons' reveals the most powerful conventional weapons yet devised. Capable of unleashing a million rounds a minute, Metal Storm is the most destructive automatic gun ever created. The Thermobaric bomb is designed to use a lethal combination of flame, pressure and suffocation. This state-of-the-art bomb reaches deep into caves, creating an enormous bone-crushing blast, which is quickly followed by a firestorm that leaves nothing but charred landscape in its wake. The Multiple Rocket Launch System fires off a barrage of missiles against its target with such ferocity and speed that it guarantees total destruction. At the place where stood an army before, only shadows stay now.

As former chief of Navy, Mr. Mack Machowicz is quite familiar with the seamy side of the sneaky technology. He dwells at length on the weapons to be used in the wars to come. More sinister and subtle than anything that's been seen before, these weapons can destroy entire cities in the blink of an eye. The EMP bomb paralyzes a city with an invisible electromagnetic pulse, sending civilization back into the dark ages.

The LRAD weapon strikes down human targets with low frequency noise and powerful lasers take the place of bombs and bullets, when a laser mounted in a plane incinerates other planes and ground targets at the speed of light. The future has set in! (Discovery.com/Future Weapons)

Is the future so gruesome and horrible? Ninety-nine per cent of those who view the Discovery Channel programmes are children and teenagers.

People like Ms. Radhika Koomarasami, the Special Representative of U.N. Assembly, who have been constantly raising their voices against the practice of turning children into militants and engaging them in warfare, should spell out their views on this programme.

A debate is raging in international courts and research forums on criminal laws about how and under what circumstances individuals can be allowed to use weapons. Internet is flooded with articles about practical laws and norms on the use of deadly weapons like gun. International scholars are analyzing the practical differences between those using guns and those not using them.

Martin Killas, J. Vankestern and M. Rindlisbacher of the U.S. have traveled in 21 countries

and collected evidences and published a long research (“Guns, violence, crime and suicide in 21 countries”). The origin of gun-related violence, murders and suicide lies in those wielding guns, says their research in a condemnatory tone.

Every country, in order to safeguard its sovereignty, uses guns as a fundamental right to suppress any attempt to interfere in its governance, any civil strife and any resurrectionist warfare. However, it so happens sometimes that in times of political turmoil, the nations are forced to forego this fundamental right.

Countries which violate the international rules on arms and those defeated in wars are subjected to severe arms embargo. However, branding such controls and punitive actions as invalid, those countries keep sticking to their guns, saying that they operate within the limits of their sovereignty.

There are several civil rights movements in America which propagate the idea that possession of arms like gun is their civil right. But outfits like National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) support laws on control of arms. Furthermore, the NAACP filed a suit against gun manufacturers in 2003.

Their case is that the manufacturing organisations put on sale hand-guns and thereby disturb public peace and have an ulterior motive of instigating violence in black-dominated belts. Moreover, ‘special guns’ are put up for sale on Saturdays with attractive offers and ads as if they were consumer goods; the motive behind it is cruel, says the then chief of NAACP, Mr.Kweisi Mfume.

By targeting black-dominated areas for sales, these arms manufactures and salesmen instil in the minds of the downtrodden people an image of sleeper cell. A person who turns into a sleeper cell must have been affected by the society which has been moulded by government and its power. In his psyche there must be raging an anger at the society and at the government. Cashing in on the burning ire and turning him into an agent, these arms merchants carry on their business with finesse.

“By allowing people to buy arms as they wish and use them as per their whims and fancies, we have created an environment of violence and hatred”, said critically the Blacks’ leader Martin Luther King.

But Buddhist leader Dalai Lama said, “when a person advances towards you, wielding a gun, you had better shoot back with your gun”. (In May, 2001, when he was in Portland on a three-day visit, interacting with the students of a high school, he made the observation. However, he qualified his statement, saying that you should shoot back, aiming at just legs and hands and other limbs in such a way that life is not harmed. But most of the media did not heed this part of his statement.<http://www.snopes.com/politics/guns/>We can find the host of the programme, “Future Weapons”, Mr.Mack Machowicz’s identification of himself as a heroic representative of Zen.

I don’t know how this programme will be useful to ordinary people. Must it not have targeted the audience consisting of rulers of countries, war lieutenants and war consultants? The organisers of the programme may justify it, saying that it is aimed at creating an awareness of weapons. But actually what it does is to strike fear and anxiety about future among viewers.It is not a sci-fi film, just to be watched and forgotten; rather a long celluloid

document unfolding arms in blood and flesh so realistically drawn up that it sinks into the psyche of the audience.

Moreover, by explaining the relevance of that technology to the day-to-day circumstances, they pave the way for the audience to use the weapons and their other instruments in their day-to-day life. The audience have a feeling that they have gained an exclusive entry into the arms labs conducted by the Government and the private sector. They get to know even the names of the makers of the future arms technology of the U.S.

A lady, who was one of the designers of such future weapons, says, "I am a Vietnamese refugee and I came out after having experienced the cruelties of war." She adds with a note of pride that she has designed the weapon as part of her long-term goal in life.

World arts and literature and life documents usually say that those who put behind themselves the memories of war do progress towards peace. But this lady's statement sounds contrary. Hers is a voice that does not sound like that of someone who has come out of the wheels of war weapons, but that of a diplomatic sales representative of war arms.

Yamaguchi, who survived the Hiroshima nuclear bombing, has actively functioned as a protester of the lethal politics of nuclear science to the end. In an interview, he said, "Had bombs been flung at Hiroshima once in 20 minutes till now, how many bombs would have been thrown? Now, the world has that mind-boggling number of bombs. What does it mean? They are operating, with government support, in the world of destructive science through nuclear reactors, radiation agriculture etc. We have to construct a science for peace. I have witnessed nuclear bombing twice in my life, living as a remnant of the disasters. Now, there should not be a third such catastrophe; it is my fervent appeal"

The Discovery Channel show is only a technique of pushing human rights groups carrying on a moral fight, scattered all over the world, to the next stage.

That only big nations can wage a war slows down the weapon trade. Moreover, there are other obstacles such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, human rights conventions against war, Nuremberg trials, Geneva conference model laws, international criminal courts etc. So, they are of no use. In order to expand the trade business, Third World countries' small groups should be targeted.

In the Discovery Channel show, one can find the image of Vietnamese refugee deliberately manipulated as an undercurrent. One should mull over the subtle political dimensions inbuilt here. Anti-Americanism is an omnipresent image all over the world. Hence, they deftly load a metaphor of weaponry on the exploding skill of an affected person.

Not only that, they also present a demonstration of how to target the terrorists hiding in countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan. That shows not only a mercantile attitude oriented towards sales, but also the cruel face of the imperialism, which always describes the terrorists as Muslims.

Thus this programme has to be seen from several perspectives.

Just watch the way the weapon named MOAB is introduced.

“The MOAB, mother of atom bombs, weighs 18,000 kg. If we have it in our possession, that itself will be a threat to the enemies. Before the Iraq war, it was tested. At the mere trial explosion, Iraq suffered a setback and Saddam Qusseini declined”.

In fact, this is not the voice of the programme host, but that of the American imperialism.

Piecing together all the chapters of this serial programme, still more issues may come to the fore.

The following are the 13 chapters:

1.No Place To Hide 2.Stealth 3.Maximum Impact 4.Future Shock 5.Smart Weapons 6.The Power of Fear . The Second Series had thirteen episodes - 1. Search and Destroy 2. The Protectors 3. No Escape 4. Mission Invisible 5.Front Line 6.First Strike 7.Predators 8.Top Guns 9.Smart Destroyers 10. Close Quarter Combat 11. Immediate Action 12.Future Combat 13.Massive Attack.

The programme unfolds not in the usual matter-of-fact or documentary style. It creates a life-like appearance in order to sensationalize the multi-faceted dimensions of the future arms trade. By showing battlefields at every available opportunity, it puts forward a rare vision, providing an answer to the riddles about war hidden in man’s mind and to his search for arms. The compere explains which of the everyday happenings in man’s life becomes precious and costly.

It is a serial telecast every week. Each episode throws lights on a variety of weapons in all their dimensions, bringing into focus the defensive and offensive technologies. The scenes delving deep into the qualities of weapons unfold before us, loaded with well-chosen poetic words and with a language bubbling with emotions and intuitions, grabbing the viewers’ riveting attention.

The scene that shows the charred landscape in the bone-shattering and cave-piercing destruction wrought by the deadly weapon called Thermobaric which mixes in right proportions flames, pressure and gasping.....

“Superb”

“Excellent”

“Marvellous”

“The precise bouncing of a hunting animal on its prey”

“The unmatched friend of this century”

The show “Future Weapons” thus shines with this kind of attractive language used in the encomiums showered on it.

This smashes to the smithereens the dream of world citizens about a warless world and generation.

Browsing the Internet with an eye for the global media’s perspective of this programme, I

found most of the journals have projected the programme host as a superman. A few journals have elevated him to the status of a Zen philosopher with a modern outlook.

“An extremist-like quality is seen in this man who insists on being called Mack (Mecovis), that is, a Zen master. However, he does hardly match the image of an usual Zen priest. He says such a customary general image of Zen is per se wrong. He narrates the story of Rinzai, one of the best Zen masters, who always wields a stick in order to jolt his students out of their reverie ” writes the Police journal.

Man Institute has conducted an elaborate research in this regard. It says: “We have to realize on several occasions that as human beings, we smash something and destroy it. The activities such as smashing something, exploding something, and setting fire to it have been resorted to by macho men from time immemorial. Burning of ants through microscope, playing the game of accident through car toys and hammer and smashing a building and adopting an aerial technology.... In all these things, man has been exhibiting an exciting destructive urge.

However, this should not be misconstrued as a theory that we are all murderers. We should not be tempted to think that we are all incendiary beings or having such destructive qualities.

Have you known Mack who, pointing out to certain targets, reveals the action-oriented power of some new weapons and arsenals which are still in an experimental stage?

I believe that reading of Mack will stir the essence of libidinal urges. If everyman is bubbling with masculinity like Mack, the world would have been far more elevated.

Supermen like Richard Machowicz are essential to provide equilibrium to life or the world. Congrats, Mack!” (Tim: Man Institute. Com)

“The Discovery Channel show, ‘Future Weapons’, puts on display the future technology”, says M. Clauper in his elaborate article in the Web magazine Associatedcontent.com.

It is not clear whether any other media have raised a voice of protest against the show. My web search has not brought to my notice anything on the count.

It is mysterious why forward thinkers, media theorists, crusaders against war, peace activists, human rights champions and art and literary personalities have been turning a Nelson’s eye to the subtle politics running as an undercurrent of this show. Probably, do country cousins like me miss the superb quality of this show?

Gouthama Siddarthan is a noted columnist, short-story writer, essayist and a micro-political critic in Tamil, who is a reputed name in the Tamil neo-literary circle. He can be reached at unnatham@gmail.com

Translated by: Maharathi

Web links used as resources for this article:

<http://dsc.discovery.com/tv/future-weapons>

<http://ManInstitute.com>

<http://Associatedcontent.com>

<http://policemag.com>

<http://www.discovery.com/tv-shows/other-shows/videos/other-shows-future-weapons-videos.htm>]

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