

= The Arsenal of Freedom =

" The Arsenal of Freedom " is the 21st episode of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : The Next Generation , originally aired on April 11 , 1988 , in broadcast syndication . The teleplay was written by Richard Manning and Hans Beimler , based on a story by Beimler . The episode was directed by Les Landau .

Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures of the crew of the Starfleet starship Enterprise @-@ D. In this episode , the crew investigates the disappearance of the USS Drake . They travel to the planet Minos , where an away team and the ship are separately attacked by the demonstration of an automated weapons system .

Maurice Hurley saw the episode as commentary on the sale of F @-@ 14 Tomcats to Iran . He intended to have Doctor Beverly Crusher (Gates McFadden) reveal her feelings for Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) in this episode , but Gene Roddenberry had it changed . Dan Curry created the model of the drone seen in this episode using a pantyhose container and a shampoo bottle . The opinions of critics were mixed , but singled out the appearance of Vincent Schiavelli for praise .

= = Plot = =

The Enterprise has been sent to the Lorenze Cluster to search for the USS Drake after it vanished while surveying the planet Minos . When the ship reaches the planet , they are met by a pre @-@ recorded holographic figure (Vincent Schiavelli) advertising " The Arsenal of Freedom " , and invites the crew to the surface . Commander William Riker (Jonathan Frakes) , Lt. Data (Brent Spiner) and Lt. Tasha Yar (Denise Crosby) beam down to the surface to investigate . Riker separates from the other two , and is met by the Drake 's captain who asks what ship he is from . Riker realizes that it is a trick when told that the only life signs detected are the away team and tells the " captain " that he is from the Lollipop and it 's a " good ship " . After being further questioned about the Lollipop 's armament , the " captain " disappears , revealing a floating sentry probe that fires a stasis field around Riker before Data and Yar can destroy it .

The stasis field around Riker prevents the Enterprise from beaming him up , so Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) and Doctor Beverly Crusher (Gates McFadden) travel to the surface , and Lt. Geordi La Forge (LeVar Burton) is left in command of the Enterprise . Picard and Crusher meet with the away team , and as they attempt to free Riker , another sentry probe appears and fires on them . Picard and Crusher are separated from Data and Yar and fall into a hole , where Crusher is severely injured . Meanwhile , Data and Yar discover that the second probe is more powerful than the first and requires their combined power to destroy it . While Picard attempts to tend to Crusher 's injuries , Data manages to release Riker from the stasis field . Riker , Yar and Data are again attacked , with this new probe requiring all three of them to combine their phaser power to destroy it . Data deduces that each probe learns from the tactics used to destroy the prior probes and adapts to become stronger , and that the next probe might be unbeatable .

Meanwhile , the Enterprise is attacked by a cloaked ship . Each subsequent attack gets stronger and straining the ship 's shields . Chief Engineer Logan (Vyto Ruginis) comes up to the bridge to demand that the Enterprise flee the planet and attempts to take command under the pretext that he has the higher rank . La Forge correctly states that the only people who can relieve him of command are Picard and Riker , and he commands the chief to go back to Engineering and resume his duties . Soon the attacks threaten to disable the shields , so a resigned appearing La Forge asks Logan to return to the bridge . The smug Logan assumes that he will be given command , however , La Forge orders a saucer separation , leaving Logan in charge of the escaping saucer , while La Forge and the remaining bridge crew will helm the battle bridge of the star @-@ drive section as it returns to Minos .

Picard discovers a computer terminal . He activates it , causing a hologram of the salesman to appear which explains that they are witnessing a demonstration of the " Echo @-@ Papa 607 " , a system of intelligent weapons which are able to upgrade in response to any enemy threat . Picard

surmises that the Minosians and the Drake were destroyed by the weapon . He unsuccessfully attempts to coerce the hologram to end the demonstration . Data is able to find the hole leading to Picard 's location , and jumps down to try to assist . While examining the computer , Data concludes that while he could set the sentries to target their own power source , the explosion would probably take out the whole area , including the away @-@ team . Picard attempts to negotiate again with the salesman , eventually agreeing to buy the weapons system . Satisfied , the salesman disappears , and the computer system shuts down . Meanwhile , La Forge uses the planet 's atmosphere to reveal the location of the space @-@ born probe and destroys it . The away team return to the star @-@ drive section and set course to rendezvous with the saucer section , still under La Forge 's command , as Picard remarks that he left him with the ship intact and would like it returned in the same condition .

= = Production = =

Story editor Maurice Hurley saw the plot of " The Arsenal of Freedom " as commentary on the sale of American Grumman F @-@ 14 Tomcats to Iran taken to the " ultimate conclusion " . In 1974 , Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi purchased 80 Tomcats and missiles for \$ 2 billion . That transaction prevented Grumman from going into bankruptcy as the United States Congress was no longer funding the project . Iran was the only country other than the United States to use the planes .

The original story had Picard injured , and Crusher revealing her feelings for him while trying to save him from dying . However the show 's creator Gene Roddenberry did not want to do a love story and so it was changed . Les Landau made the suggestion to switch around the roles of Picard and Crusher in order to take them out of their elements . Landau had been an assistant director on staff , and became the first member of the production team to direct an episode with " The Arsenal of Freedom " .

The model of the Echo Papa 607 drone was created by Dan Curry , from a L 'eggs pantyhose container and a shampoo bottle . He hand animated the model instead of using motion control photography , using his years of Tai Chi training to keep the movements fluid . In order to blend into the background , he wore a pair of green tights whilst he was manually moving the model on screen .

= = Reception = =

" The Arsenal of Freedom " first aired in broadcast syndication on April 11 , 1988 . It received a 10 @.@ 4 rating , meaning that it was seen by 10 @.@ 4 percent of all households . This was the first new episode for three weeks , the previous episode , " Heart of Glory " receiving a rating of 10 @.@ 7 .

Several reviewers re @-@ watched the episode after the end of the series . Keith DeCandido reviewed the episode for Tor.com in July 2011 . He highlighted the appearance of Vincent Schiavelli , saying that he " totally owns every scene he ? s in " . He thought that the situation which left La Forge in charge of the Enterprise was " horribly contrived " and said " Picard doesn ? t even give a good excuse for going down to the planet beyond the script calling for it " . He gave the episode a score of six out of ten , summing up that it was a " fun , enjoyable , diverting episode " . Zack Handlen reviewed the episode in May 2010 for The A.V. Club . He criticised the episode , saying that there " are all kinds of problems , the biggest being that the episode doesn 't really have a third act , but the moral superiority of the crew is on full display , and it 's frustrating . " He summed up the moral story played out in this episode , saying that " On TOS , Kirk , Spock , and McCoy would 've hashed out the appeal of an unbeatable weapon as well as its drawbacks . Here , we 're all supposed to know that violence begets violence , and that 's it . " He gave the episode a grade of C + .

James Hunt watched the episode for the website Den of Geek in March 2013 . He recalled it being a good episode , but found it wasn 't as good on the re @-@ watch for the review . He thought that the plot seemed reminiscent of the plot of a Philip K. Dick novel , but thought that the away team

sequences on the planet were a little boring with the exception of Data jumping down into the pit where Picard and Crusher were . Michelle Erica Green reviewed the episode for the website TrekNation in August 2007 . She thought that the scenario with La Forge was the most forced but described Vincent Schiavelli as a " treat " . She said that the cast otherwise didn 't get to stretch much , but was pleased with the visuals where the star @-@ drive section enters the planet 's atmosphere .