

ARE WE FAKING IT AGAIN?

That's what the Iranians say. They say the US took video and superimposed audio to it with the menacing threat, "I am coming to you. You will explode after a few minutes," but that the threat (and the claimed throwing of small boxes in front of the US Navy ships) didn't happen.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard accused the United States on Wednesday of fabricating video showing armed Iranian speedboats confronting United States Navy warships in the Persian Gulf over the weekend, according to a report carried by the semi-official Fars news agency as well as state-run television.

"Images released by the U.S. Department of Defense about the navy vessels, the archive, and sounds on it are fabricated," an unnamed Revolutionary Guard official said, according to Fars. The news agency has close links to the Revolutionary Guard. It was the first time Iran had commented on a video the Pentagon released Tuesday.

The US, for its part, admits that it matched the audio to the video, but claims that both are authentic.

The video and audio were recorded separately and then matched, Naval and Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

Now, frankly, I'm not surprised the Iranians were playing chicken with the US Navy. With all the war-mongering Dick has been doing, you'd have to imagine they'd be testing our defenses in the Straits of Hormuz. And maybe the Iranians even radioed something to the US—though the audio here sounds more like some frat boys playing with helium than a real threat.

But what I want to know is why—authentic or not—the military released video that looks so fake? Particularly when you watch both the YouTube and the DefenseLink version, which blacks out at the end when they play the claimed threat. And with the guy on the radio repeating the threat—somehow he can understand what helium-man says right away, with no "huh" or "what"—and no continuation of the tape to hear what came next.

See, whether or not the video is authentic, I just don't think it particularly helps the US make the case that the Iranians threatened the US. Better to leave the video alone with the bright blue boat playing along in the ships' wake and the horns blaring than to have something as farcical sounding as helium-man issuing odd threats. We already have damaged our credibility on these issues—and particularly on Iran. We don't need helium-man to damage it further.