

PENTAGON: MAYBE THAT BORAT VOICE CAME FROM A UFO

I suggested yesterday that the voice issuing threats to the US Navy during the confrontation between three US ships and five motorboats—"I am coming to you. You will explode after a few minutes"—sounded like a frat boy playing with helium. But LS had a better suggestion: Borat. And now the Pentagon is getting into the spirit of the absurdist fun by admitting that the audio it released along with its video of the confrontation with the Iranian motorboats may not have come from those boats after all.

The audio includes a heavily accented voice warning in English that the Navy warships would explode. However, the recording carries no ambient noise – the sounds of a motor, the sea or wind – that would be expected if the broadcast had been made from one of the five small boats that sped around the three-ship American convoy.

Pentagon officials said they could not rule out that the broadcast might have come from shore, or from another ship nearby, although it might have come from one of the five fast boats with a high-quality radio system.

Oh yeah. Those fancy Iranian motorboats have such high-quality radio systems that they filter out the ambient noise of an outboard motor working at full speed while the tape taken from the US ship, taken at least partially inside the bridge, itself has the noise of a ship at sea.

Mike Nizza, who seems to be having more fun with this story than I am, offers a reader's explanation:

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All ships at sea use a common UHF frequency, Channel 16, also known as "bridge-to bridge" radio. Over here, near the U.S., and throughout the Mediterranean, Ch. 16 is used pretty professionally, i.e., chatter is limited to shiphandling issues, identifying yourself, telling other ships what your intentions are to avoid mishaps, etc.

But over in the Gulf, Ch. 16 is like a bad CB radio. Everybody and their brother is on it; chattering away; hurling racial slurs, usually involving Filipinos (lots of Filipinos work in the area); curses involving your mother; 1970's music broadcast in the wee hours (nothing odder than hearing The Carpenters 50 miles off the coast of Iran at 4 a.m.)

On Ch. 16, esp. in that section of the Gulf, slurs/threats/chatter/etc. is commonplace. So my first thought was that the "explode" comment might not have even come from one of the Iranian craft, but some loser monitoring the events at a shore facility.

So now we have Borat on a bad CB sitting on the shore of the Persian Gulf doing play-by-play of a confrontation between the US and Iran at a time of high tension. This gets more and more fun every day.

I'll repeat what I said yesterday. Do you think maybe it wasn't a good idea to add in the Borat audio to the video and release it, particularly if you weren't absolutely certain that Borat was sitting in one of those Iranian boats? Do you think maybe you owe more to America's already-damaged credibility than to enact such a parody of bad neocon propaganda?