

AMERICA'S \$1 TRILLION TARGET BARGE

The NYT has a story about a mock US aircraft carrier Iran is building, its sources say, so Iran can blow it up for the propaganda value.

Iran is building a nonworking mock-up of an American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier that United States officials say may be intended to be blown up for propaganda value.

This has set off chatter about how weird and dumb Iran is for building this giant toy boat, which US sources call the Target Barge.

But pretty soon after I started reading the article I found myself applying the phrases in it to America's F-35 program which, in many ways, is an even bigger propaganda prop. See how it looks when you swap out Iran's barge for the F-35?

Intelligence officials do not believe that the US is capable of building an actual F-35.

"Based on our observations, this is not a functioning plane; it's a large spending program built to look like an plane," said Cmdr. Jason Salata, a spokesman for the Navy's Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, across the Persian Gulf from Lockheed. "We're not sure what the US hopes to gain by building this. If it is a big propaganda piece, to what end?"

[snip]

"It is not surprising that American military forces might use a variety of tactics – including military deception tactics – to strategically communicate and possibly demonstrate their resolve in air power," said a Chinese official who has closely followed the

construction of the F-35.

[snip]

[T]he Pentagon has taken no steps to cloak from prying Chinese hackers what it is building in pork-laden building sites across several countries. "The system is often too opaque to understand who hatched this idea, and whether it was endorsed at the highest levels," said Karim Sadjadpour, an American expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

See what I mean?

Opacity of purpose.

Failure to provide adequate security.

Probable impossibility to bring to completion.

Abundant propaganda.

I'm not all that sure what distinguishes the F-35 except the cost: Surely Iran hasn't spent the equivalent of a trillion dollars – which is what we'll spend on the F-35 when it's all said and done – to build its fake boat.

So which country is crazier: Iran, for building a fake boat, or the US for funding a never-ending jet program?