

JOHN MCCAIN, SPACE MONKEYS AND MODEL PLANES

What is it about Iran that brings out the most inhumane and racist side of John McCain? As if his “Bomb, Bomb, Bomb, Bomb, Bomb Iran” in 2007 while he was running for president wasn’t sick enough, he has topped himself today. After Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said today “I am ready to be the first human to be sent to space by Iranian scientists”, McCain just couldn’t refrain from sending out this “joke” tweet:

So Ahmadinejad wants to be first Iranian in space – wasn’t he just there last week? “Iran launches monkey into space” news.yahoo.com/iran-launches-...

– John McCain (@SenJohnMcCain) February 4, 2013

That’s just so funny, at least to people who believe that Iranians are monkeys who now and then need to be bombed to put them back into their place.

And it’s not like there wasn’t sufficient material from which McCain could have made an appropriate joke. Iran suffered quite a bit of embarrassment over its space monkey launch last week when it was noticed that photos of two different monkeys had been used in Iranian news releases on the launch. This prompted some to speculate that the monkey had died during the flight and a stand-in was brought in for the after-mission photos. AP obtained an explanation from Iran (the different photos can be seen in [this Telegraph article](#)):

Mohammad Ebrahimi told the The Associated Press that the monkey who traveled in space was named “Pishgam,” the Farsi word for pioneer. Initially,

the Iranian media said "Pishgam" was the rocket that took him on a 20-minute journey into space on Monday.

Ebrahimi said one set of pictures showed an archive photo of one of the alternate monkeys. He said three to five monkeys are simultaneously tested for such a flight and two or three are chosen for the launch. Finally, the one that is best suited for the mission and isn't stressed is chosen for the voyage.

/snip/

"I say this with certainty that the monkey is in good health and the space flight didn't have any physical effect on Pishgam," Ebrahimi said. "Some of the photos released by one of news agencies were not related to the time of flight. They were archive photos of the monkeys being prepared for the launch."

If McCain had wanted to make a joke about Ahmadinejad's offer, it seems that he could have come out with a suggestion that Iran provide good before and after pictures to make sure the proper person gets on the rocket.

In somewhat related Iranian technology news, Iran also has announced development of a new fighter jet, the Qaher-313. From PressTV:

Iran has unveiled a new indigenous fighter jet, which is said to be similar to a US-made warplane.

Qaher-313 (Conqueror-313) advanced military aircraft was put on display during a ceremony on Saturday in the presence of Commander of Iran's Army Major General Ataollah Salehi, Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi and Commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) Brigadier General Hassan Shah-Safi on the occasion of the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations commemorating

the victory of 1979 Islamic Revolution.

This news report has a short snippet of video (at about 20 seconds into the video) purported to be the Qaher-313 in flight:

[youtube]<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok2aMgfBdCs>[/youtube]

However, there appear to be folks in defense aviation who have their doubts about the jet and the video:

Iran has unveiled what it says is a new stealth fighter called the Qaher-313. Perhaps, this is just me as a product of the 1980s, but this aircraft looks a lot like an old GI Joe toy.

The Iranians would have you believe this is some sort of highly advanced stealth strike aircraft that they've already designed, built and flown. But this, frankly speaking, looks unimpressive—and if I had to put money down on it, I say it's a mock-up. I suppose it could be some sort of test bed, but I'm highly skeptical.

/snip/

The cockpit, if you take a closer look, doesn't really look like it's finished. If anything, from inside the cockpit, this jet's instrument panel looks like it was lifted from a newish-model general aviation aircraft. There appears to be no provisions for a head-up display—which is typically found in most modern fighter aircraft except the Lockheed Martin F-35, which has a helmet-mounted display. The canopy seems to be made of poor quality Plexiglas with some really bad optical qualities. Check out the distortion looking through the transparency below.

I wouldn't look for the Qaher-313 to be

affecting the balance of air power in the Persian Gulf region any time soon. Especially since it might not even be able to fly.