

## WITH THE 'UFO' UNVEILING

JUST days after the Olympics opening ceremony was buzzed by a UFO that turned out to be the Goodyear blimp, conspiracy theorists have had another bubble burst by the US Navy. Two months ago Americans in Washington went slightly (and justifiably) apoplectic when a military truck was spotted – and repeatedly photographed – transporting what looked like a downed flying saucer. “They’ve caught one!”, “It’s true!”, “I’m a peacock!” screamed the UFOlogists, sure they finally had proof alien spacecraft were not only real, but had been captured. Despite the fact the military were apparently transporting the UFO on the back of a semi-trailer without even a tarpaulin to hide it, social media erupted, news services across America – then the world – ran pics of the thing

and speculation ran rife. Until the navy admitted it was their newest toy, a military drone. Yesterday the Patuxent Naval Air Station invited the local press to see the saucer-shaped X-47B unmanned drone built by aircraft makers Northrop Grumman as “the first of a new wave of unmanned military aircraft”. It’s a plane that has “already excited the interested of a lot of folks” a navy spokesman said in a masterpiece of understatement. But they’re about to become commonplace. “This is what you’ll see at any navy or Marine Corps base within the next decade,” US Navy Rear Admiral Randolph Mahr said. So, no aliens just yet, just a remote-controlled \$800 million fighter drone capable of carrying more than two tonnes of “payload”. Which is scarier?

Sydney Morning Herald 2 August 2012

John Palazzi

Sydney Post-Atlas