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## Skunk Works Mailing List

# Re: Faith versus evidence

Date: Tue, 24 Aug 1999 05:31:05 -0400  
Subject: Re: Faith versus evidence  
From: "James P. Stevenson"

>>Larry Smith wrote:

>>

>>> But, with all respect, I'm really not sure where you sit with

>>> respect to the following:

>>>

>>> 1. You don't believe in physics.

Jim Stevenson responded:

>>

>>Not true. I do believe in physics.

>>

>>> 2. You don't believe that the theory of stealth technology is valid physics.

>>

>>I believe the THEORY is valid.

>>

>>> 3. You don't believe that the F-117A represents a valid application

>>> of the theory of stealth technology.

>>

>>This is where the faith comes in. Some on this list have accepted, as a  
>>matter of faith (it has to be unless they have run tests themselves that  
>>are consistent with good science) that the F-117 works.

>

>

> Which I know some of us have. And I know that there are persons on  
> this list who have had exposure to the data that Jim beleives is  
> being "hidden behind classification".  
> And of those who have seen the data, or the models, all think that  
> "stealth works".

>

> Of course, a great deal of the data that Jim seems to think is  
> classified is in the open literature where anyone can find it.

The re-publication of a test that does not stand up to the rigors of the  
scientific method does not make it valid.

>>

>>I have always reserved the right to say "show me." Prove to me that it  
>>works. The military hides behind classification. Who can argue?

>

> At this point I doubt that there is anything that the AF or anyone

> else can show Jim that will put his argument to rest. Jim's faith is  
> in that it doesn't work, that the military is lying to him, etc.  
> There does not seem to be anything to sway him in that direction, not  
> even good physics.

I don't have faith that it does not work. That is not a matter of faith.  
I reserve judgment until I see some evidence. Statements that it works  
are not evidence.

> Jim, in short, is much like a die-hard UFO fanatic.

On the contrary, a UFO fanatic is one who asserts that something is true  
without proof. I view asserters that these stealth aircraft will work  
as advertised just as I do the UFO fanatic: give me the evidence, not  
just your assertions.

>  
>>  
>>The Air Force had four prototypes, the two YF-22s and the two YF-23s.  
>>Neither was even tested for stealth. Now we have the Air Force wanting  
>>to go into production on the F-22 before any stealth testing, much less  
>>a complete test of stealth, is done.

>  
> I don't see how you can make this statement after your bold assertion  
> that stealth test data is hidden behind classification. You say that  
> neither was "tested for stealth", while there are a few technicians  
> at the Helendale, Tejon Ranch, Groom, and Holloman ranges that would  
> disagree with you.

I would be most interested in getting the name of ANYONE who can tell me  
that the YF-22 and YF-23 were tested for stealth. That would also be a  
complete surprise to the ATF program manager.

> In addition there are a number of expenditures in  
> the F-22 program that would strongly indicate that it was indeed RCS  
> tested in flight during the ATF fly-off.

Again, I am open to change, provided the evidence is there. But the  
program manager of the YF-22 and YF-23 said there was no testing of  
either of these two airplanes and the current deputy program manager for  
the F-22 agreed. But, hey, you may know something they don't. That is  
the beauty of evidence.

>  
>  
>>As far as the F-117, it appears that two were shot up in our latest  
>>adventure. One did not make it home. That is a loss rate far in excess  
>>of the F-16. Furthermore, the F-117s had jammer escort. So, just exactly  
>>how stealthy am I suppose to believe the F-117 is?  
>>

>  
> 1. Comparing an F-117 to an F-16 is silly. They do not operate in the  
> same threat environment, perform similar missions, or sue similar  
> tactics. You might as well be comparing the F-117 to a KC-10.  
> 2. Appearances can be deceiving. As far as anyone who bothered to  
> look into that rumor can tell, there was no other F-117 damaged by  
> enemy fire.

They flew in the same environment and at the same altitudes.

Jim Stevenson

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