



## Gift Horses & Pocketed Putts

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“Over the past nine months, undocumented communication devices, including cellular radios, have also been found in some batteries from multiple Chinese suppliers,” according to a Reuters story. The “rogue communication devices” were *not* listed in the documentation.

No one should be surprised. Though China pretends to be all sweetness and light, a former director of the U.S. National Security Agency offers the basic truth: “We know that China believes there is value in placing at least some elements of our core infrastructure at risk of destruction or disruption.”

It is in this context that I place the recent discussion of

Qatar’s offered Air Force One replacement. President Donald Trump has been clear regarding the Persian Gulf state’s seemingly generous offer. He’s for it. Why pay for something when you can have it for free?

“If they give you a putt, you pick it up and walk to the next hole and say ‘thank you very much.’”

But Air Force One, which carries the United States president across the country and around the world, is more than an ordinary plane. It’s a military device.

And outsourcing military devices to other countries is a dubious activity at best. The dangers are readily understandable. “Beware of Qatarians bearing gifts”; the horse mentioned in *The Aenid*, presented to Troy—is the classic case.

Why trust the state of Qatar?

Just as “U.S. energy officials are reassessing the risk posed by Chinese-made devices that play a critical role in renewable energy infrastructure after unexplained communication equipment was found inside some of them,” so too should Trump’s team reassess the gift horse from the Middle East.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.