

To the Editor January 7, 2020

### **Whataboutism**

At this critical time in the history of our country it is very important that fellow citizens and especially our children, learn how to filter and reason out what they see and hear from an array of digital sources. Disinformation, misinformation, and deep fake videos are now prevalent. This is my humble attempt to help with that.

Whataboutism is a an attempt to discredit an opposing argument by changing the subject to something or someone else. This is done without directly refuting the facts in evidence or disproving clearly well thought out visual video, audible verbal, or articulate well written language. This technique is particularly associated with the weak substance of Cold War **Soviet and Russian propaganda**. It has been adopted by politicians and other countries, but has been brought back into style lately by the Trump administration.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whataboutism>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/whataboutism-origin-meaning>

Based on my own personal experience, this technique also involves throwing out into the ether many theories, suspicions, speculation, unsubstantiated beliefs, and the constant mention of long ago disproven supposed scandals. This type of devious and cynical *fact-free* argument style is pretty much the raison d'être of the Fox "News" television channel. The basic idea behind this being that if you repeat a lie often enough, people will tend to believe it. This is especially true if you call it something like Fair and Balanced.

*If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will even come to believe it yourself.* Joseph Goebbels, German Nazi politician and Minister of Propaganda

<https://www.azquotes.com/quote/1419276>

The thing that Goebbels didn't mention, is that this doesn't work if people know exactly what it is you are doing.

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