

WHAT ABOUT WHATABOUTISM?

By Joseph Whalen (Monday, November 28, 2016)

Decades ago Soviet Officials behind the Iron Curtain hated to be criticized for their harsh treatment of their citizens, *or anything else*. They were able to suppress and jail most so-called “Dissidents” within their own borders and territories of influence, at least they tried. We in “the west” imagined intellectuals, people devoted to their religions, critics of the *status quo*, being shipped off to gulags in Siberia, many were, if they survived interrogation. At least part of that was based in reality, some was probably not as imagined, with some worse and some not so bad.

Beyond the Iron Curtain, the Soviets had to employ a different tactic. When faced with criticism, they fought back by ignoring what was said and responded with its own criticism of the critics for some “offense”. It did not matter to these accusers as to whether the criticisms were *real; imagined or perceived* based on incomplete information; or a *total fabrication* that no person in their right mind could possibly believe. The more outrageous or absurd, the better. When faced with **substantive** responses to the baseless criticism, the rhetoric became louder and more absurd. So, if “the west” (which referred to Europe, North America, Australia, the Sub-Continent, parts of South America, and some African nations) said anything the Soviet leadership did not like they *sought to deflect* criticism and *redirect the focus* of discourse. The goal was to *confuse the issues* and *plant contradictions* in the dialogue as well as the minds of the critics, this may be termed “*obfuscation*”. In the face of a direct question, the response would be “But, what about ___?” That is “whataboutism” in a nutshell! Never fear, “whataboutism” did not disappear along with the U.S.S.R., it is alive and well and has immigrated to the United States. Ask 3 million illegal voters!