The War on Fact

Nobody asked but …

You may have noticed that my alter ego, Verbal Vol, is running a series on Logic Fallacies in his biweekly column here at EVC. That coverage is pretty much on the abstract view of logic fallacy, but here is a devastating example of how our government uses the Straw Man fallacy to do real damage. From Robert Parry's article, *America's Staggering Hypocrisy*, is this:

> *The U.S. casualty figure [in the purported Syrian poison gas incident]*
> *of "1,429" always was regarded as a wild exaggeration, since doctors*
> *on the scene cited a much lower death toll of a few hundred, and the*
> *Wall Street Journal later reported that the strangely precise number [a*
> *sub-straw man known as specious accuracy] was ascertained by the*
> *CIA applying facial recognition software to images of dead bodies*
> *posted on YouTube and then subtracting duplicates and those in*
> *bloody shrouds.*
> *The problems with this "methodology" were obvious, since there was*
> *no way to know the dates when the YouTube videos were taken and*
> *the absence of bloody shrouds did not prove that the cause of death*
> *was poison gas.*

The reason this is a Straw Man is that the fabricator controls all the data from which it is fashioning the falsehood. It cannot be verified. At least we see that they are becoming somewhat more sophisticated about the packaging of the distortions — perhaps lessons learned from that huge Straw Man, the WMD in Iraq.

Please read Parry's whole article, as it contains much more instructive material. Hat tip to Sheldon Richman.

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