

9-1-2000

# Trends. Truth and Narrative: The Case of Ballistic Missile Defense

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## Recommended Citation

Editor (2000) "Trends. Truth and Narrative: The Case of Ballistic Missile Defense," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 8 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol9/iss8/6>

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International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Title: Trends. Truth and Narrative: The Case of Ballistic Missile Defense

Author: Editor

Volume: 9

Issue: 8

Date: 2000-09-01

Keywords: Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Missile Defense

The controversy over various United States Government (USG) initiatives to develop and deploy a ballistic missile defense revolves around Issues of truth versus Issues of narrative. The former includes efforts to parse and interpret the text of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; the context of the text; the intent of negotiators and the political authorities they represented during the time the Treaty was negotiated, signed, and ratified; and any other information bearing on the Treaty as conceived and perceived in 1972. The latter includes efforts to develop storylines concerning the Treaty that--if accepted by significant political authorities affected by it--do not unduly impede desired political actions. The term "accepted" might include some notion of truth, but this inclusion is secondary. Of primary import are whatever aspects of the story mitigate against undue impediments to specific political actions.

It is in the context of narrative that multiple USG interpretations of the 1972 Treaty related to desired ballistic missile defense are being debated. One interpretation is that the most minimal steps like the awarding of contracts to build parts of a missile defense would breach the Treaty. Another is that the actual pouring of concrete for the situation of a radar site would breach the Treaty. Yet another is that the concrete foundation for the radar site would have to be complete to constitute a breach of the Treaty.

Thus, it appears that the ballistic missile defense controversy as to the 1972 Treaty involves politics in its truest form. It is an exercise in propaganda properly denoted as propagating a faith or a truth founded on faith. Both are postmodern versions of living in Truth that while inauthentic eschew relativism for a truth based on contemporary pragmatism. (See Horner, E.A. (1995). The meeting of two narratives. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 23, 9-19; Myers, S.L. (August 30, 2000). Washington split deepens in debate over missile plan. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, A12; Parry, A. (1997). Why we tell stories: The narrative construction of reality. *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 27, 118-127; Ryan, M-L. (1998). Taking risks with the truth: The value of narrativity in the representation of human reality. *Narrative Inquiry*, 8, 419-427; Tuckett, A. (1998). "Bending the truth": Professionals' narratives about lying and deception in nursing practice. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 35, 292-302.) (Keywords: Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Missile Defense.)