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Trends. Logic Limitations and Missile Defense

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Logic is almost often lauded as a sine qua non tool of truth-finding. This is the case even though psychotics with delusions, sophists enamored by dialectic, propagandists and demagogues seeking to captivate a crowd, and prosecutors seeking the laurels of conviction through making a case are frequently characterized as quite logical. The limitations of logic in truth-finding can also be identified in public discourse on national missile defense.

As one example, United States (US) proponents of missile defense during the Cold War asserted that--in a world with two superpowers--defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) was necessary in the event that deterrence failed. The massive military resources and might concentrated within the Soviet Union were the linchpins of missile defense need. Now in a world with only one superpower, US proponents assert that trends toward the wide dispersal of ICBMs among adversaries--cumulatively representing fewer resources and might than those previously possessed by the Soviet Union--necessitate a missile defense.

As another example, opponents of missile defense assert that such a defense would serve to reinforce US tendencies towards isolationism. Other opponents state that a missile defense would aid and abet US unilateral moves to assert its power globally without due consideration for the concerns of others. Proponents assert that a missile defense would ward off isolationism in that failing to deploy a missile defense would render the US unable to protect its allies.

As a third example, opponents of missile defense assert that it would lead to a renewed arms race as adversaries became energized to beat the defense. Proponents, however, assert that not deploying a missile defense would elicit such a race as adversaries became energized to exploit the absence of a defense.

It is a plain fact that underlying the public discourse on missile defense are degrees of cronyism, corruption, nepotism, ideological advocacy, self-promotion, organizational turf battles, quests for self-enrichment, senses of entitlement, feelings of righteousness, outright evil, psychodynamic conflict, and assorted conscious and unconscious intrapsychic scripts acted out by proponents and opponents alike. All these factors employ logic and, as well, fuel a proliferation of logic subversion. (See Dao, J., & Schmitt, E. (May 18, 2001). 25 years later, Rumsfeld's dream is alive again. *The New York Times*, p. A1; A10; Fischer, E.F. (1999). Cultural logic and Maya identity: Rethinking constructivism and essentialism. *Current Anthropology*, 40, 473-499; Gordon, C., & Arian, A. (2001). Threat and decision-making. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45, 196-215; Horvath, A. (1998). Tricking into the position of the outcast: A case study in the emergence and effects of communist power. *Political Psychology*, 19, 331-347; Weinberger, O. (1995). Argumentation in law and politics. *Communication and Cognition*, 28, 37-54.) (Keywords: Defense, Logic, Missiles, Public Discourse.)