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The Illogic of Logic in Security Analysis: An Example from Serbia

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Many security analysts employ the term logical as denoting something that makes sense and connoting something good or bad. But both denotation and connotation may have good and bad implications.

The "making sense" of the denotation may refer to either or both of the observer and the observed. Thus something that doesn't make sense to the observer may be illogical to the observer but logical to the observed. The latter (the observed) may even find the conclusion of "illogical" of the observer to be quite logical from the observed's standpoint. Of course at this point the observed has become the observer of the observer who has become the observed. At this point the security analyst may wish that things would stop making sense and/or find that they do.

The "good" connotation of logic also suggests that something makes sense and that that something that makes sense is good. However, from the last paragraph we can see that making sense may be anything but good. The "bad" connotation" of logic suggests that something doesn't make sense and that not making sense is bad. But if making sense is assumed to be good but is not, not making sense that is assumed to be bad also may not be bad. For example, not making sense of something that doesn't make sense could be good not bad.

Although logic as forms of argument--e.g., syllogisms, modus ponens--may be easily recognized as such, they may not be easily recognized as…well, logic. This becomes apparent when analyzing a statement cited in The New York Times by Christopher Hi ll, the United States Ambassador to Macedonia. He is cited as stating, "…there is absolutely no justification from anyone's point of view, including even the Serb internal logic, of continuing security operations in Kosovo." Sure, this might just be diplomatese or boilerplate. But from the observed, the Serbs, as observer, such operations might make plenty of sense-- killing more enemies, frightening and deterring more real and potential adversaries, setting the stage for "compromises" with intranational and international entities that de facto are anything but, dissuading Serbs from thinking about significant economic problems, and so on.

One does not have to be a radical social constructionist who believes that there is no non-constructed reality to believe that ascriptions of logic may denote and connote more about the ascriber than the target of the ascription. Whether through paeans to authorities, tradition, consensus, empiricist and rationalist functionalism, and other possible foundations of logic, the illogic of logic is that that logic's only demonstrable logic is its own self-contradiction…through illogic--or is that non-logic, alogic, or anti-logic? (See Duran, C. (1997). An analysis of formal and informal fallacies using bilogic. Journal of Melanie Klein and Object Relations, 15, 329-341; Keene, G.B. (1995). The psychology-logic overlap. Behavior and Philosophy, 23, 57-62; Morris, A.K., & Sloutsky, V.M. (1998). Understanding of logical necessity: Developmental antecedents and cognitive consequences. Child Development, 69, 721-741; Nonratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty: The logic of illogic. (June 5, 1998). IBPP, 4(22); U.S. envoy Issues a stern warning on Kosovo. (September 27, 1998). The New York Times, p. 10; van den Daele, L. (1996). Cognitive development of the binary operations for standard and nonstandard logic. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 83, 1271-1288.) (Keywords: Kosovo, Logic, Security, Serbia.)