

premise is that “citizens should have the right of self-defense.” An opposing debater might object that it is the responsibility of government rather than the individual to ensure safety in the community. When individuals take public safety into their own hands, the result is vigilantism. Sometimes debaters construct a defective deductive reasoning chain such that the premises, even if true, simply do not lead to the conclusion. Consider the following example: “Nuclear weapons threaten world peace. The United States possesses nuclear weapons. The United States should unilaterally disarm and dismantle its nuclear weapons.” This claim (that the United States should disarm) does not logically follow from the premises. Even if the premises are true, there is no logical justification for unilateral disarmament. Russia and numerous other nations also possess nuclear weapons. Although it may be true that nuclear weapons threaten world peace, an even more threatening situation could be created if only nations such as Russia, North Korea, and Iran possessed these weapons.

INDUCTIVE REASONING

A second widely used logical pattern is *induction*—meaning a type of reasoning in which previous experience or observation is used to support a claim. Using induction, a debater might argue as follows: “The government of Iran is a threat to world peace and security. Consider their behavior over the past decades: They used hostage-taking as official government policy in the 1980s when they took 63 Americans captive and held most of them for two years. They have been a state-sponsor of terrorist groups, providing funding for Hezbollah and Hamas. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said that the nation of Israel is a ‘fake regime’ that ‘should be wiped off the map.’ Now Iran is openly attempting to obtain nuclear weapon capability. These actions have been typical of Iranian behavior over the past decades.” In this example of induction, the claim is that Iran is a threat to world peace and security. The data shows numerous instances of behavior threatening to world peace. The warrant says that the examples are typical (they are the norm rather than the exception).

There are four primary tests for inductive reasoning:

- Are the examples accurately described?
- Was the number of examples sufficient?
- Are there counter-examples?
- Are the examples or the counter-examples more representative?

A debater responding to the claim that “Iran is a threat to world peace and security” might argue that the examples are inaccurately described. Consider, for example, the claim that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad threatened to “wipe Israel off the