

## More on Tautology

During a recent UN debate on how to define terrorism, the following statements appeared:

Britain's ambassador: "For the most part, terrorism is terrorism... What looks smells and kills like terrorism is terrorism."

Holland's ambassador: "Ground Zero [in New York] has made it painfully clear that terrorism in its true manifestation defines itself."

How would the above apply in the form of an argument?

Now, consider the following definition of terrorism, issued from the U.S. State Department:

"The term terrorism means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."

Is the above a tautology?

All quotations are from Harry Levins, "Terrorism Still Eludes Definition," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 7, 2002.