



Who's The Chicken?

Defeatist Attacks, Dangerous Duties and Doing Your Part

➤ The Chickenhawk Attack

Opponents of the mission in Iraq often confront pro-victory students with some variation of the question, "If you support the war in Iraq, then why haven't you signed up to fight there?" This is a difficult question for most to answer, and nearly every response is framed by the defeatist as merely an excuse for cowardice and hypocrisy. In the wake of a successful chickenhawk attack, it is then implied that the only valid civilian position on the Iraq issue is one in favor of withdrawal.

➤ Reject the Errant Premise

The underlying assertion of the chickenhawk attack is that a person must be willing to put themselves at risk if they support a public action which is dangerous. This is simply untrue and must be utterly refuted. The continuing existence of our society requires that people take on many dangerous duties. Our civilization requires inherently dangerous tasks like crime fighting, fire fighting, search and rescue, undercover intelligence gathering, interstate highway construction, handling of radioactive materials, and many others, but each of us could not possibly take part in them all though they are worthy of public support. For example, each of us, by supporting the apprehension of criminals, asks police officers to risk their lives to prevent theft, rape and murder, though not all of us are members of the police force. This is right and acceptable.

➤ Responsible Citizenship

Millions of people in this country volunteer for these dangerous duties in many varied careers, including the military, to keep us safe. Responsible citizens support these heroes and civic organizations designed to help them in their mission. The National Sheriff's Association, for example, does a great deal to support law enforcement personnel in their mission, and thousands of concerned citizens are members nationwide. Those who act to undermine these volunteers during the pursuit of their mission not only show contempt for their sacrifices but undermine society as well. It is the mission of the police to fight crime and to arbitrarily insist that police officers be

pulled out of crime-ridden areas not only prevents them from accomplishing the task they volunteered for but creates a dangerous breakdown in our social fabric.

➤ The Shadow of the Past

The inherent flaws in the chickenhawk attack lead to questions regarding its widespread use. This argument, like the defeatist movement which spawned it, remains mired in the memory of Vietnam. In that era, some student supporters of the Vietnam War argued for universal service when they did not serve in the military. People of all ideological beliefs deceptively used college as a means of 'chickening' out of the draft, including some 'hawks,' and those people could rightly be criticized for draft-dodging. However, today there is no draft, no advocacy for a draft from pro-victory students, no draft-dodgers, and the chickenhawk attack remains dated and irrelevant.

➤ The Secondary Trap

When the premise of the chickenhawk attack is applied to its fullest extent, the result is an absurd condition where only defeatist foreign policy can be supported by the public. Civilian control over the military is a cornerstone of our democracy, and members of the military are often warned from above to limit their political activities. Leftists, who are disproportionately anti-victory, are often particularly disdainful of military members vocally participating in public debate. If all supporters of military action must join the military, and members of the military should not interfere in public policy, then only people who are against military action are free to make a difference. Under this ridiculous set of assertions, even the most righteous of military actions could be blocked by a single civilian opponent as the rest of the nation heads to the battlefield.

➤ Turn the Tables

Pro-victory students who are confronted with the chickenhawk attack are not required to explain their life choices any more than their assailants. In fact, people who actively undermine the dangerous missions of volunteers are the ones chickening out of the duties of responsible citizenship. No life will ever be wasted in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, or any other theater of the war against Islamist extremism unless we abandon the mission on the brink of success. Advocating such reckless contempt for our soldiers' sacrifices' is what is irresponsible, cowardly, and shameful, and the defeatists are the ones who have to defend themselves and their decisions.