

Response to critique on DADT



The Burden of Infallibility by Wiley Robinson

Last week on Oct. 3 2011, UT senior and Marine Johnathan Dunham (I apologize for not being able to list his rank) responded to my column regarding the luxurious nature of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in contrast to bigger issues.

I claim full responsibility for any inadequacies in establishing the appropriate tone in the body of my article. Yet considering how interesting I find Mr. Dunham's perspective, I consider our miscommunication a happy accident.

However, Mr. Dunham's response first claims I "asserted that "the military" put DADT in place to persecute homosexuals ..." While I deeply appreciate Mr. Dunham's feedback and perspective, the act of honoring (however dismissively) my article with a response should merit actually reading the article. I clearly stated that "DADT being considered a significant civil rights benchmark is ridiculous." I used the word "ridiculous," not "absolutely justified" or "completely self-apparent." That alone should have established to most readers that my article was emphatically not a diatribe against the military "persecuting" homosexuals, as Mr. Dunham assumed, again perhaps due to poor writing. But attempting to misrepresent the argument by putting quotation marks around an out-of-context phrase as common as "the military" is unappreciated.

Simply because I asserted that you leave your rights at the door when you join the military doesn't mean it isn't a prudent practice. In fact I only maintained that DADT had a justifiable utilitarian basis by writing "military wisdom predicted that sexual identity was both a strong and involuntary enough social binder that asserting an identity in distinct contrast from the statistically prevailing one (straight male) was only going to cause more harm than good." This statement supports everything Mr. Dunham claimed in his description and defense of DADT.

Though irrelevant due to the fact that Mr. Dunham was incorrectly responding to what he assumed to be a predictable diatribe, I still alluded to poll data citing decisive military opinion against

DADT, which could hardly be interpreted as "disregarding" anti-DADT sentiment among high ranking members of the military.

But I maintain that the military is "backwards," relative to the rest of society — there are considerable restrictions on many fundamental rights that I should hope would be considered the ethically opposed to the standards of civilian American life. This isn't an accusation; these practices are real, and, as I acknowledged in detail (though not as much as Mr. Dunham), they are justifiable, in contrast with the harsh realities of the military. My line of reasoning only supports Mr. Dunham in his sympathy with the posthumous DADT, and I find it odd when someone seems highly provoked by a claim yet proceed to rebuke it with exact same idea.

However, DADT was only ever the build up to a denouncement of America's entire occupation in the Middle East; Mr. Dunham's reading comprehension did not fail him here. I was totally ripping into the very core of the military. Mr. Dunham starts out by citing an exaggerated statistic of mine: that 99.9 percent of non-American casualties were of innocent people. Whoa, sorry guys, what could I possibly have been thinking? The statistic is more like 63 percent. I'm sure that's much more comforting.

I will, for the sake of this argument, put aside the relevance of America's political motivations for these wars and focus only on the consequences of our "kinetic operations." In the high price of "success" against what we can safely consider to be actual enemy insurgents and terrorists that have access to funding and resources for the purpose of planned violence and subversion, it's being overwhelmingly observed that our success is actually helping the enemy. Simply put, predator drone strikes only put a dehumanized, oppressive face on America, of sci-fi proportions. Al-Qaeda is being pushed to the periphery of the world and only becoming more clandestine and gaining more influence and support that our own attacks continue to validate.

Information technology reasonably gives me, a non-soldier, the tools to effectively counter Mr. Dunham's claims. The military is not keeping me safe over-seas. My tax money pays people like Mr. Dunham, and I reserve the right as an American to reveal truths about the actions of my government institutions as I see fit.

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