Union of Saints: Whataboutism, Civic Accountability, and the Responsibility to Defend the United States

“So anyways!” *And the dragon flew away.*

No, we “so anyways,” and keep the dragon on a leash!

Understanding Whataboutism and the Dismissal of Serious Issues – The Logical Fallacy of Deflection

The Union of Saints does not accept the dismissal of serious issues simply because a subject makes a civilian uncomfortable. We use our “*so anyways*” metaphor. They may “so anyways,” in a way, so we “so anyways.” It’s all good in the moment, but we don’t actually, so anyways! We look deeper, because we care, we are protective and we feel it is important we do. For example, “yeah, but there is corruption everywhere,” and there is “nothing you can do,” can redirect a discussion away from the specific issue being examined. This type of response is commonly associated with *whataboutism*, a rhetorical tactic in which attention is shifted from an original concern to another issue, often without addressing the evidence or the question initially raised. Although comparisons to other situations can be relevant, they do not resolve the original concern.

For example, when a specific allegation of corruption is raised against an organization, responding that corruption exists in every organization does not establish whether the allegation is true or false. The original question remains unanswered: What happened, what evidence supports the claim, who was responsible, and what consequences followed? Generalizing a problem can obscure differences in the severity of conduct, the strength of the evidence, and the degree of responsibility involved. Each issue must be examined on its own merits, even when it may also form part of a larger systemic problem.

People may use these responses for several reasons. Some may be attempting to avoid accountability, protect an institution or group, defend an existing belief, normalize misconduct, or redirect attention away from uncomfortable evidence. Others may genuinely believe that the problem is widespread and that focusing on one example is insufficient. It is important to distinguish deliberate deflection from a legitimate attempt to understand a broader pattern. A systemic explanation can contribute to the discussion, but it should supplement rather than replace an examination of the specific case.

The existence of wrongdoing elsewhere does not excuse wrongdoing in the case being discussed. Nor does identifying a problem automatically establish that every allegation is true. Responsible examination requires evidence, fair consideration of alternative explanations, and a willingness to reach conclusions based on the facts. The objective is to establish what occurred, identify legitimate concerns, and determine whether corrective action is warranted.

Civic Responsibility and the Defense of the United States

The responsibility of the United States is to address problems affecting the safety, security, freedom, and well being of its people. This responsibility is particularly important when considering warfare, foreign threats, espionage, cyberattacks, corruption, and other activities that may undermine American security. A discussion of these issues should not be dismissed merely because the subject is uncomfortable, controversial, or difficult to understand. The appropriate response is to examine the available evidence, establish what has occurred, and determine what action is necessary.

Many people appear to regard the United States as a never ending resource, with unlimited supplies, funding, and military support. In reality, our resources are finite, our military personnel are finite, and our ability to respond to threats has practical limitations. The military can only do so much, and the armed forces represent a relatively small portion of the overall American population. National defense therefore requires more than military intervention. It requires responsible government, effective institutions, public awareness, and meaningful civilian participation.

Being a responsible citizen involves several obligations. First, we must remain aware of the issues affecting our country and make a reasonable effort to understand the information available to us. Second, we must hold ourselves accountable for our own conduct, decisions, and contributions to our communities. Third, we must be willing to hold others accountable when credible evidence establishes wrongdoing. These responsibilities include asking questions, examining evidence, reporting legitimate concerns through appropriate channels, and supporting lawful measures to address substantiated misconduct.

Outward accountability does not mean treating every disagreement as misconduct or accepting every allegation as fact. It means recognizing that institutions, organizations, public officials, and individuals must be able to answer legitimate questions about their actions and responsibilities. Accountability must be applied fairly, consistently, and according to the evidence. It should serve the purpose of identifying problems, correcting failures, preventing recurrence, and protecting the public interest.

Why Civilian Awareness Matters in Warfare

These principles become especially important when considering warfare and threats directed against the United States. National security depends on military readiness, intelligence, law enforcement, cybersecurity, public institutions, and an informed civilian population. Foreign adversaries and other hostile actors may seek to exploit vulnerabilities through espionage, cyber operations, fraud, disinformation, or other forms of interference. Understanding these possibilities requires careful evaluation of credible information rather than generalized assumptions about particular countries, populations, or groups.

Information warfare can involve attempts to influence public perception, undermine confidence in institutions, create division, or distract people from the underlying facts of an issue. In such circumstances, the ability to recognize deflection and examine competing claims becomes an important part of informed citizenship. A claim should be evaluated according to its supporting evidence, its

source, and its context. Allegations of foreign involvement or hostile intent should likewise be investigated through appropriate procedures rather than assumed without evidence.

When a concern involves a potential threat to national security, dismissing it with “so anyways” or “there is corruption everywhere” does not establish whether the threat exists or whether action is necessary. It simply leaves the question unresolved. At the same time, responsible citizens must distinguish verified threats from speculation and recognize that investigations may require expertise, confidentiality, and lawful oversight. The goal is to support an informed public and effective national defense without encouraging unnecessary fear or unfounded accusations.

The United States cannot place the entire burden of national defense on its military while treating civilian awareness and participation as optional. Military personnel have specific duties, training, and resources, but they cannot independently resolve every vulnerability within a nation of millions of people. Citizens, businesses, community organizations, public officials, and institutions also have responsibilities within their respective roles. Prevention, responsible reporting, sound security practices, and institutional accountability can help address problems before they require a larger response.

The Union of Saints Approach

The Union of Saints promotes a culture in which difficult subjects can be examined without being dismissed. It recognizes that personal discomfort should not prevent legitimate questions from being asked, evidence from being considered, or substantiated problems from being addressed. The purpose of discussion is not to establish guilt in advance, encourage hostility, or demand agreement with every claim. It is to create an environment in which facts can be examined, competing explanations can be considered, and conclusions can be reached through reasoned and responsible judgment.

When an issue is raised, the appropriate process is to identify the specific concern, examine the evidence, determine what is established and what remains uncertain, consider relevant comparisons, and identify the appropriate course of action. If a pattern exists, that pattern should also be examined. If the evidence does not support the original allegation, that conclusion should be acknowledged. If wrongdoing is substantiated, the responsible parties and institutions should be held accountable through lawful procedures.

The Union of Saints therefore rejects the idea that the existence of widespread problems makes individual investigations unnecessary. It also rejects the assumption that a difficult subject should be abandoned merely because discussing it creates discomfort or disagreement. Generalizations can provide context, but they cannot substitute for factual examination. A responsible society must be able to discuss both individual cases and systemic problems without using one to evade the other.

The United States has finite resources and a military that cannot be expected to resolve every problem alone. Responsible citizenship requires awareness, self accountability, outward accountability, and a willingness to contribute to the public good. These principles are especially important when national security, warfare, public resources, and the protection of American freedoms are involved.

The Union of Saints stands for informed citizenship, evidence based discussion, lawful accountability, and the responsible examination of difficult issues. We do not resolve problems by pretending they are too uncomfortable to discuss, changing the subject through whataboutism, or treating corruption elsewhere as an answer to a specific concern. We resolve them by seeking the facts, examining the evidence, accepting responsibility, and taking appropriate action. True peace requires more than avoiding uncomfortable conversations. It requires the willingness to address the problems that threaten the safety, security, and freedom of our nation.