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Cheney is 'cowardly,' senator says

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DES MOINES -- Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa pushed the name-calling in the presidential race to a new level Monday, calling Vice President Dick Cheney a coward for not serving in Vietnam and cowardly for his criticism of John Kerry.

Kerry, the Democratic presidential nominee, recently said that if elected he would pursue a more effective and "more sensitive war on terror that reaches out to other nations and brings them to our side and lives up to American values in history."

Cheney, in campaign speeches, has been mocking that reference to sensitivity.

Harkin, a former Navy fighter pilot, said, **"It just outrages me that someone who got five deferments during Vietnam and said he had 'other priorities' at that time would say that."**

He said President Bush and Cheney are "running scared because John Kerry has saying is cowardly. The actions are cowardly."

"When I hear this coming from Dick Cheney, who was a coward, who would not serve during the Vietnam War, it makes my blood boil," said Harkin. "He'll be tough, but he'll be tough with someone else's kid's blood."

Republican National Committee spokesman David James dismissed the criticism as shrill and negative.

Cheney received five student and marriage deferments of military service. Bush was in the Texas Air National Guard.

