

## **Peace symbolizing life – the Reserve Officers' role**

**“Peace and the Reserve Officer’s role in Society” is a multi-aspect, broad topic, which cannot be boasted in depth-analysis within a strictly limited time. Therefore, some thoughts of mine, considered crucial will be exposed briefly.**

**1. All peoples’ ardent wish causing them distress is peace. This is why they talk constantly about peace, making but a simulated reference to it, even those who in fact launch war. Yet, mainly those who prepare for war and enhance or carry out armed conflicts with many casualties refer to “peace” repeatedly. It is unprincipled tactics, in the context of which though big and misleading words are used, bloody works destroying human prosperity is the next step. This is history’s inexorable message. It is a hard teaching, which should not help reconcile our conscience!**

**2. Avoiding war is certainly a prerequisite for any form of peace. When weapons “speak” the voice of peace wears off. Therefore, disarmament is the first step to achieve and consolidate peace permanently. Disarmament becomes a difficult and complicated problem, yet if the link amongst economy, industry and armament is also measured. Moreover, on the aftermath of nuclear weapons being discovered, the leading powers are “condemned” to go through negotiations in order to avoid total disaster. The two super powers should endeavour to this end indeed.**

**3. Disarmament and peace keeping is not only leaders’ task. Conscience should rise; the public opinion ought to act and react. However, correct information and unbiased updating are required in order to achieve this goal. Reserve Officers’ contribution might be significantly important at this very point, as they hold crucial positions in the social structure and the State stratification. Therefore, the sacred topic of universal peace is mainly served by people being fully enlightened, which help them being protected against utopias and angry excitement that are set off intentionally nowadays. Our major duty today is to avoid squeezing the notion of peace and produce uncertain merit. We should not consider this very notion but the single pole of a contrasted pair: Peace – War; that is not to consider it but the opposite of war.**

Peace is destroyed by war but also by the lack of freedom, violence, poverty, disruptive turmoil, aggressiveness and subversive anarchy. According to the great thinker Immanuel Kant's prophetic utterance: "Peace may be concluded but by democratic States, not simply in the context of truce but in the one of a real durable provision."

4. No peace can be achieved without freedom, when it is put down or when it becomes formal, external and temporary. The lack of freedom generates increasing misery, people's or groups' suppression on the grounds of nationalism, race, cosmic theory. It entails a crisis situation on various levels ending sooner or later to open-conflicts. Ideology conviction forbidding or silence forcing or even any critics rejecting or any possible dissent banishing, while the individual loses his own features, end up in a "death peace", an "Eternal Peace".

In 1775 Immanuel Kant published a book on "Towards eternal peace"; in the book's preamble he states that he was impressed by a Dutch hotel keeper, who painted on his restaurant sign a cemetery with many graves as a device and placed the relevant inscription – Such a peace is a "peace reduced to slavery". Yet peoples prefer the "bloody freedom" causing fear chains to smash the fetters of fear, tyranny and human enslavement.

5. Peace is destroyed by violence. Yet, violence on an *open high level* is war amongst States and on a *closed low level* it becomes barbaric acts within the family or rudeness vis-à-vis the "neighbour." Peace starts from each one's home as argued by Jaspers and it is the "most precious coin family disposes of" as acknowledged by a Chinese proverb. K. Jaspers, *Philosophy and Politics Essays, Anagnosides publishing society (lat. Ach. Vagena, Athens) pages 79 onwards*

6. Reducing indigence or fighting against poverty in association with limiting the upsetting social injustice becomes one of the most positive acts enhancing peace. It is an extreme delusion to believe in peace not being achievable and in that it cannot be kept when 5% of people possess 95% of goods.

8. Therefore, peace closely linked to human rights is a right of paramount importance, thus the utmost commodity. It is associated to life and thrives when human co-existence is considered a spiritual reality. In the context of such reality, people do not behave just as neighbours like any other being but they communicate in freedom, they bring together in a harmonious and rational manner all contrasts, without referring to violence and acknowledge one another the utmost action giving rise to pluralism, majority dominance, multi-view, multi-idea, multi-trend and multi-trend environment

9. Therefore, peace becomes full of a living content. Knowledge and thoughts interaction takes place in the light of truth and mutual respect. "Peace cannot be ensured by force. Albert Einstein argues that "peace is likely to be achieved but through understanding." Understanding ensures peace not being just the end of a war, that is pax but it enters a reconciliation context.

Peace sounds equally to soul's vibrations and is translated in concert – Concordia – according to the discourse by Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Nations: "*seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.*" Peace thrives in a moral dimension, where the others' will is not under coercion to obey to our will. Any objection vanishes as any tension does. The individual, the groups and or peoples have the feeling of profound security and euphoria. Then what?

10. A pure peace context is but *within a true freedom, joy, friendship, security environment*. Besides, the basic function of human conscience is well known: fighting to achieve a creative balance firstly between internal trends and external conditions and then achieving harmonization of interests in conflict and of goals opposed to the social relations level.

Now, as far as translational relations are concerned, peace is achievable but when it does not rely upon unilateral conceding acts, sacrifices and concessions; furthermore, when setting up such peace is not attempted through psychological blackmails, propaganda campaigns or monopolising the good will for peace when it derives from a sincerely moral soundness, free from passions, expediency and supremacy in weaponry.

Peace is certainly not a condition, which becomes an “acquis” once for all. It is a laborious and evolutive process and course of things, requiring “sharp” will, a high sense of responsibility and an endless source of energy in terms of individual, community and interpersonal relations and last but not least action. Careful study of the historical data is mainly needed. This is the only way to transform peace, this primitive feeling of hope into a daily reality and the “symbol of life.”

11. In this people society the Reserve Officers have a role to play and a dual function to assume: firstly the one of the free and lawful citizen and secondly the scrupulous soldier’s sharing a strong sense of responsibility. This signifies they belong both to (i) the People’s and the Nation’s wider community and (ii) to a smaller segment standing for those in the forces. The Reserve Officers’ significantly important special mission derives from this very dual role and function to accomplish within the modern society: Being – according to the famous Churchill’s expression “Twice the Citizen” – the solid bridge between the *citizen* and the *soldier*.

The Reserve Officers should combine in them these two figures and achieve constantly their “reconciliation”, keeping them permanently in an endless and fruitful dialogue context, ensuring ongoing communication and cooperation, which the benefit of the Nation, the Peoples and the national Community may rely upon. The Reserve Officers are citizens of this Community and hold crucial positions, being aware of the problems faced by both sides. Their views are based on facts and become rational and more easily accepted.

**12. They should help eliminating any risk threatening to run over the democratic, social and political order, prompted by their national sensitivity and moral promptness. There are many risks around, yet two out of them are here below stressed:**

**(a) The risk caused by totalitarian ideologies or authoritative mentalities failing to tolerate honest critics: The State i.e. does not belong to the now and then rulers but to all the citizens. Therefore, the citizen's and the Reserve Officer's major duty derives from this principle. Thus, they are not permitted to accept their life context de facto without criticizing or checking the situation around. They are invited to adopt such attitudes and take a number of decisions in order to exert positive influence upon the course of social and historical facts.**

**This means that even though the Reserve Officers may agree with such a context, yet they make out room for bringing about improvement. If they do not agree, then they fight lawfully, respecting democratic values to bring about either a change in the existing context either partially or fully. From this very moment, the Reserve Officer as a person and as a citizen cannot be just a tool within this social structure. He becomes the kingpin indeed in this evolutive process, which society and civilization are involved in. Yet, we may state a further risk:**

**(b) The second risk entailed by the multi-colour and suspect "political" groups, these modern violence and anarchy machines are looking for abolishing the fundamental values of the democracy in a provocative manner and are trying to question the majority of citizens' skills to defend these values efficiently.**

**This dual risk is not extra but intra muros of the State. The dual risk should be coped with through constant and insistent enlightenment, inexorable reasoning, unquenched passion for cultural activity starting from the simple acquaintance and closed debates and going until the public gatherings, appearances, publications, visits, speeches, documented and convincing editorial. In a single word: enlightening struggle is needed to make it clear how democracy, being the major device and achievement of the ancient Greek civilization, is valuable and sensitive.**

**Peoples will, as a whole, be ready psychologically and will arm themselves with the skill and promptness to react and defend public order and security, relying upon the State's undivided contribution, the mass media assistance and the constant and objective updating.**

**13. The Reserve Officers should participate in this high effort to shape the social morale and the public opinion always to the benefit of the social mass**

**Yet, the Reserve Officers should act as rulers to this end and become a living part of the genuine democracy being alive. They should be strong, flexible to change, full of vigour and active members of social groups. Besides, the Reserve Officers joined forces and still do to respect always principles, values and long traditions, democracy, freedom and human dignity. Therefore, they should keep abreast with the changes occurred nowadays and ideological currents coming up. They should also be aware of the irrelevant elements, which talk about justice and freedom, while establishing the most disgusting violent acts and slavery. A further great commitment of the Reserve Officer is the fight against coercion and violence. Progress is accomplished in the context of freedom; it is not the result of a necessity.**

**A moral and spiritual orientation may be enhanced by this slogan. This may be the basic law aiming to draft and consolidate rules governing a perfect lifestyle for all and ensure the free movement of ideas in favour of social and individual progress. Do you want peace? Then advocate freedom! This is a further postulate!**

**14. However, in order to achieve all the above stated, when the Reserve Officers have finished their military service, they should be taken care of by the State so that they avoid asking themselves even once: “Does our country need us indeed or is it the case in crucial times of war? The State trusts us. Then how this entrustment is expressed? Does the State side up with us? How it does so?”**

**The State supports the retired officers who have no way to survive otherwise”! Even those – there are thousands of them indeed – who keep high positions are provided moral motivation to not be emotionally cut from the country’s Armed Forces.**

**15. In order to carry out their significantly important mission in modern society, they need the State’s affective contribution, translated not only in high military education and sensitive conscience while doing their military service but also human concern and professional settlement when they retire to ensure a long life active and strong morale. The State and its leaders each time should know that there exist three social rules amongst others – laws as others call them –, being the following:**

**(i) Higher objectives are not achieved unless the basic needs and expectations are met.**

**(ii) There is a profound relation amongst high education, information, qualifications and cultural activity. Society, which the Reserve Officers live in, needs updating and guidance, otherwise the reserve officer runs the risk to be guided by the group.**

**(iii) There is a profound relation amongst social position, social return, devotion and servicing utmost values and principles.**

**16. Briefly: The mission of the Reserve Officer in reserve, in the context of the modern society is multi-aspect and significantly important. This is so because the Reserve Officers become one of the most efficient forces unit fashioning the course of social and historical facts, considering they have determined their fate by their contribution and sacrifices while servicing their country. They have dictated their fate while experiencing difficult moments. If all the citizens may defend and advocate for their country's interests, the Reserve Officers are committed to do so, being their utmost duty. Therefore, their conscience is full of ardour and is also tossed up with what is necessary and what is inertia. They are and should be prompt to carry out firmly what is necessary.**

**This is so because they know that the army is the guardian of what is considered supreme human commodity. Armies all over the world imply a unique message: Defence meaning advocating for Freedom, enhancing Democracy and ensuring Peace. Freedom, Democracy, Peace, Security and National Independence are the sanctities of the Nation, which reference is made to in the Athenian adolescents' vow for three thousand years. Their denial signifies "the weapons' disgrace" and "the flag attendant's abandon".**

**The Reserve Officers are aware of all these. This is why they feel being Guardians of the Nation, Guardians of Peace, Pastors of Democracy and Protectors of the Nation's Freedom and Independence.**

**In conclusion, peace symbolizing life contains precious values: freedom, which is more than rejecting tyranny, prosperity, which is more than going beyond poverty, justice, which is more than the ordinary power of law, calm, which is more than lack of external threat, human rights being a universal commitment vis-à-vis free man, who are the master of their fate, vis-à-vis the nations serving, therefore, their citizens, hoping attractively to achieve a better life in a peaceful world.**

**Gregoris Phil. Kostaras**

**Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.**