

The Oath of Service

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Every officer candidate takes the following oath on the day of his commissioning. Names of people and the branch of service change, but the oath is the same.

"I, Thomas Robert Cuba, having been appointed an officer in the Navy of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of Ensign do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; So help me God."

There are a couple of things that I would like to point out. First of all the oath ends in an affirmation that the oath is taken before God. Which God from which religion is not important. What is noteworthy is that the person is asserting that, should he or she fail to live up to the oath, their God will be the one issuing the punishment.

The second pivotal element of the oath is that it doesn't say that the person will defend the nation, the service, some general or admiral, or even a base, ship, or outpost. The promise is to defend the Constitution.

What that means is not that each and every word in the Constitution is to be defended, but that the defense is to be given to the underlying Philosophy of Freedom upon which the Constitution is based. Furthermore, the oath does not limit such a defense to times of conflict. The defense is to be offered at any time that the Constitution or the Philosophy of Freedom is under attack. Sadly, today, more often than not, the Constitution is being assailed by words and acts arising domestically in everything from everyday conversation with our neighbors and friends to federal legislation and executive orders.

At its core, that philosophy is one in which power and authority is widely and broadly distributed about many men and agencies in a manner that no one person or collection of people can exert overwhelming power upon the citizens.

That philosophy includes the replacement of monarchs and oligarchs with what is somewhat too casually referred to as the 'Rule of Law.' That law is to be erected through the collective and consensual process of legislation approved by representatives of the citizens and the states.

In our daily travels, then, when those who have taken the oath consider how to vote on a particular referendum, the focus ought not to be on how such a vote might affect their daily lives, but on whether or not the measure secures or impairs the Philosophy of Freedom and the Rule of Law. For some people, myself included, this runs so deeply that traveling in my car at 5 MPH over the speed limit is a violation of that oath: The law set the speed limit. Defending it and defending the concept of distributed power are one and the same.