

January 30, 2017

President Donald Trump

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

Last night I woke up suddenly from a nightmare. My dream had taken place in the hours following a nuclear attack on our nation, and my city, Los Angeles. It was painfully personal. In it, I couldn't get in touch with my 8-year old son, and my 2 year old was badly burned. My babysitter, who'd been at work with us, was asking how long it would take her to walk the 12 miles back to her own children, and what she'd find when she got there if she got there. The cell networks and news weren't working, so we couldn't even be sure what had happened. I couldn't see well, as I'd looked out the window at the time of the explosion to try to understand what was going on. My toddler was screaming with pain and I couldn't think straight. It was complete chaos.

Whenever you see a movie about nuclear war, or life after, Hollywood spares you the details of what happens to the children. I believe that's because it's too gory to be conceivable. As a parent, however, I'm not spared those visions. They sneak up on me, and drive me to write to you today.

As I lay in bed, I thought about my dream. I tried to remember the stories I'd been told about what to do after a nuclear bomb. Duck and cover? Don't open the windows? What should I tell my babysitter so she could be prepared for such a scenario? Would my landline telephone work? Who would I call if it did? As I understand it, all of these actions would be futile under this scenario. But if I was able, I would be there with my sons, my husband and the people around me, trying to do something for their pain, until we all died.

I tried to calm myself down. This is a common dream, a common fear. I tried to remind myself of the protections that should be in place to prevent this scenario from coming to pass. But as I thought about each one, I began to worry about the degree to which those protections have been eroded in the first week of your term. I thought about Iran, and the delicate strands of diplomacy that had begun to lash our fates together. In the last week, I am afraid those have all been cut. What is to prevent them doubling down on a nuclear program? I thought about North Korea, which seems intractable and as full of hate as it ever has been, how are we building diplomacy there? What happens if we destroy our partnership with China? I thought about Russia, their arsenal of weapons, and the many neighbors who, under our current scenario, might be willing to up their bidding price for a warhead.

And I realized in a personal, terrifying way that your policy of putting 'America First' is too simple to work in a world as complex as the one we live in. What has kept us safe to this point in the nuclear age is leadership that takes our global complexity into account, and works tirelessly to foster peace. The insurer of peace is interconnectedness-- such that when violence is contemplated against us, there are

stakes. Whoever is at the helm “over there” can imagine the face of their cousin and her kids “over here”, and the devastation their action would cause someone they know.

Actions like EO 13768 invalidate this insurance policy, without apparent benefit (beyond the benefit specifically *to you of appearing* as though you are fulfilling campaign promises). In your role as president, I’m urging you to take more caution in your actions. I would feel safer if you rescinded EO 13768. I would feel safer if you committed to continue to work with Iran diplomatically, and in collaboration with experts who have already been working for the voluntary disarmament of their nuclear program. I would feel safer if you honored our international commitments to preventing global disaster, such as our commitments to NATO and those we made in the Paris Accord.

It will take some effort to explain why you are taking this more nuanced approach on international diplomacy to your base. But I ask you to honor their intelligence, and all of our lives, by doing so.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this matter.

Carla Rice

Los Angeles, CA