

When I first heard you had COVID cases on here, I was actually planning on being here last Tuesday after I went to see the Mercy off in Los Angeles. So I want you to know that no one in my level has been ignoring the situation hear from the very beginning.

I reached out to your CO through my Chief of Staff very, very early on in this crisis. On Sunday, I told him that I wanted to come out to the ship and if it would be okay or if it would be too disruptive. I told him that because I wanted to be able to help, if there was anything else he needed as this massive effort was underway, to get you guys healthy and clean and safe. He waved me off. He said he felt like things were under control. He had been concerned a day or so before that things weren't moving quickly but things--he still wanted to get more beds--but he didn't think it was necessary. He also talked to my Chief of Staff and emailed back and forth with him.

On Sunday night, he sent that email. And that email went out to a broad audience of people. I know that I mentioned that is was over 20. We believe that it was forwarded to far more even more than that. And immediately it was picked up by the San Francisco Chronicle which published sensitive information about the material condition of a Naval war ship. If he didn't think, in my opinion, that this information wasn't going to get out into the public, in this day and information age that we live in, then he was either A, too naive or too stupid to be a commanding officer of a ship like this. The alternative is that he did this on purpose. And that's a serious violation of the UCMJ which you are all familiar with. That message and all the contents of that message was perfectly fine for him to send to people in his chain of command in a confidential way so they could get acting on it. He in fact could have given it to me, either my Chief of Staff, or to me, as I asked him to do when I first reached out to him on the ship when we first found out that there were COVID cases here.

He was betrayal [*sic*]--of trust, with me, with his chain of command, with you, with the 800 to a thousand people who, with your shipmates on shore right now, busting their asses every day to do what they need to do to convert what they do in a normal day to get you guys off of here, get you safe, get you healthy, get you clean, and get you back on this ship where you are *supposed* to be.

It was betrayal. And I can tell you one other thing: because he did that, he put it in the public's forum and it's now become a *big* controversy in Washington, D.C. and across the country. About a martyr CO, who wasn't getting the help he needed and therefore had to go through the Chain of Command, a chain of command which includes the media. And I'm gonna tell you something, all of you, there is never a situation where you should consider the media a part of your chain of command. You can jump the Chain of Command if you want and take the consequences, you can disobey the chain of command and take the consequences, but there is no, *no* situation where you go to the media. Because the media has an agenda and the agenda that they have depends on which side of the political aisle they sit and I'm sorry that's the way the country is now but it's the truth and so they use it to divide us and use it to embarrass the Navy. They use it to embarrass you.

While you're out here dealing with something that this country hasn't had to deal with in over a hundred years, and the world hasn't ever dealt with anything like this on this scale. The American people believe in you and they think that of all the people in the world that can keep their shit together in something like this--it's the United States Navy and our sailors--and they're stressed. They may be stressed and they may be tired. They may be scared, but they're keeping their shit together and they're taking care of each other

and they are taking care of people on the shore who are busting their ass to get them off this ship. They aren't taking shots at them. They are asking how can we help them.

“What can we do? How can I help the E-3 that works for me? I'm an E4. I'm concerned. What do I do to help the E-2s and E-3s on this ship?” That's your duty. Not to complain. Everyone's scared about this thing. And let me tell ya something. if this ship was in combat and there were hypersonic missiles coming at it, you'd be pretty fucking scared too. But you do your jobs. And that's what I expect you to. And that's what I expect every officer on this ship to do. Is to do your jobs.

One of the things about his email that bothered me the most was saying that we are not at war, that we aren't technically at war. But let me tell ya something, the only reason we are dealing with this right now is a big authoritative régime called China was not forthcoming about what was happening with this virus and they put the world at risk to protect themselves and to protect their reputations. We don't do that in the Navy. We are transparent with each other, using the proper channels and with each other. And that's what we are supposed to do and that's what you're expected to do.

I got your list of questions. I'm very, very thankful to have gotten them. I know they're all sincere. I don't think there is any agenda in any of those. But there's a lot of them and I'm gonna answer every single one of them. But I've gotta do it respectfully, and I've gotta take some time so you understand all the nuances of the questions you are asking. And there's a lot of them here. So rather than answer them all today I'm going to take them back with me to Washington and I'm going to answer them.

And let me say one other thing, everything I am telling you right now, I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever throw you guys under the bus in Washington or anywhere else in the media, anywhere else. And I don't, I expect you never to do that to your shipmates either--the ones on the shore right now who told me when Captain Crozier's email made it to the San Francisco Chronicle after working 15 hour days--they were demoralized because they knew what they had been doing for you guys since the 25th of March to get you guys what you need.

And the other thing you need to understand is we're in Guam. It's a US territory but they have their own government and they have their own healthcare problems and they're scared too, just like every other part of the world. And the Governor of Guam has stuck her neck out big time with their own population to say that she is willing to open up hotel rooms all over this this country, or this state, this territory so that sailors from the USS Teddy Roosevelt can go and be safe. Because she believes that you all are her brothers and sisters, her brothers and sisters who are protecting this place for her citizens. So she's willing to put all that at risk to take care of you guys.

And she told me today when CAPT Crozier's letter came out to the public she then had to deal with then--all her constituents--who are saying, “holy crap what's happening? We are going to have 5000 people with COVID in our city without proper health care and everything else.”

So think about that when you cheer the man off the ship who exposed you to that. I understand you love the guy. It's good that you love him. But you're not required to love him.

So I want to share something with you that I read at the Navy Academy graduation 2018. I said it to the graduating class, but I've expanded a little bit. As officers and sailors of the United States Military, you are given tremendous responsibility to respect and protect those who are placed under your command.

The American people entrust you with their sons and daughters. And they place their security and the security of our nation in your hands. Do not expect to be loved by everyone for this--even though it may happen--as Secretary Mattis my former boss was fond of saying to us who were so honored to work with him in the pentagon--he said your job is to protect the nation.

So I'm gonna give ya a little bit of advice to make this important--and often difficult--job far easier on yourselves. My best advice to you is don't ever be--don't ever worry--about being loved for what you do. Rather, love the country you are asked to defend. Love the constitution you pledged your life to protect. And most importantly, love the people you are ordered to lead. Make sure they eat before you do, care about their families as much as your own, be invested in their success for than your own accomplishments, nurture their careers more than you pursue your own advancement, and value their lives to the point that you will always consider their safety in every single decision you make.

It's only through this level of servant leadership that you will maximize and empower those you lead to meet the demands that will face us in this century. And those demands are getting more complicated every day, as we're all learning. But it's also going to incur incredible personal satisfaction during your time of service.

Crew of the Teddy Roosevelt, you are under no obligation to love your leadership, only to respect it. You are under no obligation to like your job, only to do it. You are under no obligation, you are under no obligation, to expect anything from your leaders other than they will treat you fairly and put the mission of the ship first.

Because it is the mission of the ship that matters. You all know this, but in my view, your Captain lost sight of this and he compromised critical information about your status intentionally to draw greater attention to your situation. That was my judgement and I judged that it could not be tolerated of a Commanding Officer of a nuclear aircraft carrier. This put you at great risk even though I am certain that he thought it never would. I am certain that he loved you all, as he should, but he lost sight of why the T-R exists and why fate brought you all here together in the middle of this COVID crisis.

Your nation back home is struggling. No one expected this pandemic so we are all working our way through it. You fellow sailors in the States are volunteering, putting on uniforms and running into the fire in cities like New York, Los Angeles, Dallas, and New Orleans. I've seen them. No fear, running right into COVID.

Nothing is easy. Is this for anyone? But from the very beginning, we have been engaged from my level, down, to bring you the help that you need as fast as we possibly could. Understand it takes time to flex up for a crisis this unique.

T-R has to stand strong as warriors, not weak like victims. The T-R has to work its way through this with grace, not panic. The T-R has to demonstrate to the citizens back home that is has its act together and that it's knocking down this virus just like it would knock down the Chinese or the North Koreans or the Russians if any one of those nations were ever so stupid enough to mess with the Big Stick because she thought she was vulnerable.

I cannot control or attempt to change whatever anger you have with me for relieving your beloved CO. If I could offer you a glimpse of the level of hatred and pure evil that has been thrown my way, my family's

way over this decision, I would. But it doesn't matter. It's not about me. The former Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, suggested just yesterday that my decision was criminal. I assure you it was not. Because I understand the facts and those facts show that what your Captain did was very, very wrong in a moment when we expected him to be the calming force on a turbulent sea.

There was very little upside in this decision for me. You can believe that or not. I made a decision for the Navy I love, for the Navy I served in, and now serve for, and mostly for the sailors I am responsible for. Not just here but on nearly 300 other ships in the Fleet. Your Captain's actions had implications for them, too. Imagine if every other CO also believed the media was a proper channel to air grievances with their Chain of Command under difficult circumstances. We would no longer have a Navy. Not long after that, we would no longer have a country.

Still, I understand that you may be angry with me for the rest of your lives. I guarantee that you won't be alone. Being angry is not your duty. Your duty is to each other, to this ship, and to the nation that built it for you to protect them. Even in midst of unexpected crisis, it is the mission of this ship that matters. Our adversaries are watching and that is why we are here.

We will get you the help that you need. You have my personal word on it. Your CO had my personal word on that from day one. Whatever else you may think of me, I don't go back on my word. And when it comes to the T-R--whether you hate me or not--I will never, ever, ever, ever give up the ship. And neither should you.

Thanks for listening and I'll get the detailed answers to your questions to you sometime later this week.

Go Navy.