



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 2, 2018

Dear Tony,

I received your apology video. I accept. But I wish to qualify that acceptance with some of my thoughts around your departure -- and why the decisions that were made, well, were made.

First, your leaking of my phone number was deeply damaging. It made me sick; I did not log in for two days. You stripped me of my privacy -- privacy I had enjoyed uninterrupted for two years -- and now I can no longer give my phone number out to even staff I trust. It is *never* okay to leak people's personal information, especially when it was given to you in confidence. I understand this is a videogame, and the simulation tends to blur the line between reality and fiction, but you cannot do things like that.

Do not do it again -- to anyone. Privacy is a gift and I am sure you would hate it if people were giving you random calls and voicemails to harass you over a game.

Second, I understand that your termination was hard on you. So I at least owe you a deeper look into my thoughts at the time, and why I would make the same decision if I were given the opportunity for a do-over.

Tony, you brought up loyalty a lot, specifically loyalty to me. I appreciate loyalty, but you should know well that it is by no means a shield from my oversight into my employees. I had been given dozens of recommendations to let you go, coming from all kinds of sources, for months. I continually rejected them, defending you in the process.

But in the late stages of March, when I began trying to put together a team to pick up Aerium's slack, your ability to work with others frayed. I have never intended to make civilians a hugely dominant force in the military. In fact, I have often criticized Secretaries of Defense for their bloated staff; those Under Secretaries for [insert useless policy here] are a waste of my and our military's members' time. All I have wanted for is a Secretary of Defense, a Deputy to that Secretary, and three Service Secretaries. I do not believe that to be too much for which to ask; but even so, it was my decision to make, and mine alone. That was my ultimate problem.

We work in a roleplay of an office environment at the end of the day; our interactions matter, just as they do with our coworkers in real life. Office politics, whether you like them or not, *do* matter, because if you are unable to work effectively with your coworkers

-- even if you do not like them -- you break the ability of the unit as a whole to function cohesively.

When I brought Lily in, you assured me you would play ball and give her a chance. But then immediately within the next day or so you were already complaining and threatening to resign. Tony, no matter how loyal and dedicated you may have been to me, it is patently unworkable to keep an employee in a senior role who threatens to resign over coworkers every day. You, working in accounting, know that -- I know you do. And what made it worse is that it seemed to be a problem with *anyone* who may have had the chance to exercise some oversight.

Your termination was not a case of me taking the Secretary's word blindly. Had that letter been your first infraction in my mental record of your performance, I would not have terminated you. I would have sat you down and tried to arbitrate an agreement between you and the conflicting party. But that was not so here; this letter was simply the last step in a long stair of issues that had begun to bubble from the surface.

Tony, you were a wonderful leader and inspired my military. For that I will always be grateful, and your ability to stimulate motivation in our Armed Forces is matched by a very few. That ability, however, is merely one piece of the puzzle. You needed to be able to work with people with whom you may have personally disagreed. You needed to be able to work effectively toward my vision (which, to this day, remains a struggle -- but I refuse to stop trying).

I may fail to fix our military; the American public can judge my legacy once I am gone. And I know that there is considerable doubt about its ability to jump back this term. While you will not be returning to the Armed Forces under this administration -- actions, necessarily, must with them carry consequences -- you may be rest assured that I have not, and will not, give up on our men and women in uniform.

I forgive you. What happens regarding your ability to join this group's community is a matter for the Clan Managers. Thank you for the sincere apology. I will not forget it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tim Litzner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.