

<sup>10</sup>  
Child

3/29

485 Old Bedford Rd.  
No. Westport, Mass.  
March 27, 1960

Dear Mrs. President,

I hope this letter finds you and our First Lady in the best of health.

I should like to introduce myself. My name is Ruth Ann Couts, I am 13 yrs. old, I am in 8th grade at Westport Jr. High School. In this letter I should like to ask you three questions, two of which are very important to me.

The first is that much disputed question of our relationship in strength to Russia. Oh, I know that almost everyday you can find someone telling you



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that we are either far ahead of Russia or far behind. If you feel for certain reasons you cannot answer this will you please try and answer the next?

This is I think is the most important to me. In your opinion do you think that some day there will be a World War? If so under what circumstances will it occur? I think that in asking you this question it is only fair that I give you my opinion.

I am assuming that if we have this war it will be with Russia. I have no personal hatred for Mr.

Krushchev but I think of him  
as a person. Any person,  
when given the choice, will  
choose to live rather than  
to die. This is the basis  
for my opinion on this matter.  
You see, Mr. Krushchev knows  
he could drop a bomb on  
the United States after a  
time. But, he also knows  
that before the United  
States would be totally  
destroyed, that Russia  
would be well on her  
way too. It would prob-  
ably be one of the main  
targets and would be  
one of the first casualties.

Even if you are the  
bravest man in this world  
life will still be too good



to loose so easily.

Mr. President if you do find it in your kind heart to answer me I'm sure that not only me but my other classmates would be glad to know that Khrushchev isn't the only one who answers fan mail.

If you do answer this you won't mind if we print the answers in our school newspaper, will you?

I hope I haven't taken up too much of your valuable time.

Thank you very much!

Yours sincerely  
Beth Ann Coletto

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485 Old Bedford Road  
North Westport, Massachusetts  
March 27, 1960

Dear Mr. President:

I hope this letter finds you and our First Lady in the best of health.

I should like to introduce myself. My name is Ruth Ann Couto, I am 13 years old, I am in 8th grade at Westport Junior High School. In this letter I should like to ask you three questions, two of which are very important to me.

The first is that much disputed question of our relationship in strength to Russia. Oh! I know that almost everyday you can find someone telling you that we are either far ahead of Russia or far behind. If you feel for certain reasons you cannot answer this will you please try and answer the next.

This is I think is the most important to me. In your opinion do you think that some day there will be a World War III? If so under what circumstances will it occur? I think that in asking you this question it is only fair that I give you my opinion.

I am assuming that if we have this war it will be with Russia. I have no personal hatred for Mr. Krushchev but I think of him as a person. Any person, when given the choice, will choose to live rather than to die. This is the basis for my opinion on this matter. You see, Mr. Krushchev knows he could drop a bomb on the United States after a time. But, he also knows that before the United States would be totally destroyed that Russia would be well on her way too. He would probably be one of the main targets and would be one of the first casualties.

Even if you are the bravest man in this world, life will still be too good to loose so easily.

Mr. President, if you do find it in your kind heart to answer me, I'm sure that not only me but my other classmates would be glad to know that Krushchev isn't the only one who answers fan mail

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If you do answer this, you won't mind if we print the answer in our school newspaper, will you?

I hope I haven't taken up too much of your valuable time.

Thank you very much!

Yours sincerely,

s/Ruth Ann Couto

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Reviewed and opened,  
5/5/76 KR

**P.P.F.**

28-B

"C"

April 13, 1960.

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RECEIVED  
APR 19 1960  
CENTRAL FILES

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Ruth Ann:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter. I am delighted to send you a personal reply, although I must request that you not publish it, as you suggest, in your school paper. XOF 139-D

The question of whether we are "ahead" or "behind" the Russian government is one, of course, that engages the attention of a great number of people. It is a popular -- and an easy -- topic of conversation. Certainly it is evident that currently the Russians have greater power in their space engines, for instance, than have we; it is just as evident that in other areas we have demonstrated our own scientific superiority. But as to the basic question respecting our military strength, I assure you that it is not only adequate, but is deeply respected by the Soviets. XOF 225

You ask whether there will be another World War. I can only repeat what I have said so many times; a war on a global basis, using the awesome weapons of which many countries are now capable, would, we all know, result in the annihilation of great portions of the earth. I am sure Mr. Khrushchev is as anxious as am I, and as are the leaders of other nations, to avoid such an unthinkable catastrophe. My own unshakeable belief is that under these conditions our greatest danger is not military attack but exposure, throughout the free world, to Communist subversion and penetration. XOF 154-F



PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

I recognize the concern that you and your classmates have about these great issues; I hope you all appreciate the overwhelming advantage you have of living in freedom in a country where the individual's deeply held faith is paramount, as opposed to the atheistic doctrines of the Soviets. Moreover, I venture to suggest that your main job at the moment is to equip yourself, by education and all other possible means, to be an informed citizen of tomorrow; in so doing you and all the young people like you will be our country's greatest asset in making progress toward a durable peace in freedom.

XPA 22-c

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

X  
X  
Ruth Ann Couto,  
485 Old Bedford Road,  
North Westport,  
Massachusetts.



PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL