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| Arne M. Sorenson: | Thank you, Daisy, very much for that fine introduction. We've had a nice conversation together tonight, and I've heard many stories of her life, including one of her early jobs was being a waitress in a family restaurant in St. George, New York, which before I get to something more important reminds me of one of Mr. Marriott's favorite stories. He actually tells it about his father, JW Marriott, who founded Marriott 90 years ago this year. |
|  | Famously, his father sat down at a family restaurant, I'm sure quite like where Daisy was waitering in St. George, New York, and asked the waitress for some breakfast. She said, "What would you like?" She said, "I'd like a couple of eggs and some bacon and a few kind words." The waitress disappeared and came back 10 minutes later, and she put the breakfast down in front of him, walked away. Mr. Marriott, Sr turned to the waitress and said, "Excuse me, ma'am." She sort of turned and looked back. She said, "What?" He said, "What about them kind words?" She said, "Don't eat them eggs." |
|  | And [Noel 00:01:19], thank you, and to the FPA for this great award. We're honored to be here tonight. We really are. And thank you to the Marriott team. We've got a table over here of folks who really share this honor with me as our roughly 700,000 associates around the world who wear our name badge every day during the work that we do around the world. And I've got a couple of kids here. Lars and Esther, it's good to have you along with Dad for dinner. You bless me with your presence tonight. Thanks for coming. |
|  | "Corporate social responsibility" is a big phrase. It's a phrase that we've used, I suppose, in industry for 15 or 20 years. I'll confess that we've had conversations recently, and we're now using the phrase "social impact." We think it is more concrete. We think it is a bit more about the results that we're trying to drive and maybe a little bit less about the obligation, though we're not trying to necessarily step away from that obligation, but we're tying to get to a place where we think about what are the things that we can accomplish in the communities where we do business to have a positive impact. |
|  | And there are great stories. I won't spend a lot of time tooting our own horn, but one of them that falls in the sustainability bucket is a exercise we went through in the Amazon to save about a million and a half acres, about roughly the size of the state of Delaware. Working with the state of Amazonas, working with that government believing that if we made the lives of the folks who live in the Amazon, and the Amazon is populated, sustainable, that they would not have to deforest. And it has been an enormous success in many respects, but it sort of sits apart and aside from our business. It's not what we do every day. We had the idea when we launched it that our customers might participate with us in it. Some did, but not that many did really because they were reserving a hotel room with us or they were staying with us, they weren't necessarily coming to us to be engaged in saving the Amazon. |
|  | What that has brought us back to over the years is the most profound impact we can have is in creating jobs for people because jobs gives dignity whether it's waitressing in a restaurant in Lake George in New York or working in this ballroom as our servers have done tonight, one of whom has worked at this hotel for 62 years, started in 1955 and still loves his work. But jobs make a profound difference. Three quick examples of that. |
|  | We opened a Marriott in Port-au-Prince, Haiti after the earthquake. 200 permanent jobs. Those jobs will transform the lives of those people, those associates and their families because they have an income. They have a predictable income, and they know it was last for years. |
|  | We opened last fall a hotel in Kigali, Rwanda. Among the 200 roughly associates starting their work there, were almost 40 girls who came from the Akilah girls' school. Everyone who had been profoundly touched, their families profoundly touched by the genocide that took place in that country just 20 years ago. And they looked at the future with smiles that were extraordinarily infectious because of the optimism they had for their future. |
|  | In Washington, DC, much closer to home here in New York, we opened a new Marriott Marquis a few years ago. We had 160 associates that came from southeast Washington, DC that had never worked before. They had never worked before not because they were the age of my kids who are here tonight just starting their working careers, but because they had never had an opportunity to work before. |
|  | In all of those circumstances, that job is powerful. I want to take just a couple of minutes to talk in the foreign policy or domestic policy context about a couple of people issues that relate to this work. The first, of course, being immigration. |
|  | Why do people immigrate? Why do people move? They're looking for opportunity or maybe they're running with fear from what sits in the environment where they live in now. To try and stop that movement in its worst circumstance where to stay is life-threatening is almost impossible. People are going to move to find the opportunity. Even where it's not life-threatening, people will move if they believe that they've got a brighter future someplace else. So there are people on the move. We all know this. Everybody in this room is engaged in the world. There are more people on the move today than has been the case certainly any time since World War II. |
|  | There's enormous pressure on domestic and international politics because people who want to move. You look at it from the American context or in many countries around Europe particularly, and what you see is not just a rise in nationalism where people are saying, "We don't want people coming in here," but even worse than that, if we look at it fairly, what we see is a total lack of understanding and consensus about how immigration works. |
|  | We can't sit in New York and criticize those who are opposed to immigration in the United States because neither they nor many of our peers understand the way immigration rules work. How many do we take in the United States every year? What's the process for letting them in? Who gets to pick? Do we have any real understanding about how immigration works in the United States? For 95% of us, maybe 99% of us, the answer is no. |
|  | So we end up having this debate, which is not educated in any respect by the work that this organization does or any other where we have on the one hand some folks who say, "Let's get the 12 million people here who are not documented out tomorrow." We've got another group who say, "Let's build sanctuary cities, and we're going to ignore whatever legal principles apply today as if we can simply ignore them." Both are strong-willed, of course, but neither is capable of moving us towards a place where we have a policy around immigration that can work. |
|  | So instead, we have to say, okay, what kind of immigration do we want to have? And if we start with a basic question, do we want any immigration, I think we would find that an overwhelming majority of Americans say, "Of course we should." Then you start to say, okay, can we do it around ... Is it around families? Is it around recent grad school grads who've come here to go to school? Is it around jobs that can't be filled somehow? What are the numbers? But actually have a conversation where we can engage in that debate and build a consensus. |
|  | Now, to be fair, 10 years ago, my chairman, Bill Marriott, spoke to this group about immigration. I'm not sure the odds of federal legislation and immigration are better today than they were 10 years ago in truth. But they will be zero unless we get to a place where we start to have grounded conversations about what the policy should be. |
|  | A little closer to home for somebody in the hotel business would be about non-immigration movement of people around the globe. Should people be allowed to travel? Well, there's a voice increasing in its volume that says, "Maybe not." Why? Well, a little bit of this national thing. We don't necessarily want foreigners showing up. Certainly not too many of them. And a little bit is a security thing, a bit of fear. How do we know that the people coming aren't going to do harm to us? This is not just an American debate, this is a debate clearly which is in Europe and in many parts of Asia as well. |
|  | I was born in Japan in 1958. The passport I was issued when I was one looked almost identical to this one except it had a green cover. There is a little bit more technology in this one I carry today but not a lot different. We use kind of the same process that we've used for my 58 years. And you go around the world, and you see we're using the same process in most places. |
|  | Why can't we instead say, let's develop a global Trusted Traveler Program that allows us to let the overwhelming majority of travelers who pose no risk of either overstaying their visas or doing harm travel actually more simply than any of us can travel today so that we can focus our resources on those that have a risk or those who don't opt into the system? It would be a very simple tool to address the fears that people have, both the fears that somebody's going to stay longer than they should or the fear that they're going to do some harm to us. |
|  | Now, I am an evangelist for travel. I'm evangelist of Marriott of course, too, but I won't bore you with a purely Marriott story. Let me give you a couple of travel statistics to indicate how powerful this is. The United States last year had about 70 million visitors. If we had the same share of global travel that we had before 9/11, we would've had 110 million roughly, 40 million more annual visits to the United States. That by itself is probably 1,300,000 jobs in the United States, to say nothing of the lodging tax revenues and the restaurant revenues and the shopping that would be done and the real estate that would be purchased and all of the other ways that people would get together. |
|  | Another way of looking at this is China outbound travel, which Noel and I were talking about a little bit. 10 years, 12 years ago, one million outbound trips by Chinese a year. Last year, 120 million outbound trips, and that number is heading to 500 million in the next five to ten years. That's economic opportunity for wherever those folks go. Therefore, good for business, good for economies, but beyond that, good for global affairs, good for foreign policy, good for the way we understand each other. |
|  | It is crystal clear from traveling around the world, and you all know this from your own stories, when we get to experience other places, we understand them better, they understand us better. We take memories home with us, which we savor forever. But we create relationships, which personalize the kinds of issues that our government leaders address or that we address in our work or that our other leaders across society address in the work that they do. |
|  | I'll close by simply saying thank you again to the Foreign Policy Association. We are honored to receive the award. I'm honored to be in all of your company tonight. Of course, it's great to have you at the St. Regis. Thank you. |