

Engaging the World

Team,

I'm writing you from the United Arab Emirates, where I've been meeting with leaders from business, academia and government. Tomorrow I will have similar discussions with leaders in South Africa. Last month I met with heads of state from European and Asian nations.

And last Friday, as many of you know, I met with President Trump. IBM leaders have been engaging directly with every U.S. president since Woodrow Wilson, and this was my ninth such meeting since becoming CEO. Like my predecessors, I'm invited to these discussions because of the trusted perspective IBM offers in solving problems.

At the White House, we discussed a wide range of issues – from smarter infrastructure investments, to increasing the number of women in the workforce, to cybersecurity, to jobs. And, of course, we spoke about the president's recent executive order affecting immigration and travel.

Into this discussion I brought IBM's perspective as a truly global company. We employ people serving clients in more than 170 countries, and we embrace people of all faiths and backgrounds. We would not be the company we are today without the benefit of immigration and the flow of talent across all our markets. From this great diversity, we draw strength as a company.

Because we are so large and so global, our perspective is also special. IBMers and their families have been touched by terrorist attacks, from New York, to Paris, to the skies over Egypt. And IBMers have been touched, too, by the executive order put in place two weeks ago. In every case, my first priority has been to support and care for the employees and families most directly affected.

As elected leaders make decisions on national policy, we seek to provide ideas and solutions grounded in our values and technological expertise. Both. So on Friday, I discussed with the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security ways that advanced technology could address national security imperatives while also permitting lawful immigration and travel. I explained that this is not an either/or choice. Our points were heard, and we will continue to engage to find solutions that align with our values.

Some have suggested that we should not engage with the U.S. administration. I disagree. Our experience has taught us that engagement – reaching out,

listening and having authentic dialogue – is the best path to good outcomes. IBM does not espouse a partisan or political point of view. Alone among our major competitors, we do not make political contributions, and we do not endorse candidates for office. We never have.

But if IBM does not have politics, it does have values. IBMers believe in helping our clients succeed beyond even their own expectations; in innovation that matters to the world; in building relationships based on trust and personal responsibility. And we have always led the world of business in diversity, inclusion and tolerance. Inspired by those values and that legacy, I offer every government leader with whom I engage innovative ideas to address national challenges.

This is what we do. It has been our ethos for more than a century. And it's why so many of us chose to become IBMers. Where others see the unsolvable, we see solutions. I could not be more proud of what you do every day to live our Values and to make the world a better place. It is what makes IBM, IBM.

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