

WORKING THE PIVOT POINTS

TO MAKE AMERICA WORK AGAIN

Frank Islam • Ed Crego

Potomac, MD

Copyright © 2013, Frank Islam, Ed Crego
ISBN: 978-0-9846126-2-8

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without written permission from the author, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

Printed in the United States of America.

Foreword

THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT AMERICAN PIVOT POINTS. WE DEFINE PIVOT point as *an area that must be leveraged and addressed effectively in order to effectuate change and achieve positive outcomes.*

Pivot points define the character and shape the destiny of a nation and its people. They establish the rules of the game and influence the attitude of the public. They create an upward or downward trajectory and accelerate or decelerate forward movement and progress.

The debt ceiling debate in the summer of 2011 and the manner in which it was handled was a critical pivot point. Although the debate centered on what in the past had been a minor issue, the nature of the process and the discourse and disgust that it engendered elevated this from a symbolic or ritualistic act in a minor pivot point area to one with significant short-term and long-term ramifications.

Pivot points can be major, moderate or minor in nature. How we manage our current major pivot points will determine the country's future success and that of our citizens.

In our opinion, the major pivot point areas for the United States today include:

- The deficit and debt crisis
- Revenue deficits
- Congressional dysfunction
- Citizenship dysfunction
- Individual economic well-being
- Global competition
- Manufacturing
- Entrepreneurs
- Immigration
- Education
- Innovation

We devote a chapter to each of these pivot points. In each chapter, we describe the nature and status of the pivot point at the time the book went to the publisher, chronicle the progress made or lack thereof on the point over the past two years and present ideas for “working” the pivot point area going forward.

The central elements for working a pivot point are:

- Pivot persons—citizens and leaders from the private and public sectors who commit to working together to create shared solutions to problems and to advocate for their implementation
- Pivot policy—a mutually agreed upon agenda for action on the shared solution
- Pivot programs—well-defined, controlled and results-oriented methods for rolling out the policy in as cost-effective and efficient manner as possible

We discuss these elements throughout the book as we review each pivot point.

We begin the book in the preface and the first chapter by examining why pivot points matter today and in American history. We end the book in the epilogue by providing our summary judgment regarding where the United States stands in addressing all of these major pivot points and with some prognostications regarding the future.

We decided to write this book in mid-2011 and we said “pens down” on July 4, 2013. So, essentially it covers a two-year time period. During that period, in many of these key pivot point areas, positive progress has either been painfully slow in coming or nonexistent.

We expected that to be the case given the tone and tenor of these times. And, as we point out in the first chapter and epilogue of the book, it is not atypical for key pivot points throughout American history.

That is why we have written *Working the Pivot Points* as a work in process and designed it to be a living document. We end each pivot point area chapter with a section called “Pivot Point Report Card.” We have structured that section to enable the reader to reflect on the status of that area at the time he or she is completing the chapter.

We will be posting our own assessments on progress in these pivot point areas on an occasional basis. To see those assessments and to provide your own input and feedback on an area, visit <http://www.workingthepivotpoints.com>.

While at that site, you can also sign up to subscribe to our *Pivot Points Newsletter*, which we will be issuing on a monthly basis. We will address these current and other emerging pivot point areas in the newsletter.

In conclusion, pivot points treated properly should not be about endings or beginnings but about being and becoming. They should be about listening and learning. They should be about realizing the full potential and possibilities for America and Americans. We hope this book makes a small contribution to achieving those ends.