

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

March 3 Meeting Report

Our guest speaker was Frank Islam, co-author of the book, *Renewing The American Dream*. "America and the American Dream are threatened – not by terrorists but by the enemy within—our inability to grasp the severity of our current situation and to work together to



resolve it. This is the enemy we must defeat for America to prevail in the 21st century." The first decade of this

century was one of significant decline for the United States. America became a debtor nation, a deficit nation and a divided nation. This current decade will be the decisive one. The decisions made and the actions taken in it will determine the future of America and the American Dream. Concerned citizens understand this is a pivotal period and want to get involved in shaping America's future. They have lost trust, however, in their leaders, institutions and the "governing elite." They are searching for a resource to help them think about and respond to this situation.

Renewing the American Dream introduces a new problem-solving paradigm which entails looking at the United States as an enterprise. Enterprise USA is a shared venture with business, government, community-based and non-profit organizations working together in order to revitalize all aspects of America and the American dream.



At the heart of that venture is the 21st century citizen. *Renewing the American Dream* requires a multifaceted approach including:

- * Defining a 21st century competitive advantage for the nation
- * Redirecting government
- * Redirecting business
- * Renewing leaders, organizations and individuals

* Implementing an integrated renewal process

* Implementing policies and programs that: create jobs, rejuvenate the middle class, reignite the manufacturing sector, unleash the potential of small businesses and entrepreneurs, ensure a vital news media, and, advance America's role in the world.

The book devotes a chapter to each of these areas and makes recommendations for how to accomplish those goals. It also introduces a three-part Renewal Framework the authors developed for thinking about and acting upon the American dream:

* The American Dream Construct - comprised of eight forms of capital

* The American Dream Platform - comprised of enduring promises, rules and regulations, and programs and initiatives

* The American Dream Process - comprised of leadership, organizational and individual renewal combined with proper preparation, involvement and execution

The Renewal Framework provides the organizational structure for the book and is the foundation for Enterprise USA.

The Framework presents the authors' perspective as businesspeople. It is based on a belief in facts, evidence-based analysis and rational decision-making. It is based on the understanding that the response to the nation's current situation cannot be about grand ideas, ideologies or governmental policies or programs alone. Nor, can or should it be the exclusive province of politicians, lobbyists, and special interests.

Renewing the American Dream was written as a resource and reference guide for 21st century citizens—those citizens who are: interested, issue-oriented; informed, independent and involved.

21st century citizens are willing to stand up and speak out - not as advocates for entrenched positions or as

members of political parties. They are prepared to confront doubt directly and engage in nonpartisan problem-solving. As committed and collaborative individuals they recognize that they are:

- * Entitled to think
- * Required to reason
- * Empowered to act

Renewing the American Dream advances a citizen-centered agenda for change and restoring America's competitive advantage. It presents detailed recommendations for renewing the dream and outlines actions that leaders, organizations and individuals can take to participate in the renewal process.

Drawn from the authors' substantial experience in leading, managing and working in the private and public sectors, *Renewing the American Dream* is a "call to arms." It brings the citizen's voice and the businessperson's perspective to the forefront in a national dialogue which to this point has been

dominated by elected officials, lobbyists, talk show hosts, academics, economists and journalists. It can be seen as a twenty first century equivalent of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense."

