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Introduction: Governing to Win—Enhancing National Competitiveness

In the March 2012 *Harvard Business Review* article, “The Looming Challenge to U.S. Competitiveness,” Michael Porter and Jan Rivik point out that the U.S. faces a deeper, more fundamental challenge than recovering from a recession of unusual depth and duration—that is, its ability to be competitive globally. “To restore its competitiveness, America needs a long-term strategy,” counsel Potter and Rivik.

With the recent release of *Governing to Win: Enhancing National Competitiveness Through New Policy and Operating Approaches*, Chuck Prow has compiled some 13 insightful essays by leading thinkers and practitioners that can contribute to laying out that long-term strategy. “Given today’s fiscal realities,” Prow explains, “the nation must explore alternative policy approaches and ways for government to do business.” He notes that the alternatives outlined in his new book can catalyze national competitiveness in an environment where major new investments will be difficult.

The book addresses three topics that, together, offer a competitiveness agenda different from more traditional approaches. The book kicks off by setting the context for the current national debate on fiscal stability. It offers a path for creating a nonpartisan framework for setting national priorities in that context. It follows with a discussion of targeted policy interventions in key sectors of the economy, such as economy/regulation, healthcare, education, and energy, which could lead to improved national competitiveness. The book ends by outlining a value-oriented, enterprise operating model for the federal government, based on commercial experience, which could lower operating costs by up to \$1 trillion over a decade while improving mission performance and services to citizens. For Prow, this new operating model could catalyze similar changes in the broader economy, thereby improving productivity and enhancing national competitiveness.

This forum excerpts selected essays from the book that explore the insights forming the larger vision of the work.

- Chuck Prow kicks off the forum by setting the context and outlining the purpose and intent of *Governing to Win: Enhancing National Competitiveness Through New Policy and Operating Approaches*.
- Gail Fosler then details why governance is the new competitiveness imperative.
- F. Stevens Redburn follows with a cogent description of a new strategic approach for reforming our country’s budgeting process.
- Mark Forman discusses the changes that need to occur in both the technologies government uses and the way its IT systems are governed.
- Raj Sharma rethinks government purchasing and supply chains.

These essays paint outlines of both opportunities and challenges that the present period provides to government executives. We do our best in this forum to delve into this new and different terrain, the shifting contours and dangerous detours that define this moment in time. ■

