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It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch - - Committees, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and the Congressional Budget Office; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks, especially those in Washington; and (3) major reports from national professional associations. A few new high quality, high relevance think tank-sponsored books are also listed.

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Adolescent Literacy. Alliance for Excellent Education. December 15, 2011.

The nation's workforce is demanding ever more literate workers and citizens. As technology advances and the American economy grows increasingly knowledge based, individuals must be able to read, write, and communicate at higher levels in order to remain economic and social contributors. A student's level of literacy is a critical determinant of success in secondary school and beyond. Currently, more than half of America's secondary students struggle to read their textbooks and other course materials. Still, research demonstrates that adolescents' literacy levels can improve with intensive, comprehensive instruction.

<http://www.all4ed.org/files/AdolescentLiteracyFactSheet.pdf> [PDF format, 4 pages, 304.95 KB].

Item#2

Barely Half of U.S. Adults Are Married - A Record Low. Pew Research Center Social & Demographic Trends. December 14, 2011.

Barely half of all adults in the U.S., a record low, are currently married, and the median age at first marriage has never been higher for brides (26.5 years) and grooms (28.7). In 1960, 72% of all adults ages 18 and older were married; today just 51% are. If current trends continue, the share of adults who are currently married will drop to below half within a few years. Other adult living arrangements-including cohabitation, single-person households and single parenthood-have all grown more prevalent in recent decades.

[*Note: contains copyrighted material*].

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/12/marriage-decline-final.pdf> [PDF format, 14 pages, 331.83 KB].

Item#3

Federal Laws Relating to Cybersecurity: Discussion of Proposed Revisions. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Eric A. Fischer. December 7, 2011.

For more than a decade, various experts have expressed increasing concerns about cybersecurity, in light of the growing frequency, impact, and sophistication of attacks on information systems in the U.S. and abroad. Consensus has also been building that the current legislative framework for cybersecurity might need to be revised. The complex federal role in cybersecurity involves both securing federal systems and assisting in protecting nonfederal systems. Under current law, all federal agencies have cybersecurity responsibilities relating to their own systems, and many have sector-specific responsibilities for critical infrastructure.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42114.pdf> [PDF format, 52 pages, 505.85 KB].

Item#4

From Brussels to Durban: Debt and Climate Crises Spotlight Free Riders. YaleGlobal. Scott Barrett. December 9, 2011.

Europe's rapid response to the debt crisis may have overshadowed the long-planned negotiations on climate change in Durban, but the contrast throws light on the problem of global governance, explains

Barrett. Both crises demonstrate the limits of collective action in the face of known dangers. In Europe, poor fiscal discipline by any euro member threatened other countries, he explains, while on climate change, every country's emissions add to atmospheric concentrations, harmful to all, and yet each nation bears the cost of reduction alone. So, countries are tempted to become free riders, delaying their own response and collecting benefits without sharing the costs.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/debt-and-climate-crises-spotlight-free-riders> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#5

Global Consensus to Rise and Occupy. YaleGlobal. Laurence Brahm. December 15, 2011.

The year 2011 has given rise to a wave of peaceful protests around the globe. In Tunisia, Egypt, Europe, the U.S. and now even Russia, citizens organize via social media, convene in public spaces and protest policies that fail to protect the public interest. Alarm is building about governments and corporations that mismanage diminishing resources, argues Laurence Brahm. In turn, that mismanagement erodes employment opportunities, sustainability, equality, infrastructure, security, weakening media vigilance and basic trust. "Activists across the developing world have come to the realization that standard economic measures overlook key components of well-being and stability," writes Brahm, and these concerns have spread to the developed world as well. In the face of global consensus, corporations and governments must respond with policies that are fair, transparent and sustainable.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/global-consensus-rise-and-occupy> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#6

Iran Frustrated Attempting to Take Charge of Arab Rising. YaleGlobal. Jamsheed K. Choksy. December 13, 2011.

When the Arab uprisings began, Iran was delighted. Iranian leaders claimed credit, suggesting their 1979 revolution inspired the revolutionary spirit sweeping the region, even though Iran repressed its own election protesters in summer of 2009. Young adults who galvanized protests did not risk all to overthrow autocratic leaders in favor of controlling fundamentalists. New leaders cautiously step into the political void, appeasing fundamentalist clerics who could be quick to whip up anger with accusations of cronyism with foreign powers. But Islamist parties have more sympathy with Tehran's concerns than those of Washington, notes Choksy.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/iran-frustrated-attempt-take-charge-arab-rising> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#7

It All Starts with Training: Crisis Prevention and U.S. Foreign Affairs Agencies. American Center for Progress. John Norris et al. December 14, 2011.

Conflict prevention training for our foreign affairs personnel would better serve our foreign affairs agencies, and it would make it so our military personnel are less likely over time to be deployed in direct conflict. That will save both lives and treasure in the long run, according to the authors.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/12/pdf/crisis_prevention.pdf [PDF format, 40 pages, 726.38 KB].

Item#8

MetroMonitor: Tracking Economic Recession and Recovery in America's 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas. Brookings Institution. December 15, 2011.

Output growth accelerated during the third quarter in nearly all large metropolitan areas but job growth slowed in most. Unemployment rates, although lower than at the beginning of 2010 in most large metropolitan areas, remained very high. Housing markets began to improve, as most large metropolitan areas saw increases in house prices and declines in foreclosures during the quarter. Manufacturing employment continued to grow and remained an important contributor to economic recovery but this growth slowed and became less widespread during the third quarter. Government employment had an important impact on economic recovery. As always, metropolitan economic performance varied greatly among the 100 largest metropolitan areas. High technology and Great Lakes auto centers recovered strongly, while government and transportation/warehousing centers in the South generally lagged.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/Programs/Metro/metro_monitor/2011_12_metro_monitor/1215_metro_monitor.pdf [PDF format, 10 pages, 321.21 KB].

Item#9

North Korea After Kim. Council on Foreign Relations. Jayshree Bajoria. December 19, 2011.

The reported death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il on December 18, 2011, has raised serious concerns over the future of the country and stability in the Korean peninsula. His son Kim Jong-un is now expected to take over the helm of the nuclear-armed Communist country, one of the most closed-off societies in the world.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.cfr.org/north-korea/north-korea-after-kim/p17322> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#10

The Saudi-Iranian Rivalry and the Future of Middle East Security. Strategic Studies Institute. W. Andrew Terrill. December 8, 2011.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have often behaved as serious rivals for influence in the Middle East and especially the Gulf area since at least Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. While both nations define themselves as Islamic, the differences between their foreign policies could hardly be more dramatic. Recently, the

rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran has intensified and been reflected in their policies involving a number of regional states including Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and others.

<http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1094> [HTML format with links to PDF (3.89 MB) file and Kindle Reader].

Item#11

The United States and China in Power Transition. Strategic Strategies Institute. David Lai. December 19, 2011.

Historically, systematic power transitions were settled in war. Can China and the United States avoid a deadly contest and spare the world another catastrophe? What can we expect from China and the United States with respect to the future of international relations?

<http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1093> [HTML format with a link to a PDF file, 284 pages].

Item#12

Vaclav Havel's Lasting Words. Council on Foreign Relations. Robert McMahon. December 18, 2011.

Vaclav Havel, who died on December 18, was the last president of Czechoslovakia and the first president of the Czech Republic. He was also a renowned writer and humanist who became a staunch advocate for the Euro-Atlantic alliance and a leading global voice for human rights, says the author.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.cfr.org/czech-rep/vaclav-havels-lasting-words/p26848> [HTML format, various paging].