
E-ALERT is compiled based on an email service we receive from the Department of State's Office of International Information Programs. We are sending it to you to alert you of the latest issues and debates in the United States.

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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Reports

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Building Civilian Interagency Capacity for Missions Abroad: Key Proposals and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Nina M. Serafino et al. December 22, 2011.

Within the past two decades, prominent foreign policy organizations and foreign policy experts have perceived serious deficiencies in the authorities, organizations, and personnel used to conduct interagency missions that prevent the U.S. from exercising its power to full advantage. For the 112th Congress, proposals to address these problems may be of interest for their perceived potential not only to enhance performance, but also to save money by streamlining processes, encouraging interagency cooperation, and reducing duplication.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42133.pdf> [PDF format, 87 pages, 768.54 KB].

Item#2

Campaign 2012: The Candidates on Nuclear Proliferation. Council on Foreign Relations. January 6, 2012.

Among Republican presidential candidates, the issue of nuclear proliferation has centered on Iran's ambitions, while President Obama kicked off his presidency with high-profile nuclear initiatives, according to the analysis.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.cfr.org/us-election-2012/campaign-2012-candidates-nuclear-proliferation/p26984> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#3

The Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of the United States. U.S. Department of Commerce. January 2012.

The report serves as a call to arms, highlighting bipartisan priorities to sustain and promote American innovation and economic competitiveness. The report was mandated as part of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, which was signed into law by President Obama in January last year. The report addresses a diverse range of topics and policy options, including: tax policy; the general business climate in the U.S.; barriers to setting up new firms; trade policy, including export promotion; the effectiveness of federal research and development policy; intellectual property regimes in the U.S. and abroad; the health of the manufacturing sector; and science and technology education.

http://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2012/january/competes_010511_0.pdf [PDF format, 160 pages, 4.86 MB].

Item#4

Continued Majority Support for Death Penalty. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. January 6, 2012.

Public opinion about the death penalty has changed only modestly in recent years, but there continues to be far less support for the death penalty than there was in the mid-1990s. A Pew Research Center survey on this issue, conducted Nov. 9-14, 2011, among 2,001 adults, finds that 62% favor the death penalty for people convicted of murder while 31% are opposed. That is generally in line with polling on the death penalty over the past several years.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/1-6-12%20Death%20penalty%20release.pdf> [PDF format, 5 pages, 53.13 KB].

Item#5

Forty-Fourth Terrorist Plot Against the U.S. Marks Need for Continued Vigilance. Heritage Foundation. Jessica Zuckerman. January 9, 2012.

On Saturday night, 25-year-old Sami Osmakac was arrested in connection to an alleged Islamist-inspired terrorist plot in Tampa, Florida. Osmakac, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in the former Yugoslavia, is believed to have planned to use vehicle bombs, assault rifles, grenades, and other explosives in an attack on possible targets including night clubs, businesses, and a local sheriff's office. His arrest was the result of an undercover operation in which the FBI had been monitoring Osmakac for months. Osmakac's arrest marks the 44th terrorist plot foiled against the U.S. since 9/11 and serves as a strong reminder that the global war against terrorists is not yet won.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2012/pdf/wm3446.pdf [PDF format, 2 pages, 1.59 MB].

Item#6

Global Health and the New Bottom Billion: How Funders Should Respond to Shifts in Global Poverty and Disease Burden. Center for Global Development. Amanda Glassman et al. January 6, 2012.

After a decade of rapid economic growth, many developing countries have attained middle-income status. But poverty reduction in these countries has not kept pace with economic growth. As a result, most of the world's poor now live in these new middle-income countries (MICs), making up a "new bottom billion." As the new MICs are home to most of the world's poor, they also carry the majority of the global disease burden. This poses a challenge to global health agencies, in particular the GAVI Alliance and the Global Fund, which are accustomed to disbursing funds on the assumption that the majority of poor people live in poor countries. The report provides recommendations.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.cgdev.org/files/1425851_file_Glassman_Duran_Sumner_global_health.pdf [PDF format, 4 pages, 184 KB].

Item#7

GOP Voters Still Unenthused About Presidential Field. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. January 9, 2012.

Republican voters continue to express mixed views of the party's presidential field. Roughly half (51%) of Republican and Republican-leaning registered voters say the candidates are excellent or good, while 44% say they are only fair or poor. Mitt Romney holds a sizable lead in the race for the GOP nomination.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/1-9-12%20Political%20Release.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages, 198.73 KB].

Item#8

North Korea: What Not to Do. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Victor Cha. January 9, 2012.

The announcement of Kim Jong Un as Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army is one more step in the process of Pyongyang's efforts to consolidate power as quickly as possible after the sudden death of Kim Jong Il. It is fairly certain that the proliferation of pronouncements and titles given to the young Kim are manifestations of a terribly rushed succession process. Something that they hoped could be done over the course of a decade or more has suddenly been set in motion.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://csis.org/files/publication/Pac1.pdf> [PDF format, 2 pages, 95.85 KB].

Item#9

Using Public-Private Partnership to Carry Out Highway Projects. Congressional Budget Office. January 2012.

The U.S. has a network of over 4 million miles of public roads. That system has faced increasing demands over time. Almost all of those infrastructure projects were undertaken using a traditional approach in which a state or local government assumes most of the responsibility for carrying out a project and bears most of its risks, such as the possibility of cost overruns, delays in the construction schedule, and, in the case of toll roads, shortfalls in the road's revenues. Some observers assert that an alternative approach, using a public-private partnership, could increase the money available for highway projects and complete the work more quickly or at a lower cost than is possible through the traditional method. Specifically, such a partnership could secure financing for a project through private sources that might require more accountability and could assign greater responsibility to private firms for carrying out the work.

<https://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/126xx/doc12647/01-09-PublicPrivatePartnerships.pdf> [PDF format, 44 pages, 4.28 MB].

Item#10

Why Policymakers Should Care about Children's Savings. New American Foundation. William Elliott. January 5, 2011.

"Creating a Financial Stake in College" is a four-part series of reports that focuses on the relationship between children's savings and improving college success. Report I presents a case for why policymakers should care about promoting savings, especially among children from lower income families. The report presents evidence on the relationship between children's savings and college success and provides the context for a broader discussion of designing children's savings policies and ensuring that they offer children a meaningful financial stake in college.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/Elliott_I_final1.4.12.pdf [PDF format, 19 pages, 348.58 KB].