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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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Reports

Item#1

AMERICAN PUBLIC HAS MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' ISSUE POSITIONS. National Annenberg Election Survey. Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Web posted October 2, 2008.

Many Americans are unable to identify where the major party candidates' stand on various issues ranging from health care to abortion to free trade, according to recent data collected by the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey. Only a little over a quarter (28 percent) of adults were able to identify Senator John McCain as the presidential candidate more likely to support free trade agreements like NAFTA.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

<http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/Downloads/Releases/NAES%202008/Political%20Knowledge%20final.pdf> [PDF format, 6 pages].

Item#2

EVEN AS OPTIMISM ABOUT IRAQ SURGES: DECLINING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT. Pew Research Center. September 24, 2008.

The public is feeling much better about how the war in Iraq is going these days, but at the same time has a sharply diminished support for U.S. efforts to deal with an array of global problems. Fewer people than at any point in this decade assign high priority to such foreign policy goals as preventing genocide, strengthening the United Nations, promoting and defending human rights, and reducing the global spread of AIDS and other infectious diseases.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/453.pdf> [PDF format, 40 pages].

Item#3

FOLLOW THE MONEY: WHY THE US IS LOSING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Anthony H. Cordesman. Web posted September 26, 2008.

According to the report, the weakness of the Afghan central government and the fact that the Taliban-HiG-Haqqani and Al Qa'ida have had a near sanctuary in Pakistan have played a critical role in the resurgence of the threat, and creating an insurgency that has made major gains over the last four years. The report provides a detailed summary of the

steady growth in Taliban-HiG-Haqqani and Al Qa'ida threat activity and its impact on U.S. casualties.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/080919_afghanwarcosts.pdf [PDF format, 26 pages].

Item#4

FOOD STAMPS, FEDERALISM, AND WORKING FAMILIES. Urban Institute. Kenneth Finegold. Web posted September 16, 2008.

The combination of a domestic economic slowdown and the recent worldwide rise in food prices threatens to increase the number of American households experiencing "food insecurity," which the government defines as lacking access to enough food for an active, healthy life at all times. They can, however, take advantage of state Food Stamp Program (FSP) policy options that increase eligibility and benefits. The state cost of expanding FSP is low because the federal government pays the entire cost of benefits and about half of state administrative expenses.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411752_food_stamps.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages].

Item#5

A FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET FOR THE FUTURE: FIXING THE CRISIS IN DIPLOMATIC READINESS. American Academy of Diplomacy. October 2008.

The report recommends that the State Department hire 4,735 more Foreign Service staffers and other key personnel between fiscal 2010 and 2014. New hires would be involved in core diplomatic efforts such as operating embassies and working with businesses and nongovernmental organizations abroad; engage in public diplomacy; administer economic assistance programs like those at USAID; and manage reconstruction and stabilization projects similar to ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those staffers would fill a 2008 shortfall of 2,400 employees, the authors say, and help State expand its activities while allowing more employees to receive much-needed training.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

http://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/publications/FAB_report_2008.pdf [PDF format, 30 pages].

Item#6

GETTING THE PEOPLE PART RIGHT: A REPORT ON THE HUMAN RESOURCES DIMENSION OF U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY. U.S. Department of State. 2008.

Public diplomacy, the effort to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in support of foreign policy objectives, has never been more important to the security of U.S. than it is today. The challenges confronting U.S. public diplomacy (PD) are varied and there is no single easy fix for them. Getting the human resources dimension of public diplomacy right, however, can go a long way toward enhancing the

overall effectiveness of our nation's outreach to the world. The report casts a spotlight on these important issues and offers some concrete recommendations for improvement.

Full Text:

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf> [PDF format, 41 pages].

Item#7

HIGH STAKES, MORE MEANING: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS OF REDESIGNING THE US CITIZENSHIP TEST. Migration Policy Institute. Web posted September 29, 2008.

More than a decade in the making, the redesigned citizenship test required for use after October 1, 2008 is supposed to provide a more meaningful opportunity for applicants to demonstrate knowledge about US history and civics, and allow the government more standardized test administration. The most significant change to the test is the new civics portion. As before, applicants must correctly answer six out of 10 questions drawn from a master list of 100 civics questions. However, the 100 questions have undergone a significant overhaul with new questions emphasizing core concepts of American democracy and new items about geography, Native Americans, and women.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/BR6_NatzTest_092908.pdf [PDF format, 18 pages].

Item#8

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION. Brookings Institution. Ralph C. Bryant. October 2, 2008.

The financial meltdown is now worldwide. Financial institutions have failed or are under severe pressure not only in the United States but in the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Ireland, Iceland, Russia, China, India, and other nations. The turmoil began with falling prices for housing and for securities and derivatives backed by mortgages. But it is increasingly unanchored from those original causes. Herd behavior and self-fulfilling expectations are now threatening even healthy, adequately capitalized institutions.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2008/1002_financial_crisis_bryant.aspx [HTML format, various paging].

Item#9

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION PROCESS IN NEED OF A MAJOR UPGRADE. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Norman J. Ornstein. October 16, 2008.

The most vulnerable period for the United States is the first few months of a new administration. According to Ornstein, the best step to take now would be to follow the State of the Union model. Bush should agree to have one or two of his top Cabinet members, say the secretaries of State and the Treasury, resign as of 9 a.m. January 20, with Bush nominating the incoming president's choices so that the

Senate can confirm them before the inauguration. This insures that at least one top official representing the views of the new president and clearly in the line of succession would be away in case of disaster.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

http://www.aei.org/publications/filter.all,pubID.28777/pub_detail.asp
[HTML format, various paging].

Item#10

U.S. METRO ECONOMIES: CURRENT AND POTENTIAL GREEN JOBS IN THE U.S. ECONOMY. United States Conference of Mayors. Web posted October 6, 2008.

According to the study, the U.S. economy currently generates more than 750,000 green jobs, a number that is projected to grow five-fold to more than 4.2 million jobs over the next three decades. The report is the first calculation of its kind to measure how many direct and indirect jobs are in the new and emerging U.S. green economy. Current green jobs are well distributed across the country. Approximately 85% are located in metropolitan areas, while the remaining ones are found in non-metro counties.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

Full Text:

<http://www.usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/GreenJobsReport.pdf> [PDF format, 41 pages].