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News, Research and Events

February 16, 2022



The 'Texas Freeze' one year later: What happened? Can it happen again?

It's been one year since a deadly winter storm struck Texas, leaving millions of people without power for days in subfreezing temperatures. The Texas power grid, operated by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), was tremendously stressed by the abnormal storm, and even now questions remain about what happened and whether such a catastrophe could occur again.

A [working paper](#) by the [Center for Energy Studies' Peter Hartley, Ken Medlock and Elsie Hung](#) offers a step-by-step examination of various factors that were blamed for the extended power outages and reveals that no single factor fully explains the calamity. All forms of generation capacity experienced failures, but the bureaucratic failure in identifying and addressing risks along fuel supply chains was a significant part of the issue, the authors write. To prevent future disasters, they recommend enhancing coordination among state agencies and reevaluating market rules, among other policy solutions.

Read the full paper in the Baker Institute's [online research library](#).

Strategic response options if Russia cuts gas supplies to Europe

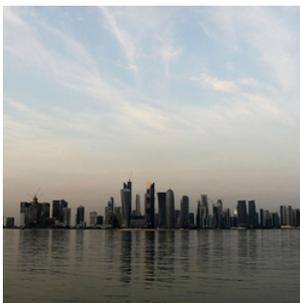


Russia's intensifying challenges to physical and energy security in Europe demand bold response options, write fellows [Gabriel Collins, Ken Medlock, Steven Miles and Anna Mikulska](#). Their new [working paper](#) seeks to quantify the potential energy security consequences of a significant disruption of gas supplies from Russia to Europe, and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of several response strategies. Read it [here](#).

Although immigration strategies of wealthy liberal democracies “may temporarily reduce arrivals or divert migratory routes, they do not offer long-term solutions. As long as migrants and refugees are left without viable means to rebuild their lives, the pressure to move will remain.”

Kelsey Norman, Fellow for the Middle East and Director, Women’s Rights, Human Rights & Refugees Program, in [Foreign Affairs](#) (subscription required)

Latest Research



How Qatar became a key U.S. ally. Less than five years after former President Donald Trump appeared to back the Saudis and Emiratis in launching their blockade of Qatar, President Biden has designated the nation a major non-NATO ally. Fellow [Kristian Coates Ulrichsen](#) explains this and other developments in U.S.-Qatari diplomacy in [The New Arab](#).



Poll: Texas 2022 elections and issues. Through a collaboration with the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston, Baker Institute fellow [Mark P. Jones](#) co-authored a [series of reports](#) polling registered Texas voters regarding their opinions of the 2022 primary candidates and various policy issues — including the state’s response to energy concerns and voting and election related reforms.



Who will defend embattled scientists? In an op-ed, fellow [Peter Hotez](#) describes the worsening harassment of scientists during the pandemic, including threats through emails, anonymous phone calls, social media and personal confrontations. The ongoing attacks may require the formation of a new type of organization to ensure the scientists’ safety and productivity, he says. Read more at the [Boston Globe](#) (subscription required).

Upcoming Events

Visegrad Group: The Challenges and Opportunities in Energy Markets and Beyond. Ambassadors from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic, collectively known as the Visegrad Group, discuss energy security, economic and political integration, and the rising tensions between the EU, China, Russia and the United States. **February 23 | 9:00 a.m. CST**

Webinar — The Risks of Constitutional Reform for the Energy Sector: Crippling Mexico's Future? A constitutional reform proposed by Mexico's President Andrés Manuel López Obrador could severely impact private investors in energy, thwart climate policy objectives and hinder Mexico's long-term economic growth. A panel of experts considers these and other potential consequences. **February 24 | 11:00 a.m. CST**

Visiting with the Ambassador: An RYP Open House at Baker Hall. Join fellow and future [Roundtable Young Professionals](#) for a membership recruitment, networking and open house event in Baker Hall's Doré Commons. Baker Institute Director Ambassador [Edward P. Djerejian](#) will offer brief remarks. Learn about RYP membership [here](#). **March 8 | 6:00 p.m. CST**

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