



News, Research and Events

Nov. 3, 2021



*Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images*

## The Carter-Baker Commission: 16 years later

In 2005, former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State [James A. Baker, III](#), co-chaired the Commission on Federal Election Reform, which produced a report on the U.S. electoral process and recommendations on maximizing ballot access and election integrity.

In spring 2021, [The Carter Center](#) and the Baker Institute conducted a series of [five webinars](#) that again examined critical challenges facing the U.S. electoral system. A new report includes the results of discussions by a range of election officials and experts who provided hands-on analysis about the problems confronting our elections and advice on how to solve them. Read it [here](#).

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## America on edge: Settling for second place?



The United States risks ceding its longstanding global leadership in science and engineering to China, write senior fellow [Neal F. Lane](#) and former Lockheed-Martin CEO Norman Augustine in [Issues in Science and Technology](#).

Read the authors' [recommendations and concrete steps](#) to advance U.S. international research and economic competitiveness.

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## Center for Energy Studies: Focus on climate change



### CES a finalist in global climate challenge competition

A [carbon-storage project](#) led by the Center for Energy Studies is a finalist in the first international [Climate Challenge Cup](#) competition. The winners will be announced Nov. 10 at the [United Nations 2021 Climate Change Conference](#) currently in progress in Glasgow, Scotland. In the meantime, read more of the CES' [climate-related work here](#) — including [this week's blog](#) on a dispute over one of Poland's largest lignite mines, an important source of jobs and serious environmental concerns.



### A net-zero Saudi Arabia? Not so fast

Saudi Arabia has declared a goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2060 — a formidable task for a country built on oil, but an essential one for the kingdom's future, write [Center for Energy Studies](#) fellow [Jim Krane](#) and co-author Karen Young. However, the Saudis have a number of advantages to help them make the shift.

Read more in [Al-Monitor](#).

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***“The disruptions that are caused by the pandemic have worsened a lot of things. ... We would have continued to see a rise in the synthetic opioid-related overdoses, but the pandemic worsened it.”***

Katharine Neill Harris, Ph.D., fellow in drug policy,  
in [Yahoo Finance](#)

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## Latest research



**Iran Won't Back Down.** “As the U.S. and Iran prepare for talks to revive the nuclear agreement that Washington abandoned in 2018, the leadership in Tehran is laying the groundwork for a newly assertive foreign policy,” writes fellow [Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar](#) in Foreign Affairs. Read the full article [here](#).



**A dubious exceptionalism: Texas vs. other states' curriculum standards.** Texas social studies curriculum standards do not give public school students the balanced coverage of religion they need to function effectively in an increasingly diverse society, contends nonresident scholar [David R. Brockman](#). His comparison of equivalent curriculum standards in five culturally similar states identifies lessons Texas can learn from its counterparts. Read Brockman's paper [here](#).



**The fracas with France.** Paris and Washington are past the immediate AUKUS crisis, but two major, related issues will remain high on Biden's foreign policy agenda for the balance of his term, writes fellow [Joe Barnes](#): China's military expansion in the Pacific and the EU's role in great power politics. Read more at the [Baker Institute Blog](#).

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## Upcoming events

**Webinar — The Way Forward: Immigration Reform for the 21st Century.** At this virtual conference featuring a keynote address by Fort Bend [County Judge KP George](#), experts discuss the challenges faced by the undocumented immigrant population in the U.S. and potential policy solutions to benefit the country and domestic economy. **Nov. 4 | 9:00 a.m. CDT**

**Roundtable Dialogue: Are We Moving Toward a “Post-American” Regional Security Complex in the Persian Gulf?** At this member-exclusive event, Middle East fellow [Kristian Coates Ulrichsen](#) examines the factors reshaping regional security interests in the Persian Gulf. For those attending in person, breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. The program can also be viewed virtually; visit the [event page](#) for details. Consider joining our Roundtable to enjoy this and other member events! **Nov. 11 | 8:00 a.m. CST**

**Webinar — Old Conflict, New Frameworks, Evolving Discourses: The Future of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 30 Years After Madrid.** Experts reflect on the Madrid Peace Conference’s unfinished business in the shadow of triumphs and failed efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. **Nov. 16 | 9:00 a.m. CST**

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Rice University, MS-40, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251-1892