

Baker Briefing

Research from the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy

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HOWARD H. BAKER JR.
CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Global Security



GS Director Wiegand's Article on South China Sea Tension Published in *The Conversation*

Published April 19 - As part of a joint military exercise with the Philippines, the U.S. Navy is slated to sink a mock warship on April 26, 2023, in the South China Sea.

The live-fire drill is not a response to increased tensions with China over Taiwan, both the U.S. and the Philippines have stressed. But, either way, Beijing isn't happy – responding by holding its own staged military event involving actual warships and fighter jets deployed around Taiwan, a self-governed island that Beijing claims as its own.

Read Global Security director [Krista Wiegand](#)'s full article in *The Conversation* [here](#).



Wiegand Participates in Indo-Pacific Security Dialogues

When the Baker Center's [Krista Wiegand](#) talks about Indo-Pacific security issues, government and military officials across the globe listen.

These security dialogues are highly exclusive, bringing in a mix of retired government, military, and diplomatic officials, as well as researchers from universities and think tanks to provide nonpartisan assessments of security threats. Read more about the security dialogues [here](#).



"Named and Shamed"

International advocacy campaigns can influence levels of oppression and the leaders who conduct it. Global Security affiliate [Kelly Morrison](#)'s new research suggests that opposition attitudes toward oppressive leaders can be increased among those who don't view oppression victims as threatening and don't identify with the leader. However, there is potential backlash from these campaigns. Those who view victims as threatening and do identify with the leader will increase their support of the leader after such a campaign.

Read the full article, [*Named and Shamed: International Advocacy and Public Support for Repressive Leaders*](#), published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Energy & Environment



New Research on the Transportation Sector and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

New research from Baker Center research associate [Benjamin Leard](#) and Baker Center fellow [David Greene](#) has significant implications for policies geared toward reducing fuel use and

greenhouse gas emissions. Leard and Greene released their newest report in which they develop a method for projecting how long cars and trucks can survive before going to the junkyard. [READ](#)

Leard also discussed the economics of reducing emissions from passenger vehicles at an Energy & Environment Forum. [WATCH](#)



Can Coal Ash Be Repurposed?

As a part of the Department of Energy-funded research on rare earth elements and coal ash, Energy & Environment director [Charles Sims](#) and Baker expert [Deborah Penchoff](#) toured Southern Company's Ash Beneficial Use demonstration facility at Plant Bowen in Georgia.

The goal of the project is to repurpose the vast amounts of coal ash in the Southeast as a feedstock for the rare earth elements needed in the region's burgeoning electric vehicle and battery industry. The Baker Center is leading the research project with the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, and the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation.



Milt Russell Tribute

On Friday, April 21 the Baker Center hosted a memorial service for former economics professor and environmental champion, Milt Russell.

Russell served as a senior staff economist at the Council of Economic Advisors and assistant administrator for policy, planning, and evaluation at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). His biggest accomplishment at the EPA was leading a team to conduct a cost-benefit study on phasing out lead in motor fuels.

He worked in the UTK economics department from 1987 to 1997. During his tenure, he founded the Joint Institute for Energy and Environment, which today is part of the Institute for a Secure and Sustainable Environment.

For more information on Russell's legacy, visit [here](#).

Student Spotlight



Nolan Ragland, Baker Scholar and Ambassador since fall of 2019, was named Undergraduate Researcher of the Year at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Ragland has extensive research experience as an undergraduate, working as a Global Security research assistant for the Baker Center under the mentorship of Global Security director Krista Wiegand. He also co-authored a paper *Who Sets the Human Rights Agenda*, with Jonathan Ring, director of Baker Center's Student

Programs.

Ragland's senior thesis, *Does Electoral Proximity Influence Commitment to International Human Rights Law*, builds on the democratization explanation for human rights treaty accession.

Learn more about Ragland's research [here](#).

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