Robert M. Cutler

Energy Security, Infrastructure & Geoeconomics

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Robert M. Cutler advises on the geopolitical, commercial, and institutional conditions affecting energy and infrastructure decisions. His experience includes evaluating Caspian export-pipeline options, advising on energy diplomacy and negotiating approaches, and preparing executive briefings. His research addresses energy security, regional integration, and access to markets, with sustained attention to Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Selected advisory assignments

Caspian export-pipeline options | 2000–2004

Consultant to the special assistant to the president of an international oil and gas development company with operations in Central Asia. Evaluated proprietary financial and organizational information, assessed geopolitical risks, and recommended export-pipeline routes and negotiating approaches.

Energy diplomacy and strategic communications | 2018–2020

Advised the director for corporate strategy of a pipeline-development company in the Black Sea–Caspian region. Designed and implemented its external information strategy; developed website and other information products; communicated through conferences, seminars, policy writing, and interviews; and advised on negotiating strategies and international-diplomatic approaches.

Executive briefings and policy dialogue | EastWest Institute | 1998–1999

Consultant to the special assistant to the president. Served as rapporteur for the Second East–West Leaders' Forum and prepared a briefing book for a high-level American business delegation to the Caspian Sea region.

Caucasus Working Group | Centre for European Policy Studies | 1998–2000

Contributed proposals on stability, security, energy development, and pipeline construction in the South Caucasus. Assessed how existing or new international institutions could support regional security and cooperation.

Institutional design | Parliamentarians for Global Action | 2003–2005

Designed the institutional blueprint for a Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians for the International Criminal Court and Rule of Law, defining structure, responsibilities, and functions. Served as rapporteur for the organization's strategic review and planning retreat for organizational renewal.

Expert witness on human rights in Central Asia | 2002–2009

Prepared affidavits and court-recognized expert opinions for U.S. immigration appeals concerning the likelihood of religious, gender-based, or political persecution following return to a country of origin.

Public diplomacy and specialist briefings | U.S. Department of State | 2009, 2010, 2012

Speaker and Specialist Grantee. Delivered invited lectures and public presentations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, and Romania; led seminars at research institutes and policy think tanks; and consulted with government advisory and decision-making bodies.

Strategic foresight

Strategic foresight through expert simulations | Wikistrat

Lead analyst for The European Union in 2030 (2013), a three-week simulation involving 80 analysts worldwide, and Global Middle Class Values 2033 (2014), a two-week simulation involving 80 analysts worldwide. These are selected examples from service as lead analyst (2013–2018) and senior analyst (2012–2018).

Research and program leadership

Program leadership | NATO Association of Canada | 2018–present

Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Energy Security Program. Manages and edits the program's analytical publishing; develops publication series; trains and mentors interns; and organizes and moderates webinars and podcasts.

Practitioner Member, Waterloo Institute for Complexity and Innovation, University of Waterloo, 2019–Present.

Applying complex-systems analysis to global energy geoeconomics, organizational resilience, and antifragility, emphasizing adaptive evolutionary responses to systemic volatility. Institutional strategic planning, participation in WICI's visioning session; developing interdisciplinary links with Balsillie School of International Affairs and WICI's Montreal network.

Energy Program Asia | Leiden University | 2005–2019

Member of the Energy Program Asia research team at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden University. Contributed analytical chapters and reviewed and edited colleagues' work.

Canadian Energy Research Institute | 2016–2021

Fellow. Research and analysis of energy security and geoeconomics.

Contributing Analyst/Editor: The Times of Central Asia, 2024–Present; Strategy International, 2021–Present; Central Asia–Caucasus Analyst, contributor since 1999; Derik Ekonomi [Deep Economy] (Istanbul), 2015–2022; Asia Times, 2007–2013; FSU Oil & Gas Monitor, 1998–2001; many other op-ed analyses.

Analyses of Eurasian energy security, geo-economics, Asian and European finance and markets.

Selected analytical writing: robertcutler.org/blog and muckrack.com/RobertMCutler.

Institutional and editorial service

Member, Board of Directors, Montreal Press Club (MPC), 2013–2019.

Chairman, 2015–2019; Secretary pro tempore, 2015–2016; Vice-President, 2014–2015. Designed organizational structure, redeveloped institutional infrastructure; established inter-organizational partnership co-operation between MPC and Brussels Press Club Europa.

Member, Executive Board, Central Eurasian Studies Society, 2002–2005.

Key team member guiding organizational takeoff of a new international interdisciplinary scholarly organization with membership doubling every year from 2001 to 2005. In addition: Chair, Institutional Linkages Committee; Member, Publications Committee.

Selected editorial service

Editorial service includes The Times of Central Asia, Journal of Eurasian Studies, Journal of International Organizations Studies, and Oil, Gas and Energy Law. Founding editor of the "Perspectives" section, Central Eurasian Studies Review (2002–2007).

Research and teaching

Senior Researcher, Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies [and its antecedent academic units], Carleton University, 1996–2019.

Resource person on Central and Southwest Asia and the Caucasus, and selected topics of international relations theory, including energy-related topics from Europe to East Asia. Evaluated theses, networked with foreign institutions.

Co-principal investigator, Research and Development Grant, [U.S.] Social Science Research Council, 1994–1996.

Mediated and coordinated bureaucratic interests in support of a successful grant proposal. Planned and organized workshops on post-Soviet affairs; assured attendance and discussion.

Principal Investigator, Research Grants: Co-operative Security Program, Department of External Affairs and International Trade, Government of Canada, 1993–1994; Social Science and Humanities Research Council, 1991–1994; and Special Sovietology Program, Department of Defence.

Developed, wrote, and administered projects: “Soviet Studies and Gorbachev”, “Social Science Theory and Post-Soviet Reality”, “Cooperative Security in Eurasia”, “Post-Soviet Foreign Policies in Emerging World Order”; supervised assistants, published relevant research. Innovated Cooperative Energy Security concept under Cooperative Security Program grant.

Principal Investigator [and Post-doctoral Research Fellow], Joint Committee on Soviet Studies, Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies 1985–1988.

Developed and wrote successful research proposal for studying overlap between foreign policy making and domestic bureaucratic politics. Executed plan of work, supervised assistants, administered funds, published results.

Assistant Professor of Political Science: Laval University, 1988–1996; University of California at Santa Barbara, 1985–1988; University of Arizona, 1984–1985; Webster University, Summer 1983.

Taught international relations, comparative politics and political philosophy at all levels from introductory undergraduate courses to graduate research seminars. Supervised undergraduate honours theses, one-on-one reading seminars, Master’s theses.

Education and training

Columbia University, Alan and Tudy McLaine Leadership Fellow, Rockefeller Brothers Program for East Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union, International House, 1993–1994.

Social Science Research Council, Central Asian Studies Grant, Indiana University, Summer 1993; Post-Doctoral Fellow, Soviet Studies, University of Pennsylvania, University of Illinois, 1985–1988.

University of Nantes, Fellow in International Economics, Scientific Research Council, 1984–1985.

Columbia University, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, The Harriman Institute, 1983–1984.

Moscow State University, IREX Postdoctoral Fellow, Faculty of Contemporary History, 1982–1983.

University of Michigan, Ph.D. in Political Science, 1982.

University of Geneva, Albert Gallatin Fellow in International Affairs, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Faculty of International History and Politics, 1979–1980.

Pennsylvania State University, M.A. in Political Science, 1976.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Sc.B., Political Science, 1974; Sc.B., Humanities and Science, 1974. Studies in history, literature, and mathematics, with coursework in Western European history and politics.

Languages: English (native); French (bilingual); Russian (proficient); German and Dutch (working knowledge).

Countries of international experience: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, China, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Mexico, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan.

Selected publications

"From Unipolar Drift to Systemic Bifurcation: Evolution of the Anglosphere–Sinosphere Opposition," in Tiago Luís Carvalho and Monojit Das (eds.), Geoeconomics and Governance: Evolving Roles and Challenges (London: Palgrave Macmillian, forthcoming 2026).

"In the Grip of Global Bifurcation: The EU and Its Possible Futures," Baku Dialogues 8:4 (Summer 2025), 6–32.

"The Foreign and Security Policies of Armenia and Azerbaijan, 1994–2020," in Svante E. Cornell and Damjan Mišković (eds.), After Karabakh: War, Peace, and the Forging of a New Caucasus (Washington, D.C.: AFPC Press, 2025), pp. 71–104.

"How Azerbaijan Advances South Caucasus–Central Asian Integration Through the Middle Corridor", Caucasus Strategic Perspectives 5:2 (Winter 2024), 19–30.

"Using NATO Partnership to Strengthen Strategic Autonomy for Azerbaijan and Central Asia in Rare-Earth Mining and Supply Chain," Published Remarks, Conference on Azerbaijan and NATO's Partnership for Peace, Baku, 25–27 November 2024.

"Hydrocarbon Energy Complexes: Central Eurasian Keystone Triangles," Baku Dialogues 4:3 (Spring 2021), 38–56.

"Western Blind Spot in the South Caucasus: Chronicle of a War Foretold," Caucasus Strategic Perspectives 1:2 (Winter 2020), 57–70.

Euro-Caspian Energy Security and Geoeconomics, interview by Michael Hilliard, Energy Security Program Research Brief 1 (Toronto: NATO Association of Canada, December 2020).

"Non-alignment and Azerbaijan's Energy Export Policy", Caucasus Strategic Perspectives 1:1 (Summer 2020), 33–43.

"Azerbaijan's Place in West Central Eurasian Energy Security", in Farid Shafiyev (ed.), Azerbaijan's Geopolitical Landscape (Prague: Charles University Press, 2020), chap. 4.

The Trans-Caspian Is a Pipeline for a Geopolitical Commission, Energy Security Program Policy Paper 1 (Toronto: NATO Association of Canada Energy Security Program, April 2020).

"The Unintended Consequences of Energy Policy Reform: Lessons for Canada", Geopolitics of Energy 39:9 (September 2017), 2–11.

"Foundation of the East Central Eurasian Hydrocarbon Energy Complex", in M.P. Amineh and Y. Guang (eds.), Geopolitical Economy of Energy and Environment (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 231–269.

"The Emerging East Mediterranean Energy Province: Overview and Prospects," Geopolitics of Energy 39:1 (January 2017), 11–16.

"Global Energy Governance Needs to be Multi-level and Regionalized", Caucasus International Journal 5:2 (Summer 2015), 91–105.

"Chinese Energy Companies' Relations with Russia and Kazakhstan", Perspectives on Global Development and Technology 13:5–6 (2014), 673–698.

"The Role of the Southern Gas Corridor in Prospects for European Energy Security," Caspian Report, No. 6 (Winter 2014), 28–41.

Kazakhstan's "Resource Nationalism": Its Sources and Motives, Central Asia Economic Paper 2 (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, Elliott School, Central Asia Program, September 2012).

"The Central Eurasian Hydrocarbon Energy Complex: From Central Asia to Central Europe", in M.P. Amineh (ed.), Secure Oil and Alternative Energy (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 41–74.

"Azerbaijan's Place in Euro-Caspian Energy Security", in G.E. Howard and F. Ismailzade (eds.), South Caucasus 2021: Oil, Democracy and Geopolitics (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 107–130.

"Russia's Emerging Place in the Eurasian Hydrocarbon Energy Complex", in M.P. Amineh and Y. Guang (eds.), The Globalization of Energy, (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 71–100.

"Recent Developments in the Structuration of the Central Asian Hydrocarbon Energy Complex", in C. Len and A. Chew (eds.), Asian Energy and Security Challenges (Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2009), pp. 61–82.

"Current Problems of Global Energy Security in Light of Caspian Sea Region's Recent Experience", Oil, Gas and Energy Law 4:1 (May 2006).

"The Caspian Energy Conundrum", Journal of International Affairs 56:2 (Spring 2003), 89–102.

"Cooperative Energy Security in the Caspian Region: A New Paradigm for Sustainable Development?", Global Governance 5:2 (April–June 1999), 251–271.