Robert M. Cutler

Organizational Design & Decision-making

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Robert M. Cutler advises on institutional mandates, organizational structures, and decision processes. His experience includes designing an international parliamentary institution, contributing to organizational reviews, and developing research and publication programs. This work draws on his research into complex systems, institutional development, and the relationship between organizational arrangements and effective action.

Selected advisory assignments

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

Institutional and program leadership

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. Founding Editor, “Perspectives” Section, Central Eurasian Studies Review, 2002–2007. In addition: Chair, Institutional Linkages Committee; Member, Publications Committee.

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.

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.

Contributing Analyst/Editor: The Times of Central Asia, 2024–Present; Strategy International, 2021–Present; Central Asia–Caucasus Analyst, contributor since 1999; ISN Security Watch, 2008–2011; Asia Times, 2007–2013; FSU Oil & Gas Monitor, 1998–2001; op-ed analyses in many others.

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

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

Research and teaching

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. Contributing to institutional strategic planning, including participation in WICI’s visioning session on future research priorities and interdisciplinary collaboration. Developing interdisciplinary connections with the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo’s Department of Political Science and WICI’s emerging Montreal network.

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. Advising and lecturing on these subjects, evaluating theses. Networking with foreign institutions, enhancing visibility of Institute and University.

Principal Investigator, Research Grants: [U.S.] Social Science Research Council, 1994–1996; 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 National Defence, 1989–1991.

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 proposal to study domestic influences on Soviet foreign policy making. 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.

Selected professional service

Editorial and academic advisory service has included Journal of Eurasian Studies, Journal of International Organizations Studies, Geopolitics of Energy, Oil, Gas and Energy Law, Central Eurasian Studies Review, Electronic Journal of World Politics, Cahiers d’études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde turco-iranien, and Mershon International Studies Review.

Selected Service to Professional Associations: Member, Executive Committee, Canada Section, International Studies Association, 2006–2009; Member, Executive Committee, and Vice-President, Research Group on Alienation, International Sociological Association, 1998–2002; Member, Executive Committee, and Awards Committee Chair, Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy Section, American Political Science Association, 1998–2000.

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.

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, Contemporary History Faculty, 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, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Mexico, Norway, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan.

Selected publications

Books

East-South Relations and the Political Economy of the Communist Bloc, 1971–1991, Soviet and Post-Soviet Foreign Policies 1 (Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2022). Future series volumes in preparation.

How Soviet Foreign Policy Failed: What Complexity Science Tells Us That Nothing Else Can (Litchfield Park, Ariz.: Emergent Publications, 2013).

Complex systems

"An Evolutionary Phenomenology of Resilience," with Alexander von Lingen. Kybernetes 48:4 (April 2019), 685–695. First published online August 7, 2018.

"The Application of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers to International Conflict Analysis," in I. Purica (ed.), Nonlinear Approaches to Crisis and Conflict (Bucharest: Expert, 2011), 322–353.

"The Paradox of Intentional Emergent Coherence: Organization and Decision in a Complex World," Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences 92:4 (Winter 2007), 9–27.

"Complexity Science and Knowledge-Creation in International Relations Theory," in Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems: International Relations, vol. 1 (Oxford: EOLSS/UNESCO, 2003), 253–272.

"The Complex Evolution of International Orders and the Current International Transition," InterJournal: Complex Systems, no. 255 (1999). [Abridged revision in: Ali Minai and Yaneer Bar-Yam (eds.), Unifying Themes in Complex Systems, vol. 2 (New York: Perseus Press, 2004), 515–522.]

Energy security and geoeconomics

"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.

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

"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), 41–74.

Organization and cognition

"Gorbachev as CEO Roadkill: How and Why Soviet Foreign Policy Failed to Manage Complexity," in M. Lissack and H. Gunz (eds.), Managing the Complex (New York: Quorum, 1999), 352–370.

"Unifying Cognitive-Map and Operational-Code Approaches," in C. Jönsson (ed.), Cognitive Dynamics and International Politics (London: Frances Pinter, 1982), 91–121.

"The Formation of Soviet Foreign Policy: Organizational and Cognitive Perspectives," World Politics 34:3 (April 1982), 418–436.

International parliamentary institutions

Robert M. Cutler and Alexander von Lingen. "Emerging Interregional Parliamentarism," in K. Raube et al. (eds.), Parliamentary Cooperation and Diplomacy in EU External Relations (Cheltenham: Elgar, 2019), 120–138.

"International Parliamentary Institutions as Organizations," Journal of International Organizations Studies 4:1 (Spring 2013), 104–126.

"The Emergence of International Parliamentary Institutions," in G.S. Smith and D. Wolfish (eds.), Who Is Afraid of the State? (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 201–229.