

PRESENTERS

Dr. Robert M. Cutler is Adjunct Professor, Institute of European, Russian & Eurasian Studies, Carleton University. He was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (B.Sc.), Geneva Graduate Institute of International Studies (Gallatin Fellow) and The University of Michigan (Ph.D.), and has held research and teaching appointments at major universities in the United States, Canada, France, Switzerland and Russia.

During a dozen years exclusively in universities, in three different countries, he taught 14 different subjects in international relations, comparative politics and political philosophy, at all levels from introductory undergraduate to graduate research seminar. He then expanded into policy analysis and consulting, foremost as an Energy Security and Geo-economics Specialist now covering the whole of Eurasia with a special focus on Central, South, and Southwest Asia, with a secondary focus on Europe, Russia, and China.

Dr. Afgan Niftiyev received his graduate degrees from Georgetown University and The George Washington University in international relations and political science. At the US capital, Mr. Niftiyev worked for several influential institutions including the US Congress and policy think tanks. He also served at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy which is a prominent academic institution of Azerbaijan. Mr. Niftiyev currently is responsible for strategy and policy at the Istanbul based Caspian Strategy Institute where he started working since the establishment of the institute.

Mr. Niftiyev has various publications on the topics of international and political affairs in a number of American, Turkish and Azerbaijani professional journals and popular media. Mr. Niftiyev speaks Azerbaijani, English, Turkish and Russian. His research interests include: Energy Security, Political Economy of Caspian Region, Comparative Politics of Caucasus and Central Asia.

Mr. Alex Vatanka is a Senior Fellow at the *Middle East Institute* and at the *Jamestown Foundation* in Washington D.C. Born in Tehran, he holds a BA in Political Science (Sheffield University, UK), and an MA in International Relations (Essex University, UK), and is fluent in Farsi and Danish. He specializes in Middle Eastern regional security affairs with a particular focus on Iran. From 2006 to 2010, he was the Managing Editor of *Jane's Islamic Affairs Analyst*. From 2001 to 2006, he was a senior political analyst at Jane's in London (UK) where he mainly covered the Middle East. Alex is also a Senior Fellow in Middle East Studies at the US Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) at Hurlburt Field and teaches as an Adjunct Professor at DISAM at Wright-Patterson AFB.

Beyond *Jane's*, the *Middle East Institute* and the *Jamestown Foundation*, he has written for such outlets as *Christian Science Monitor*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Americas Quarterly*, *CNN.com*, *Al Monitor*, the *Journal of International Security Affairs*, *BBC Persian Online*, *The National Interest*, *The World Today*, *PBS*, *Daily Beast*, the *Jerusalem Post*, *Journal of Democracy* and the *Council of Foreign Relations*.

H.E. Selçuk Ünal is the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Canada. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992. As a career diplomat, he held different positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, including the Western Europe Department and the Middle East-Iraqi Department. In addition to postings in Qatar and Ireland, he also served in the Turkish Permanent Missions to the UN Office in Geneva and in UN Headquarters in New York during Turkey's non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council. He was the Spokesperson and Political

Coordinator for the UNSC of the Permanent Mission of Turkey. He returned to Ankara in 2010 as the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in 2013 he was appointed as the Chief Foreign Policy Adviser of the Turkish Foreign Minister. He is serving as the Turkish Ambassador to Canada since September 2014. He is a graduate of Ankara College and the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University, Department of International Relations.

Dr. Reha Aykul Muratoğlu was assigned as Project Coordination Manager at the Department of Transit Petroleum Pipelines, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey in 2000. In 2009, he was appointed as the Head of the said Department. Transit Petroleum Pipelines Department deals with oil and gas pipelines of transit nature across Turkey. He also served as the lead negotiator of the Turkish side in Nabucco Project Support Agreement and TANAP Project Intergovernmental and Host Government Agreements. His other current permanent assignments include INOGATE Country Coordinatorship and NATO Civil Expert on Oil Pipeline Security.

HE Mr. Alexander Latsabidze's educational background includes Tbilisi Institute of Asia and Africa and Tbilisi Institute of Oriental Studies. He is fluent in English, Persian, Russian and Japanese. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador of Georgia to Canada, he served in different positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic missions of Georgia in Iran, USA, Argentine and Canada. He is also the author of a number of publications focusing on energy resources of the Caspian region, and troublesome legal status of the Caspian Sea.

Mr. Ramil Huseynli holds Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration and Master's Degree in International Relations, both from East Carolina State University. Before moving to East Carolina as a transfer student he studied Law and Social Sciences at Khazar University in Baku. In 2002 Mr. Huseynli joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Within the Foreign Ministry in Baku, he worked at the Department for Americas. His most recent position there was the Chief of North and Central American Division. His assignments include a posting to the Embassy of Azerbaijan in the United States. He served there as III Secretary in 2005-2009. Mr. Huseynli speaks English, Turkish and Russian.