

November 25, 2004

## Arctic Countries Agree on Perils of Climate Change but Not Solution

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**T**he United States and the seven other countries with Arctic territory jointly expressed concern yesterday about profound changes in the Arctic climate and said they would consider new scientific findings concluding that heat-trapping emissions were the main cause.

But they did not agree on a common strategy for curbing such emissions, to the disappointment of environmental groups and Arctic indigenous groups.

The joint statement on Arctic climate, which emerged after several days of negotiations in Reykjavik, Iceland, reflected the continuing opposition by the Bush administration to anything other than voluntary measures to slow the growth in such gases.

This put the United States at odds with the other Arctic countries, all of which are among the 128 nations that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, a treaty poised to take effect in February that requires participating industrialized countries collectively to cut emissions below levels measured in 1990.

The other Arctic countries are Russia, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and Finland.

The talks took place at a meeting of the Arctic Council, an international body that was created in 1996 to foster cooperation among the world's northernmost countries and six Arctic indigenous groups that participate in sessions but do not vote.

The statement followed the release on Nov. 9 of "Impacts of a Warming Arctic," a summary of a four-year assessment of high-latitude climate shifts done by 300 scientists at the request of the council.

The study documented an array of shifts in climate ecosystems, and ice conditions, and concluded that "human influences, resulting primarily from increased emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, have now become the dominant factor."

The report said the changes could imperil indigenous groups and many species while offering some benefits, like longer growing seasons and new shipping routes in ice-free waters.

In a speech to senior officials at the meeting, Paula J. Dobriansky, the United States under secretary of state for global affairs, said that once the full science report was released early next year, "the United States will take the findings into account as it continues to review the science on climate change."

Environmentalists and representatives of Arctic indigenous cultures said the science was clear enough to justify stronger actions to stem gases linked to the changes.

"In terms of what the planet needs, this is far from enough," Sheila Watt-Cloutier, chairwoman of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, told the Reuters news agency. The group says it represents 155,000 Arctic residents in Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Russia.