

24 February 1987
JAH/MW

ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

FROM THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING, OSLO 13 FEBRUARY 1987.

PARTICIPANTS: See Annex 2

DOCUMENTS

distributed to the participants: See Annex 3

1. After Director Rogne's words of welcome and a presentation of the participants, the proposed Agenda (Annex 1) was adopted with the following changes:

- Because of the late arrival of Dr. Roots, Item 3 should be postponed.

Two new items were added:

- 1 B. Summary of the San Diego meeting (Dr. J. H. Zumberge).
- 4 A. National organization and extent of Arctic Science.

- 1 B. THE SAN DIEGO MEETING, 1986

In order to provide background information for those who were not present at the 19th SCAR meeting, Dr. Zumberge gave a brief summary of the meeting between representatives from the Arctic nations. The meeting was summoned to explore the possibility to establish a counterpart to SCAR in the Arctic.

In spite of the differences between the Arctic and Antarctic, there are also several similarities which call for cooperation and over-border exchange of information. Science is best served by international cooperation, and there are several examples of successful multinational programmes in the Arctic.

The conclusion of the San Diego meeting was to convene a meeting of the Arctic Rim Nations in order to discuss a possible Arctic Science Organization.

2. DEFINITION OF "ARCTIC"

The term "Arctic" is not unambiguously defined. One may use geographical definitions, e.g. north of the Arctic Circle, north of 60° , or scientific criteria, as north of the 10°C July isotherm or north of the timber line, but each definition will usually exclude regions which one feels should be included and comprise areas which should be excepted. The term "Northern" is even less precise, and "Boreal" will not ring a bell to most non English speaking.

It was stated that we at this stage should be more concerned about the focus than the borders. The scope of the organization will also reflect the definition. The word "Arctic" should be used as a working term without any further definition.

3. STATUS OF ONGOING COOPERATION

Information regarding the following organizations had been circulated to the participants:

- i. Comité Arctique
- ii. Arctic Ocean Sciences Board
- iii. International Permafrost Association
- iv. UNESCO-MAB Northern Science Network
- v. International Union of Circumpolar Health
- vi. Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research
- vii. International Geosphere/Biosphere Program

Dr. Roots commented on the various organizations. He also made a brief mention of the International Council of Scientific Unions, ICSU.

ICSU encompasses several very different unions, and is thus not a uniform organization. ICSU has twice had discussions on the need for a special Arctic body. The ICSU rules do not permit discrimination of nations based on geographical criteria.

During the discussion it was stated that an ICSU representative had declared that ICSU would look favourably on a membership application from a new Arctic organization.

4 A. NATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND EXTENT OF ARCTIC SCIENCE

The participants informed about the status of Arctic Science in their respective countries and how it is organized.

4 B. NEED FOR A NEW ORGANIZATION FOR ARCTIC SCIENCE?

In a round-table discussion, the participants expressed their views on an Arctic Science Organization and the need for such a body, also considering the success or rather lack of success in previous attempts to build a similar structure. It was stressed that one will not find a uniform opinion on this matter in the national scientific communities and that the views therefore would be personal.

The fact that Iceland and the USSR were represented by observers from their respective embassies in Oslo, does not reflect a lack of interest for the subject in these countries.

Apologies were received from Dr. Ludviksson for not being able to attend the meeting. In a letter to the organizers he informed about the status of Arctic research in Iceland and welcomed the idea of establishing a forum for circumpolar research contacts. These views were also conveyed by Mr. Egilsson.

Mr. Korpusov expressed that "The question of scientific cooperation between the Arctic nations seems undoubtably interesting for our part. The Soviet side will of course study the idea of regional cooperation the the Arctic region, forms and methods of its realization, suggested by participants of the meeting".

Among the viewpoints which appeared in the discussion were these:

- The Arctic nations will have special problems, and there will also be matters limited to national interest. However, studies of cross-border phenomena emphasize the need for international cooperation.
- On the national level it is important that there are central national organizations and contacts.

- An international organization can encourage scientists and national bodies to take up research within fields where there is a need to strengthen the activity, and organize multidisciplinary programmes.
- One should not forget that Arctic science is a part of global science.
- Exchange of information is important. There is a need for a forum for information and contact.
- All examples to date have shown that where international cooperation has been involved, progress has been made.

In short: the participants' view was that science will benefit by an organization which can provide a contact forum for Arctic research.

5-8. TYPE OF ORGANIZATION/MEMBERSHIP/LEVEL OF COOPERATION/SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

Director Rogne distributed a note "Arctic Science Committee, ACS" where some key issues were sorted out and some contours of an organization could be seen. It was, however, a general feeling that it would be somewhat premature to go into a discussion on specific organization issues at this stage. It is important that all views, pro's and con's appear. These can then be further elaborated and together with Rogne's note form a discussion document for the next meeting. Items 5 to 8 on the Agenda were therefore covered in a general discussion session, continuing the exchange of views which was opened during the previous agenda item.

The participants expressed that:

- There seem to be a definite need for some kind of an Arctic science organization, but in our attempts to establish such an organization, it is important to avoid pitfalls and to take an approach which gives a reasonable possibility to succeed.
- Laying the foundation of a new organization one should build a structure which will assure continuity and long life. This can be obtained through ICSU.
- An organization inside ICSU will stand a better chance to be accepted and to succeed than a non-ICSU organization.

- Open contra closed organization:

It is obvious that the Arctic rim nations have special research and operational interests.

On the other hand some other nations have also heavy research programmes in the Arctic, and should not be excluded.

One model would be to have an organization open to all nations with "significant" research activity in the Arctic, but with a core group of the Arctic rim nations.

- The relation between basic and applied science was aired. The transition from "basic" to "applied" is gradual, and it will be difficult to define the border-line. An Arctic science organization should, however, have its center of gravity on the basic science wing and try to avoid topics which are purely of commercial interest.
- The political interests in the Arctic are obvious, it is therefore important to have political understanding for the work of establishing the organization. We must build up trust and confidence and not rush towards a dim goal.
- Can we build on an existing organization? The feeling was that this can not be done, or that any one of the existing organizations will have to be changed to such a degree that it de facto will appear as something new.
- SCAR was mentioned several times as example of a successful organization, and an organization which could be a model for an Arctic body. One should, however, also have the pre-history of SCAR in mind. This organization grew out of a successful international cooperative programme, the IGY. Science had first demonstrated the advantage and need for cooperation.
- One should be careful not to build a bureaucratic organization with a heavy superstructure.
- The body should be a union of organizations and not between scientists as individuals, but should be built in such a way that it also can be a vehicle of communication between individual scientists.

9. HOW TO PROCEED

It was proposed that a working group should be formed to elaborate on the ideas put forward at this meeting. This group shall come up with a working document which will be the basis for the discussions at the next meeting. A three-man group, consisting of Rogne, Roots and Taagholt - the RRT-group - was appointed.

The next meeting will be hosted by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariate.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

It was during the meeting stressed several times that the success of a new Arctic science organization depends to a great extent on the active participation of the USSR. The meeting will therefore express its thanks to the Foreign Office of the USSR which has made it possible for the Scientific Advisor at the USSR Embassy in Oslo, Dr. V. V. Korpusov, to participate. It was at the end of the meeting again emphasized that without the support and enthusiastic participation from the USSR, we can not achieve the goals we have in mind.

Jan A. Holtet

ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE
CONSULTATIVE MEETING, OSLO 13 FEBRUARY

AGENDA

- Proposal:
1. Welcome, presentation, agenda
 2. Definition of Arctic
 3. Status of ongoing cooperation (Fred Roots)
 - a. Scientific unions
 - b. C.A.I.
 - c. A.O.S.B.
 - d. MAE
 4. Need of improvement or organization
Statement/opinions by representaives
 5. Type of organization
 6. Membership
 7. Level of cooperation
 8. Success or failure?
 9. How to proceed

As this is the first meeting with reresentatives from all Arctic countries it may be necessary to change to a more general agenda, depending on opinions/statements made under item 4.

ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE
CONSULTATIVE MEETING. OSLO 13. FEBRUARY 1987

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- Canada : Dr. E. Fred Roots
Science Advisor, Ministry of the Environment,
Ottawa
- Danmark/Greenland: Director Gregers E. Andersen
The Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland,
Copenhagen
Dr. Jørgen Taagholt
Scientific Liason Officer for Greenland, Copenhagen
- Finland : Dr. Tuomo Kärnä
Technical Research Center of Finland, Espoo
- Iceland : Mr. Jon Egill Egilsson
Icelandic Embassy, Oslo
- Norway : Director Odd Rogne, Norwegian National Committee on
Polar Research/Norsk Polarinstitt
Dr. Jan A. Holtet, Norwegian National Committee on
Polar Research/Norsk Polarinstitt
- Sweden : Director Anders Karlqvist, Swedish Polar Research
Secretariate, Stockholm
Dr. Göran Rudbeck, Swedish Polar Research
Secretariate, Stockholm
- USA : Dr. James H. Zumberge, US Arctic Research
Commission, Los Angeles
Director W.T. Hushen, US Arctic Research
Commission, Los Angeles
- USSR : Dr. Valentin V. Korpusov, Scientific Advisor,
USSR Embassy, Oslo

ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE

CONSULTATIVE MEETING, OSLO 13. FEBRUARY 1987

DOCUMENTS distributed to the participants.

Prior to the meeting:

- Some Points for Consideration in Discussion on the Need for, Feasibility and Possible Role of an International Arctic Science Committee; by E. F. Roots and O. Rogne.
- International and Regional Cooperation in Arctic Science: A Changing Situation; by E. F. Roots.
- The Northern Science Network: regional co-operation for research and conservation; by E. F. Roots.
- Information regarding other organizations:
 1. Comité Arctique
 2. Arctic Ocean Science Board
 3. International Permafrost Association
 4. UNESCO-MAB Northern Science Network
 5. International Union for Circumpolar Health
 6. Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, SCAR
 7. International Geosphere/Biosphere Program

At the meeting:

- Letter of 6 February from Dr. V. Ludviksson, The National Research Council, Iceland.
- Science and Politics in Polar Areas; by T. Gjelsvik.
- Trends and Directions in Polar Science.
- Arctic Science Committee, ASC; by O. Rogne.