



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

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For Immediate Release

REMARKS

May 7, 2019

**Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo  
At the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting**

**May 7, 2019  
Lappi Arena  
Rovaniemi, Finland**

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you, Timo. Foreign ministers, permanent participants, Arctic Council observers, it's great to be with you here today. President Trump sends his regards, as do the American people. The United States is proud to be an Arctic Council member, and we're proud to be an Arctic state.

This forum that we're in today embodies many of the characteristics that we'd all like to see in multilateral forum all around the world; it's built on the bedrock principles of individual sovereignty, voluntary cooperation, and shared responsibility. As I said in Brussels in December, the United States wants multilateral institutions that hew to their missions and serve the interests of the nation-states that created them. From this sturdy foundation, valuable accomplishments are within our reach, as our Finnish friends have proven through their two years of exceptional leadership.

When the United States held the chair, the Arctic states signed a science cooperation agreement to facilitate the movement of scientists, equipment, and data across our borders. The first meeting under this new agreement was convened here in Finland just a few months ago. This strengthens our ability to cooperate on scientific endeavors that will benefit all of peoples, from improving weather forecasting to studying outer

space to learning more about the planet and the resources beneath our feet. We've also conducted joint exercises to prepare for possible marine oil pollution incidents, and we've increased our search and rescue capacities and preparedness, which has already helped save lives.

To build on these and so many other successes, it's up to each member of this council to ensure that our underlying bonds of trust and responsibility remain unbroken. That includes the United States; we can always do better. The Trump administration has sought to engage the Arctic with renewed vigor, openness, and respect, as I spoke about at length yesterday. America's new Arctic focus prioritizes close cooperation with our partners on emerging challenges, including the increased presence and ambitions of non-Arctic nations in the region.

In addition to sharing our vision, I also came here to listen. I've appreciated this opportunity today to hear from each of you, including on topics that we don't always agree on. Even on those topics, I think it is the case that we tend to agree much more than we disagree. For example, the Trump administration shares your deep commitment to environmental stewardship. In fact, it's one reason Chinese activity, which has caused environmental destruction in other regions, continues to concern us in the Arctic. The Arctic has always been a fragile ecosystem, and protecting it is indeed our shared responsibility. But once again, the keys are indeed trust and responsibility.

Collective goals, even when well-intentioned, are not always the answer. They're rendered meaningless, even counterproductive, as soon as one nation fails to comply. Regardless of whether our goal is in place, the United States strives to operate with honesty and transparency. Though we are not signing on to the collective goal for reduction of black carbon, America nonetheless recently reported the largest reduction in black carbon emissions by any Arctic Council state. We are doing our part, and we encourage other states to do the same, and to do so with full transparency. That's true for every issue before this council. Under President Trump, the United States seeks candid engagement and close cooperation.

I want to close by thanking everyone involved in this council – government officials, delegates from the permanent participants, secretariats, observers, and invited experts. And I would like to again thank you, Timo, and Finland, on a highly productive chairmanship. You and your colleagues have set a high bar for Iceland, and I'm confident that Reykjavik is up to the task of matching it.

I look forward to many more shared accomplishments for our nations in the years ahead.

Thank you.