
FOLKETINGET



Grønlandsudvalget

Til: Udvalgets medlemmer

Dato: 7. februar 2017

**Invitation til konference fra James Arroyo OBE, The Ditchley Foundation
den 7. februar 2017.**

**Ditchley Foundation conference
The Arctic at the crossroads: cooperation or competition?
9-11 June 2017**

The Ditchley Foundation is organising a conference in June 2017, hosted by the Canadian Ditchley Foundation, to consider 'The Arctic at the crossroads: cooperation or competition?' The conference will take place in Whitehorse, the capital of northwest Canada's Yukon territory, and will be co-chaired by former Premier of Quebec and Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, The Hon Jean Charest PC, and Mr Duane Ningaqsiq Smith, Chief Executive Officer of [Inuvialuit Regional Corporation](#) and a former President of the [Inuit Circumpolar Council – Canada](#).

I am writing to bring this conference to your attention and to invite you to participate. The context of the conference is explained below.

This conference, under the auspices of the Canadian Ditchley Foundation, will also be Ditchley's contribution to the 2017 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Confederation of Canada.

Just over 20 years ago, the Arctic Council was founded in Ottawa by the eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States). Its rotating biennial chairmanship will be held by six European states in a row from 2017, at a time when new forces – climate change, resource development, globalisation and geopolitical developments – are transforming the fabric of the region and producing new challenges and opportunities for the people who call the Arctic home, the eight Arctic states and other countries and businesses seeking to benefit.

The interconnectedness of these new forces makes the development of rational and proactive Arctic policies an imperative but also a formidable challenge. Particular questions which arise include territorial claims and rights of access to shipping routes and fishing grounds; management of the environment; ownership and management of mineral and fishing resources; and security issues. These, in turn, bring to the fore concerns about the design of the institutional machinery to govern the region.

Hydrocarbons are probably the most obviously valuable commodity in the Arctic, with up to 25% of the world's undiscovered deposits, but there are many other rich mineral resources, including zinc, copper, nickel, iron-ore and diamonds. The potential for generation of clean energy is considerable. The reduction of ice cover means greater access for fisheries and for tourism and scope for sea transport. The increased economic interest in the region compounds the existing problems of how its resources should be managed, while protecting the interests of its indigenous inhabitants and the Arctic ecosystems.

The Arctic will remain a very expensive place to do business. The challenges of access, by land or sea, the high costs of construction and maintenance of infrastructure, and the unique risks from severe and unpredictable weather, are only some of the problems. The stakes are therefore high.

The Arctic is fundamentally different from the Antarctic since the vast majority of its area falls within the extended sovereignty rights of littoral states. The region has also been the home of its indigenous peoples for centuries. It is therefore difficult to envisage an international treaty on its protection along the lines of the Antarctic Treaty, although this is advocated by some. The maritime dimension of the Arctic region means that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is a central feature in its governance. It is the undisputed forum to redraw the boundaries of the Arctic Ocean and defines the rights of coastal states over activities within their maritime zones. There nevertheless remain areas of contention with respect to boundaries and control of international maritime traffic and fishing rights. The Arctic Council itself has no treaty basis, and its limited membership means its policy-making capacity is also limited, despite its success in many other ways. Can it be effective in the future, or might something else be required?

The looming challenges include:

- How should the continuing disputes about boundaries be handled?
- Are the rights and interests of the indigenous peoples being properly protected?
- Military and Search and Rescue cooperation around the Arctic has so far been good, including fora discussions and joint exercises, but how might any future security tensions or threats to militarise the region be best handled, given their explicit exclusion from the ambit of the Arctic Council itself?
- Are we adequately investing in "Arctic science" to be able to understand and manage this unique ecosystem?
- How should the increased interest in the region by Asian and European states be harnessed to enhance the capacity to deal with the environmental, economic, social and geopolitical challenges that confront the region?

This conference will aim to bring together policy-makers, experts, representatives of indigenous communities and other interested parties from a wide array of countries, including those of the Arctic Council, to examine the challenges and recommend cooperative ways forward for the future.

The Ditchley Foundation brings together brilliant and influential people to tackle big and complex problems. Rebuilding consensus and confidence in the future remains more important than ever. Ditchley aims to do this through frank and private discussion. The atmosphere of informality, trust and expertise makes Ditchley events a unique opportunity for leaders and experts alike. Ditchley was founded in 1958 by the visionary philanthropist Sir David Wills and is independent of all governments. Please visit our soon to be modernised website at www.ditchley.co.uk.

Around 50 participants from a wide variety of countries and backgrounds are expected to attend the conference. The discussions will be informal and off-the-record – with emphasis placed on frank debate and dialogue rather than on formal presentations – and subject to the Ditchley Rule, akin to the Chatham House Rule and strictly observed, whereby no participant may attributably quote anything heard at the conference to anyone outside. My Director's Note on the broad thrust of the proceedings will be publicly available and the discussions themselves may be written about freely afterwards. There is no obligation to present anything in writing or to make any other special preparation for the event.

The conference will run from the morning of Friday, 9 June (with participants arriving on 8 June) until mid-morning on Sunday, 11 June. Participants are requested to commit themselves to the conference as a whole, since the aim is an interactive debate that runs from the opening to the closing session. In addition to plenary sessions, the programme creates time for discussion in

smaller groups. All those invited are guests of the Canadian Ditchley Foundation during their stay. Three nights' accommodation and meals will be provided at the Westmark Hotel & Conference Center in Whitehorse. Participants are expected to cover their own travel costs, although a number of travel bursaries will be available in exceptional cases to assist with these costs.

In addition to the main programme, an optional overnight excursion will be arranged to Inuvik, within the Arctic Circle, to include presentations by local experts on life in the Arctic Circle and on the local environment. A **chartered** flight to Inuvik will depart from Whitehorse at the conclusion of the conference at 11:30am on Sunday, June 11, 2017. The return flight on Monday, June 12, 2017, will be scheduled to allow participants to connect with the 12:10pm flight from Whitehorse to Vancouver. Details including the itinerary and precise cost of this excursion will follow but will not exceed CAD\$2,200 (based on a minimum of 20 participants; the price will fall, if the number of participants is higher than 20).

I should be most grateful if you could let me know by **24 February** whether you will be able to attend the conference. Please also indicate whether you are interested, *in principle*, in taking the optional excursion.

If you can attend the conference, we will send you the papers for the discussion, together with a list of participants, a detailed programme and detailed travel advice, six to eight weeks before the conference, at which time we will also confirm whether the excursion to Inuvik will operate.

I very much hope that you will be able to join us, and I much look forward to welcoming you to Whitehorse as a guest of the Ditchley Foundation and of the Canadian Ditchley Foundation. Please include the Conference Coordinator in your response.

Yours sincerely,

James Arroyo OBE, Director, The Ditchley Foundation, Ditchley Park, Enstone, Chipping Norton, OX7 4ER, UK.

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