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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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December 22, 1971

National Security Decision Memorandum 144

TO: The Secretary of State
 The Secretary of Defense
 The Secretary of Interior
 The Secretary of Commerce
 The Secretary of Transportation
 The Director, National Science Foundation
 The Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality

SUBJECT: United States Arctic Policy and Arctic Policy Group

The President has reviewed the NSC Under Secretaries Committee's recommendations, conclusions and report regarding United States Arctic policy and organizational arrangements for its implementation, as forwarded by Under Secretary Irwin on August 9, 1971.

The President has decided that the United States will support the sound and rational development of the Arctic, guided by the principle of minimizing any adverse effects to the environment; will promote mutually beneficial international cooperation in the Arctic; and will at the same time provide for the protection of essential security interests in the Arctic, including preservation of the principle of freedom of the seas and superjacent airspace.

In furtherance of this policy, the President has:

- Directed that the NSC Under Secretaries Committee review and forward detailed action programs, including plans and specific projects (with budgetary implications as appropriate), for increasing mutually beneficial cooperation with Arctic and other countries in areas such as exploration, scientific research, resource development and the exchange of scientific and technical data; for improving the US capability to inhabit and operate in the Arctic and the understanding of the Arctic environment; and for developing a framework for international cooperation with particular attention given the Northlands Compact approach. (These action programs should be forwarded for the President's consideration not later than March 1, 1972.)

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Date: 18 May 1977
By: Michael Hornblow
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

- Directed that an Interagency Arctic Policy Group be established, chaired by the Department of State and including the Departments of Defense, Interior, Commerce and Transportation, the National Science Foundation, the Council on Environmental Quality and representatives of other agencies as appropriate. (The Department of State is responsible for providing the administrative support, including staff, necessary to enable the Arctic Policy Group to carry out its responsibilities.)

The Interagency Arctic Policy Group will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of U. S. Arctic policy and reviewing and coordinating U. S. activities and programs in the Arctic, with the exception of purely domestic Arctic-related matters internal to Alaska. In discharging these responsibilities, the Arctic Policy Group will report to and coordinate with the NSC Under Secretaries Committee. Any substantive policy issues requiring the President's decision will be referred to the NSC Senior Review Group for consideration.

- Approved the development of a coordinated plan for scientific research in and on the Arctic, including possible cooperative projects with Arctic and other countries, and the investigation of the feasibility of developing a comprehensive transportation system capable of meeting U. S. requirements in the Arctic, with appropriate recommendations to be made to the Arctic Policy Group.

There should be no public statements concerning U. S. Arctic policy and the other decisions set forth herein pending the President's review of the action programs requested above.



Henry A. Kissinger

cc: Secretary, Health Education and Welfare
Director of Central Intelligence
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Director, Office of Management and Budget
President's Science Advisor