

**Trip Report**  
**Craig L. Fleener**  
**Gwich'in Council International**  
**Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada**  
**January 29- February 3, 2005**

**Purpose of Trip**

Attend the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy Outreach meeting

**Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Travel Day**

I flew from Fort Yukon to Fairbanks to await transportation to Whitehorse.

**Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Travel Day**

I flew from Fairbanks to Whitehorse.

**Monday Meetings, January 31<sup>st</sup>**

Awaiting Meeting Start Date

**Tuesday Meetings, February 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Jack Anawak, Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs*

Ambassador Anawak opened discussions by stating the importance of incorporating a "Northern Dimension" to Canada's foreign policy, and ensuring participation from the northern territories in fulfilling these policies.

*Wayne Lord, Director Aboriginal & Circumpolar Affairs*

The director focused much of his discussion on the fact that Canada is developing a "Northern Strategy". He stated that the circumpolar north is a zone of peace in the world, and that we must build strong and enduring relations with our pan-arctic neighbors to support and build good relations in the north.

*Janet Moodie, Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office, Yukon Government*

Deputy Minister Moodie spoke about the pre-existing role of the Yukon in pan-arctic affairs. She also spoke about the importance of forging new partnerships in the future. She stated that the Yukon Government budget was fairly robust at 700 m & that Whitehorse has about a 5% unemployment rate, while the rate in outlying communities is considerably higher.

*Jeffrey Parker, Consulate General, Canadian Consulate Seattle, Washington & Karen Mathias, Consul, Canadian Consulate, Anchorage, Alaska*

They identified their newly established office in Anchorage. They recognized the importance of having a northern office because the concerns of Yukon & NWT are far more in common with Alaska than with the lower '48 states. They are hoping to build good relations with Alaska because it may be a good market for Canadian business.

*Ed Shultz, Grand Chief, Council of Yukon First Nations*

Grand Chief Shultz spoke about the concerns of the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC). He stated his concerns about climate change, international relationships, needs of northern communities, and the origins of the AAC (2000).

*Craig L. Fleener, Vice-Chairman, Gwich'in Council International*

I spoke about the origins and history of the GCI. I also identified our organizational goals for the communities we serve, which include; build capacity, promote social, community, & recreational development, provide education & training within numerous management realms, create career opportunities, perpetuate, protect, & strengthen our social, cultural, & political fabric. I described our council composition and our funding sources. I explained that GCI participates in numerous boards & committees.

*Margaret Cumming, Assistant Regional Director, Policy and Planning, Northern Secretariat, Health Canada*

Spoke about circumpolar health issues. She graphically displayed some health issues such as; excessive tobacco use amongst youth, elevated levels of diabetes, & increases in sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Wednesday Meetings, February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Dean Stinson O'Gorman, Senior Policy Advisor, Climate Change Bureau, Environment Canada*

Mr. Stinson spoke about what Canada's government has done to address & prepare for enacting the Kyoto Protocol. He stated that Canada's domestic policies, relating the "Kyoto", will begin to drive their foreign policies. He spoke about the importance of Canada spending the money necessary to be ahead in technological advances. They wish for Canada to export its technological advances in order to boost the Canadian economy. "Kyoto" will become active on 16 February 2005, and Canada needs to find long-term & enduring results.

*Peter Johnson, Chair of the Board of Directors of Canadian Polar Commission*

Chairman Johnson spoke about what the International Polar Year (IPY) means to northern communities. He said that issues of polar importance were brought into the scientific and public eye through the IPY about 125 years ago. There are numerous Canadian IPY proposals and they can be viewed on the web site at [www.ipy-api.ca](http://www.ipy-api.ca) or [www.ipy.org](http://www.ipy.org).

*Susan Decker, Circumpolar Analyst, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada*

Ms. Decker spoke about boosting the cooperation between Canada & Russia. It seems natural that the two should be partners in regards to northern activities since the two share the fact of having the largest territories in the circumpolar arctic. She also pointed that they have been funding Russian participation in their activities for a number of years because of Russia's financial difficulties.

*Sally Webber, President Yukon College and Amanda Graham, University of the Arctic Instructor, Yukon College*

President Webber and Ms. Graham spoke about the Yukon College, the University of the Arctic, and the circumpolar academy. They spoke of the quick successes of the University of the Arctic in a relatively short span of time. The University of the Arctic has 72 member organizations and is one of the best examples of education cooperation on Earth. In 2003-2004 there were 161 students registered in circumpolar studies. Currently (Feb 2005) there are 377 students registered. The University of the North's goals are to improve education access by northerners, especially in rural, limited access, communities, empowering the north, & creating partnerships.

**Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Travel Day**

I flew from Whitehorse to Dawson to Old Crow to Fairbanks to Fort Yukon..