

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Arctic Circle Forum
Reykjavik, Iceland
October 12-14, 2013

To the Participants of the Arctic Circle Forum:

Greetings from the United States of America. I want to congratulate you on your conference, and for highlighting the importance of the Arctic.

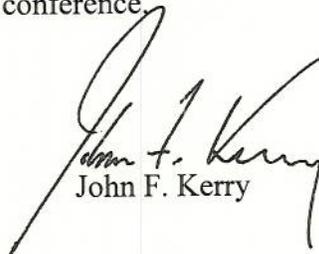
The United States places great emphasis on the Arctic region. We are an Arctic nation. I also deeply and personally care about the Arctic region and have made it a priority of my tenure as Secretary of State, which is why visiting the Arctic Council was one of my first trips. There is no other place on the planet where temperatures have risen more dramatically, as we can see through rapidly diminishing sea ice and other effects of warming. The profound changes in the Arctic present serious challenges to the nations and people of the Arctic, and are also affecting interests of many outside the region. At the same time, the Arctic is opening up to unprecedented levels of human activity.

To take account of these developments, and to prepare for the new realities confronting the Arctic, President Obama issued a National Strategy for the Arctic Region earlier this year. We are now working to implement that Strategy, in partnership with many others.

Although our knowledge and understanding of the Arctic is expanding, there is still much work to be done to fully understand and adapt to the changing Arctic. We must also commit to protecting its environment and honoring its people. In order to address many of these emerging challenges and opportunities, I am confident that the Arctic States, the Arctic indigenous peoples and the growing number of observers will continue to collaborate closely through the Arctic Council.

This inaugural Arctic Circle meeting is sure to be a great success and I wish you well in your discussions.

Best wishes for a successful conference



John F. Kerry