

THE UNITED STATES IN ANTARCTICA

Report of the
U.S. Antarctic Program
External Panel



Cover: "Cathedral Berg At Night," ©1994 by Neelon Crawford.

This photograph of a heavily eroded iceberg was made on the evening of June 23, 1994. R/V *Polar Duke*, from which the picture was taken, was about 60 miles south of the Antarctic Circle, in the Bellingshausen Sea at 67°26'77.6" S. 70°05'39.9" W. The highest points of the berg tower more than 100 feet above the waterline and the length of the visible portion of the berg is on the order of 400 feet. The berg presumably calved off one of many glaciers on the Antarctic Peninsula, but in fact could have traveled a far greater distance to this location. Some of the berg's ice may have been formed hundreds of thousands or even millions of years earlier.

Inside Back Cover: Polar stratospheric clouds are illuminated by the Sun in the Antarctic Spring. Photo © by James Mastro.

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**Washington, D. C.
April 1997**

Questions regarding availability of this document may be directed to the
National Science Foundation, Arlington, Virginia 22230.

United States Antarctic Program External Panel
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This document represents the final report of the United States Antarctic Program External Panel. The report has the unanimous approval of all 11 panel members and draws upon our collective experience which includes some 44 individual trips to Antarctica involving visits to all three U. S. stations, each research ship, support icebreakers and numerous field sites. As a panel, we visited McMurdo Station and South Pole Station and toured support facilities at Christchurch. We received approximately 70 briefings and conducted 80 "one-on-one" meetings with individuals involved in virtually all aspects of the Antarctic Program. Over 200 inputs were received in response to our request for "public comments."

During visits to McMurdo and the Pole, the Panel conducted informal "Town Meetings" and was the beneficiary of numerous comments by members of those communities having first-hand experience in day-to-day operations. We are most appreciative of the candor and professionalism with which we were treated by all those with whom we came into contact, and in particular the members of the National Science Foundation who so expertly and constructively supported our efforts.

We believe the U. S. Antarctic Program is well managed, involves high quality science and is important to the region as well as to the United States. We also believe that in the current budget environment, costs must be reduced, preferably through increased efficiency and "reinvention," but, if not, through reduced scope. Recommendations are offered herein to help ensure the continued viability of the program into the 21st century.

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Contents

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2.0 INTRODUCTION	5
3.0 ANTARCTICA—THE ENVIRONMENT	9
4.0 ANTARCTICA— PAST AND PRESENT	17
4.1 Early Antarctic Activity	17
4.2 Current U. S. Antarctic Program	23
4.3 Recent History of U. S. Science in Antarctica	32
5.0 ANTARCTICA - SIGNIFICANCE TODAY	35
5.1 Importance of U. S. Presence in Antarctica	35
5.2 Development of U. S. Policy	35
5.3 Antarctic Research.....	37
5.4 Environmental Considerations	45
6.0 FINDINGS	47
6.1 Geopolitical Significance	47
6.2 Scientific Activity	47
6.3 International Cooperation.....	47
6.4 Facilities	48
6.5 Provisions for Capital Asset Replenishment	49
6.6 Life-Extension of Existing South Pole Facilities	49
6.7 Level Funding.....	57
6.8 Safety and Health	59
6.9 Management Effectiveness.....	59
6.10 Ongoing Facility Improvements	60
6.11 Cost Visibility	60
6.12 Personnel Issues	61
6.13 Support Capacity	61
6.14 Management Structure	62
6.15 Cost Reduction Opportunities	63
6.16 Transition of Aviation Responsibilities	64
6.17 Telecommunications	64
6.18 Robotics	66
6.19 Technology Opportunities	66
6.20 Education Opportunities	66
6.21 Tourism	67
6.22 National Commitment to an Antarctic Policy.....	67

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS	69
7.1 Presence	69
7.2 Safety and Health	69
7.3 Program Scope	69
7.4 International Cooperation.....	69
7.5 South Pole Facilities	70
7.6. Funding.....	70
7.7. Planning and Budgeting.....	71
7.8 Management	71
7.9 Program Integration	71
7.10 Transition	72
7.11 Telecommunications	72
7.12 Tourism	72
 APPENDICES	 75
I. Biographies of Members	76
II. Terms of Reference	79
III. State Department Views	82
IV. Summary of Recommendations.....	87
V. Presentations and Interactions	88
VI. International Agreements: Excerpts.....	91
VII. Bibliography	93
 GLOSSARY	 94

Exhibits

1. Federal spending for polar research in FY96 ...	5
2. Cutaway view of the Antarctic ice sheet and bedrock	9
3. Map comparing sizes of Antarctica and the United States	9
4. Antarctic annual temperatures at three locations	10
5. How Antarctic ice affects world climate	11
6. The life cycle of the emperor penguin	12
7. “Antarctic Meltdown” (effect of melting ice sheet)	14-15
8. South Pole/North Pole map and comparison table	16
9. Cruise tracks of Captain Cook and other early explorers	18
10. Attainment of the South Pole (Amundsen and Scott)	19
11. Comparison of impact of whaling and ozone hole	20
12. Gondwana (maps of former supercontinent) ...	20
13. Map of Antarctic stations (all nations)	22
14. Number of Antarctic Treaty nations, 1959-1997 ...	23
15. U. S. Antarctic Program spending history, 1955-1997	24
16. USAP FY95 funding for support and science by facility	25
17. USAP FY95 science grants to research institutions	25
18. McMurdo Station	25
19. McMurdo Station annual population cycle, June 1994 - May 1997	26
20. Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station	26
21. Palmer Station	27
22. R/V <i>Polar Duke</i> (ice-strengthened research ship)	27
23. R/V <i>Nathaniel B. Palmer</i> (research icebreaker)	28
24. USCGC <i>Polar Sea</i> (logistics icebreaker)	28
25. <i>Green Wave</i> (cargo ship)	28
26. LC-130 Hercules	29
27. Twin Otter research/support airplane	29
28. Contract helicopter being unloaded from C-5	29
29. Automated geophysical observatory	30
30. Field camp	31
31. International cooperation (Cape Roberts project)	31
32. Number of projects and research personnel compared to budget	33
33. USARP and operational support budgets, FY85-FY97	34
34. USAP dollars per research personnel	34
35. USAP dollars per research project	34
36. U.S. Government Executive Branch policy statements regarding Antarctica	37
37. The ozone hole (stratospheric depletion vs time)	38
38. The ozone hole (vertical profile from South Pole Station)	39
39. The ozone hole (satellite image of Antarctica)	39
40. The ozone hole (satellite image of southern hemisphere)	39
41. Antarctic Muon and Neutrino Detector Array (AMANDA) at South Pole	40
42. West Antarctic Ice Stream (WAIS) project and <i>Glacier</i> educational project	41
43. Southern ocean cross section	42
44. Sea ice extent, summer minimum	42
45. Sea ice extent, winter maximum	42
46. Flux of carbon dioxide: southern ocean JGOFS experiment	43
47. Organisms living in Dry Valleys rock	44
48. Cyanobacteria in saline Dry Valleys lake	44
49. Algal bloom on under surface of sea ice	44
50. McMurdo bulk fuel tanks	48
51. Snow drift at South Pole (two photographs) ..	49
52. Elevated structures at South Pole Station	50
53. South Pole water well	50
54. Jamesways at South Pole Station	51
55. South Pole Station garage	51
56. Nine 25,000-gallon rubber fuel bladders, South Pole	52
57. Existing South Pole station (1989 photograph) ...	52
58. Useful life projections, existing South Pole Station	53
59. Utilidor (utilities tunnel) at South Pole Station ...	53
60. Enhanced Station at South Pole (artist’s conception)	54
61. Capabilities, three South Pole Station options	54
62. Design parameters, three South Pole Station options	55
63. Optimized Station at South Pole (artist’s conception)	55
64. Reductions from Enhanced to Optimized Station	56
65. Costs through 2002 and 2025, four South Pole Station options	56
66. Assumed USAP “level” budget, FY98-FY02	57
67. Funding schedule, South Pole Optimized Station, FY98-FY02	57
68. Cost of McMurdo and Palmer improvements, total and FY98-FY02	58
69. USAP science grants and science support costs, FY98-FY02	58
70. USAP level cost five-year budget assessment	58
71. USAP funding shortfall, FY98-FY02	59
72. Mobile runway support facility, McMurdo	60
73. Reverse osmosis water production at McMurdo ...	61
74. Vintage heavy vehicle at McMurdo	63
75. Communication with the South Pole	65
76. Number of tourists visiting Antarctica since 1980 ..	67