Preface

Ambassador Hannu Halinen

Policy should always be based on unbiased science. Researchers should prepare policy-relevant studies and politicians should act on this information. In a perfect world, these two parties would work in unison.

Today we seem to be moving away from these lofty goals. There is a "War on Science" (*New York Times* Editorial, September 8, 2017), specifically related to climate change and Arctic developments. Policy adopts the predetermined conclusion that climate change is not a problem, seeking evidence to justify that position. This is the opposite of genuine science, which follows the evidence. And governments are supposed to build policy on these outcomes.

Clearly, there is not one truth in science. However, when it comes to climate change, there is an overwhelming consensus in universities, research centers, and also governments, publishing peer-reviewed reports, that climate change is caused by human actions. To paraphrase former U.S. Vice-President, Al Gore, does the *Inconvenient Truth* become the *Assault on Reason*? Or is there a way to help politicians to heed to the truth and make the right decisions?

This edition of *Arctic Yearbook*, once again, is an eminent compilation of studies and reports by qualified scholars on developments in the Arctic. *Arctic Yearbook 2017* focuses on "Change and Innovation," particularly addressing differences between the Arctic and developments in other parts of the world, between the North and the South. There is a need for a research strategy to study the ongoing interconnected processes. Globalization influences the Arctic, but the Arctic has also global influence and impact. The Arctic is a regional actor vitally important in the global context. Southern technological solutions and innovations cannot all be converted to benefit the Arctic.

The Arctic, however, is not a vacuum. Indigenous peoples and Arctic inhabitants have been living there for thousands of years, finding a way on how to not only survive but also prosper in cold climate, in ice and snow. Inevitably, the change will come to the Arctic, which today is a stable and peaceful region. The key challenge is to keep the change enforcing, not weakening, Arctic sustainability and resilience.

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The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), on invitation by the Finnish Prime Minister's Office, has been working for some time on developing a project called "Arctic Futures Initiative." Behind this project, "A Systems Analysis Perspective on the Plausible Futures of the Arctic," lies the conviction that policy makers, governments, investors, environmental communities and Indigenous communities need to reconcile the development of economic opportunities and the need to safeguard the environment, diverse cultures, social well-being and livelihoods. Research on the Arctic is increasing in volume, but is often fragmented and overlapping. Politicians generally draw quick solutions and rarely have time to go through the whole spectrum of research. There is a call for a systematic, holistic analysis and possible solutions.

All efforts to find ways and means to assist politicians to convert relevant and reliable scientific findings into strategies and policies are highly appreciated. True, in the real world, the politicians make the final decisions, with or without solid scientific background.

However, this should never discourage science to push politicians towards right and educated solutions.