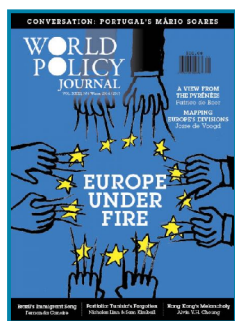


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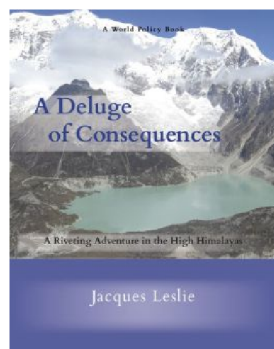
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## Arctic Issues Top World Policy Agenda

November 12, 2014 - 10:06am | admin



By **Cleo Abramian** and **Yaffa Fredrick**

Last Friday October 31, World Policy Institute and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung held a private luncheon and discussion featuring former Vice President Al Gore. The event marked the launch of the Arctic Deeply Roundtables, which seek to engage leading experts and next-generation thinkers on one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Members of Parliament Dennis Bevington of Canada and Johann Saathoff of Germany were in attendance, [along with a group of public and private sector leaders](#). Focusing on the urgent demand for global environmental stewardship in reversing the world's precarious trajectory, Gore engaged attendees in a critical policy conversation.

Notably, the event was held just days before the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued its most urgent report to date. According to the [report](#), the current risks of climate change could reverse "generations of progress against poverty and hunger," if the issue is not acknowledged and addressed immediately. It is no longer a futuristic threat, but as Rajendra Pachauri, who headed the panel said, "It's here and now."

A key part of the global crisis is playing out in the Arctic, which has become the recent focus of a World Policy Institute initiative, [Arctic Deeply](#). The Arctic is warming at a significantly faster rate than the rest of the world, posing serious social, economic, and environmental challenges. This reality will affect shipping routes, security frameworks, and growing competition for natural

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resources—all issues Gore raised in the course of his discussion.



MP Johann Saathoff, VP Al Gore, MP Dennis Bevington, and WPI Chairman Joe Cari (from left to right)

The Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum for Arctic governments and people, therefore has a particularly important role to play. In the wake of the UN Climate Summit in September and the second Arctic Circle Summit in Reykjavik, Iceland last week, the Arctic represents a zone of increasing international interest.

The United States, which will assume chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2015, will be uniquely positioned to take action on this issue. Because this is only a two-year commitment, Gore said, the U.S.'s long-term investment in the Arctic is uncertain. However, he emphasized that the organization has major potential, marking a great opportunity for multi-state cooperation in the global fight against the climate crisis.

Given the wealth of evidentiary support of this global crisis, Gore argued that a global response was obligatory. In order to fully, and finally, take responsibility for the environmental emergency at hand, he explained, we must know the answer to the following questions: Do we really have to do this? And, if we have to do it, can we do it? The answer to this second question is crucial since it will be a driving force behind taking an active role in creating a more sustainable future.

The final question, however, is perhaps the most important. Are we going to take immediate action, or will we go down in history as having missed an opportunity to reverse the course of human history? World Policy Institute is certainly trying to do what's right. In collaboration with News Deeply, an innovative digital news platform, the Institute is developing Arctic Deeply, an information platform, which in conjunction with high-level roundtables and curated events, will build a sustained conversation on the Arctic—the global issue that needs it now more than ever.

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Cleo Abramian is a former editorial assistant at World Policy Journal.  
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[Photos courtesy of Matt Breitel and Alyssa Stein]

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