

"Clearly, one has to view any work in the Antarctic as planetary in scope?"

"The participants at the 15th Consultative Conference have adopted a number of recommendations to intensify efforts to achieve the permanent monitoring of factors impacting on the environment in the Antarctic. Evaluating and forecasting the status of the environment in the Antarctic is a key issue. There is support for an initiative to set up an inter-disciplinary data bank."

"What is our contribution to this important work?"

"Each year 'Goskomgidromet SSSR' (USSR State Committee on Hydrometeorology) allocates nearly 10 million rubles to support the activities of the Soviet Antarctic Expeditions (SAE). Other ministries and departments spend approximately nine million rubles on basic and applied research, coordination of which is the responsibility of the Interdepartmental Commission on Study of the Antarctic (MKIA), attached to the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and the State Committee on Science and Technology (GKNT). In evaluating the effectiveness of these investments, one should note the clearly limited capabilities of the MKIA and the GKNT in coordinating the Soviet Union's antarctic research. This is to be expected given the departmental nature of their subsidization. The fact that in our country there is no single governmental body which determines policy and activities for the southern polar region is becoming increasingly noticeable and is leading to a loss of prestige by the USSR in the Antarctic Treaty system. The USA, Britain, France and Australia have government agencies which control the financing of operations in the Antarctic. In the USA, the budget for the Antarctic Division of the National Science Foundation is debated in Congress, and this year amounts to