

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 3:09 PM
To: H
Cc: Abedin, Huma
Subject: FW: Putin Tags Polar Bear in Arctic

Pretty good stuff.

From: Russell, Daniel A
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 3:08 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Cc: Gordon, Philip H
Subject: Putin Tags Polar Bear in Arctic

Jake: This is the event to which Putin invited Bill Clinton during his meeting with HRC in Moscow.

Putin Tags Polar Bear in Russia's Arctic

Russian Prime Minister Helps Scientists Track Endangered Species,



Calls for Removal of

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, right, fixes a radio beacon on a neck of a polar bear, which was anaesthetized, during a visit to a research institute at the Franz Josef Land archipelago in the Arctic Ocean on Thursday. (AP Photo/RIA Novosti, pool)

(AP) Updated at 1:29 p.m. ET

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin played the eco-warrior in Russia's Arctic on Thursday, helping scientists track endangered polar bears and calling for a cleanup of the region.

Putin traveled to Franz Josef Land, an archipelago in the Arctic Ocean off the northwest coast of Russia's mainland in his latest display of adventuring prowess to highlight the country's guardianship of the resource-rich region.

Wearing a bright red coat and cap, the 57-year-old premier knelt at the head of a tranquilized polar bear to attach a satellite-tracking collar, then helped elevate the beast for weighing. The images were broadcast nationally.

Putin helped measure the bear and roll it onto its side.

On his departure, he shook its paw and uttered the words: "Be well."

"The paw is heavy. This is the master of the Arctic, you can feel that straight away," Putin said.

Of a total 25,000 polar bears remaining in the wild, about 6,000 are in Russia's Arctic territory, Russian news agencies quoted officials as saying.

Putin also called for "a general cleanup of the Arctic," ordering the removal of thousands of barrels of fuel buried in the snow that had been left unused by a Soviet-era military base.

He has been spearheading Russia's re-emergence as a regional power, including the country's claims over the Arctic's formidable natural resources. Some 90 billion barrels of oil and one-third of the world's undiscovered natural gas lie hidden in the Arctic region, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates.

"Geopolitically, Russia's deepest interests are linked to the Arctic," Putin said. "Here Russia's security and defense capabilities is provided for. Here there are vitally important transport communications."

Canada, the U.S., Russia and Denmark have competing claims before a United Nations commission regarding extend their undersea boundaries into areas previously blocked by Arctic ice.

Moscow dramatically staked its claim to the region by dropping a flag on the ocean floor at the North Pole in 2007.

Since then, all four countries have agreed to cool their rhetoric and allow scientists to finish their surveys.

Putin adores the media spotlight when it accentuates his macho side. He has been photographed fishing bare-chested in Russia's Altai region, and was shown on television diving into an icy river and swimming the butterfly stroke.

He has also tackled predators in the wild before, shooting a tiger with a tranquilizer gun and releasing leopards.