

yellow block and delicately traversed onto an expansive belay meadow, six pitches—but only 600' vertical—from the start of the climbing. We looked at the massive face looming above, capped by huge overhanging blocks of dubious rock, and looked at our skimpy rack. A direct line was not in the cards. We untied and traversed back left along the ledge, sucking water from seeps through straws snagged at the last truck stop, and then scrambled to the distinguishable ridge. We continued by scrambling and hiking the ridge to the summit, topping out in a beautiful, smoky, Arctic midnight-blue haze, with a view over the Brooks Range. After a long half-circumnavigation of the massif, we finished by tussock-hopping back to Andy's truck, 20 hours after we left.

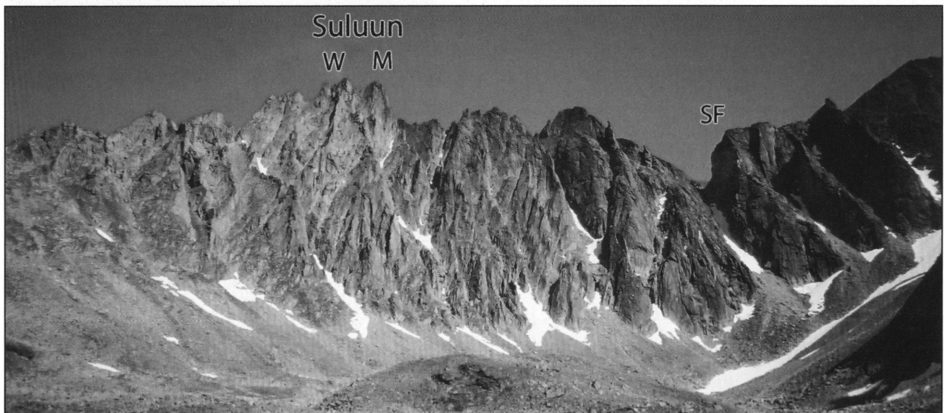
The Voice of America boomed from Andy's shortwave radio while we snacked, brewed, and discussed the projecting necessary for a big-wall route on Sukakpak's face, happy to be off safely. We called our unfinished (because we wanted to go direct) route Arctic Haze (5.9+A0) and clambered out of the smoky air and swarming mosquitoes, into our tents, before the bumpy ride back home.

MATT KLICK, AAC

## KIGLUAIK MOUNTAINS

*Suluun, new routes.* Last July Andy Sterns of Fairbanks and I made several ascents on a remote and spectacular chunk of granitic gneiss at the Glacial Lake headwaters. We flew in from Nome with Ben Rowe in a Bering Air helicopter to a base camp in the spectacular western cirque of Suluun. First came a 17-hour epic climbing its West Ridge (IV 5.7) to the west summit, lots of ups and downs across several tors, followed by a hideous gully descent. Two days later we returned to bag the true, east summit of the mountain, the Sulu Tor (II 5.8, from the notch at the base), a soaring pinnacle I had faced alone on earlier attempts. Lastly, we climbed an eight-pitch line, the Steely Focus Buttress (III/IV 5.9), up a patch of tolerable rock in the western cirque of the mountain. The normally scree-laden approaches were ameliorated by huge amounts of residual snow.

IAN McRAE



Suluun's west and main summits, and the Steely Focus Buttress. The West Ridge route takes the left skyline. Ian McRae