

Describing the Agreement as "an important step for Canada in the North," Prime Minister Brian Mulroney stated:

While we and the United States have not changed our legal positions we have come to a practical agreement that is fully consistent with the requirements of Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic. It is an improvement over the situation which prevailed previously. What we have now significantly advanced Canadian interests.⁶

CURRENT CANADIAN POSITION

On 11 October 1988, Mr. Clark announced that the Canadian Government had given its consent to a US request under the Canada-United States Arctic Cooperation Agreement, to have the US Coast Guard icebreaker *Polar Star* transit the Northwest Passage. The *Polar Star* had sustained damage while assisting two Canadian Coast Guard icebreakers in US waters. Unable to continue on its westward journey from its location off the Alaskan coast due to extremely heavy ice conditions, the US vessel entered Canadian waters to refuel and effect repairs to its turbines.⁷ It then proceeded eastward through the Northwest Passage to exit the Arctic, as did the two Canadian icebreakers. The incident marked the first test of the "Icebreaker Agreement," and was viewed as a success by Government officials.⁸ During its voyage, the *Polar Star* operated in a manner consistent with the pollution control standards and other provisions of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act and other relevant Canadian laws and regulations. US officials also assumed responsibility for costs incurred as a result of any pollution caused by the vessel during its transit.⁹

On 18 October 1988, in a speech at Carleton University, Mr. Clark reviewed Canadian Government actions in the North as well as "what we have done to reinforce our sovereignty in the North." He stated that the two issues were linked because the resolution of any competing claims would come in time through negotiations and international law.¹⁰ As such, he observed that Canada's claims would be judged by the actual things it has done to demonstrate use and control of its own North.¹¹

After outlining the steps Canada had taken over the years to strengthen its sovereignty claims in the North, Mr. Clark turned to the issue of northern cooperation with the Soviet Union. The Minister announced that in November 1988, a Canadian

6 *Ibid.*

7 Department of External Affairs, *News Release* No.220 (11 October 1988).

8 "US Ship Allowed in Canadian Arctic," *Vancouver Sun*, 7 October 1988, p. A6.

9 Department of External Affairs, *News Release* No.220 (11 October 1988).

10 Department of External Affairs, *Statements and Speeches* (18 October 1988), p.1.

11 *Ibid.*