

THE ARCTIC

On January 11, 1988, Canada and the United States concluded an Agreement on Arctic cooperation. The Agreement affirms the political will of the two countries to cooperate in advancing their shared interests in Arctic navigation, development and security. It signals the importance which the two countries attach to protection of the unique and fragile environment of the region and the well-being of the inhabitants of the North.

Pursuant to this Agreement, in future each and every transit of a United States' government-owned or government-operated icebreaker through the waters of the Canadian Arctic archipelago, including the Northwest Passage, will be subject to the prior consent of Canada on a case-by-case basis. This provision is of fundamental importance since it gives Canada effective control over all U.S. icebreaker activity in Canada's Arctic archipelago waters.

The Polar Star voyage through Canadian Arctic waters in October 1988 took place following a U.S. request and Canadian consent pursuant to the Agreement.