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U.S. ICEBREAKER POLAR STAR ENTERS CANADIAN WATERS UNDER CANADA-U.S. ARCTIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that the Canadian Government granted its consent, under the Canada-United States Arctic Cooperation Agreement, to a United States request to have the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Polar Star enter Canadian waters to refuel and effect repairs to one of its turbines. The Canadian Coast Guard has offered to have its icebreaker, the John A. MacDonald, proceed to American waters to assist the American vessel.

The Polar Star sustained damage while assisting, in U.S. waters, the Canadian Coast Guard icebreakers Martha L. Black and Pierre Radisson. Unable to continue on its westward journey from its location off the Alaskan coast due to extremely heavy ice conditions, the Polar Star turned eastward and, with the consent of the Government of Canada, may enter Canadian waters this weekend.

If ice conditions continue to be impassable in the western Arctic, American authorities will request Canadian consent to have the Polar Star transit through the Northwest Passage on its way out of the Arctic. The Canadian Government's response would take into consideration the requirements as set out under the Canada-USA Arctic Cooperation Agreement signed on January 11, 1988.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

The USA authorities have undertaken to ensure that the Polar Star will operate in conformity with the pollution control standards and other standards under the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. In addition, the United States has provided an undertaking to be responsible for any costs incurred in the unlikely event of any pollution caused by the Polar Star.

The Canadian Government is grateful for the assistance provided by the Polar Star to Canadian icebreakers and is pleased to help facilitate the return of the Polar Star from the Arctic.