

Arctic 'hurricane' to be studied

The Associated Press

Washington— Government researchers are launching a study of devastating arctic winter storms similar to hurricanes.

"These arctic hurricanes can develop very rapidly and in a matter of hours produce winds as high as 100 miles an hour, causing very high sea states that are extremely dangerous to shipping in the area, as well as to any off-shore oil activities," said Melvyn Shapiro of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The storms will be studied by American and British scientists flying research planes from Keflavik, Iceland, later this month, and from Bodo, Norway in February.

The storms occur in many arctic areas, including the North

Atlantic, Norwegian and Barents Seas and the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea.

Often forming a hurricane-like eye, the storms form from October to April.

Shapiro said the formation of the storms seems to be associated with movement of cold polar air over ocean water. Air moving from arctic areas may be as cold as minus 30 degrees, he said, and when it

moves over relatively warmer water it collects heat and moisture, forming storm clouds.
