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Panama: Oil Spill, Result Of Collision At Pacific Ocean Entrance To Canal

by Deborah Tyroler

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On March 10, a tanker and a cargo ship collided near the Pacific Ocean entrance of the Panama Canal, resulting in an estimated 200 tons of combustible heavy "Bunker" crude spilled into coastal waters. Jose Reyes, operations director for the National Port Authority, told AP on March 11 that port authority workers and members of the Panamanian Defense Forces were working to clean up the spill and to direct the oil out to sea. Reyes said the Ecuadoran cargo ship Isla Santay, 528 feet long and 75 feet wide, collided with the 599-foot-long, 105-foot-wide British oil tanker Probobravo near Panama Bay. One of the Probobravo's oil tanks was ripped open, Reyes said. According to Reyes, the collision had not affected traffic in the waterway. An average of some 33 ships pass through the canal daily. (Basic data from AP, 03/11/89)

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