Bering Streets
Arctic Ocean

Winds from the northeast pushed sea ice southward and formed cloud streets—parallel rows of clouds—over the Bering Strait in January 2010. The easternmost reaches of Russia, blanketed in snow and ice, appear in the upper left. To the east, sea ice spans the Bering Strait. Along the southern edge of the ice, wavy tendrils of newly formed, thin sea ice predominate.

The cloud streets run in the direction of the northerly wind that helps form them. When wind blows out from a cold surface like sea ice over the warmer, moister air near the open ocean, cylinders of spinning air may develop. Clouds form along the upward cycle in the cylinders, where air is rising, and skies remain clear along the downward cycle, where air is falling. The cloud streets run toward the southwest in this image from the Terra satellite.