

Canada's position on the status of the Arctic waters, it nevertheless proposed that the voyage be made on a cooperative basis. To this end, the US Coast Guard provided information to its Canadian counterpart and took Canadian observers on board the vessel. Moreover, the US Government stated that the voyage did not prejudice the legal position of either government with regard to the waters.<sup>1</sup>

The Canadian Government responded to the *Polar Sea* incident with a firm assertion of Canada's sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic Archipelago. On 10 September 1985, in a statement before the House of Commons, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark said:

Only with full sovereignty can we protect the entire range of Canadian interests. Full sovereignty is vital to Canada's security. It is vital to the Inuit people. And it is vital to Canada's national identity. The policy of this Government is to exercise full sovereignty in and on the waters of the Arctic archipelago and this applies to the airspace above as well. We will accept no substitutes.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Clark announced several measures to better ensure the protection of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. These included: an Order in Council establishing straight baselines (enclosing Canada's internal waters) around the outer perimeter of the Archipelago; the introduction of measures to extend the application of Canadian civil and criminal law to all offshore zones, including the Arctic (Bill C-104); an increase in the number of surveillance flights and in the level of naval activity in eastern Arctic waters; and the construction of a Polar Class 8 icebreaker. The Government also indicated its willingness to have the sovereignty question referred to the World Court, by withdrawing its earlier reservations in this regard. Finally, it called for immediate discussions with the United States on all means of cooperation in Arctic waters on the basis of full respect for Canadian sovereignty. Negotiations between Canada and the United States began soon afterwards.

In June 1987, Canada's Defence White Paper listed a number of additional sovereignty-related defence initiatives that the Government planned to undertake. These included: the ongoing modernization of the DEW Line radars; the upgrading of five northern airfields to accommodate fighter interceptors; an increase in the number of Aurora Long-range Patrol Aircraft; the modernization of the Tracker medium-range aircraft; an expansion of the Canadian Ranger force; the establishment of a Northern Training Centre for the Canadian Forces; and the planned deployment of fixed sonar systems for submarine detection in the Arctic passages. In addition, recognizing the Archipelago's potential as a viable passageway for submarines between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, the White Paper announced the Government's decision to acquire ten to twelve nuclear-powered submarines of its own, partly because of their under-ice capability.

In a speech in Murmansk on 1 October 1987, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev proposed that the Arctic become a zone of peace. Specifically, the Soviet leader called for negotiations aimed at scaling down militarization and naval activity in the Baltic,

<sup>1</sup> This was made clear in a State Department Press Guidance released on 14 June 1985, the day after the Canadian public was made aware of the impending transit.

<sup>2</sup> *Commons Debates*, 10 September 1985, p. 6463.