

While the United States has made known that it does not share Canada's view regarding the status of these waters, it has assured the Government of Canada that the purpose of the voyage is solely operational, to reduce the Polar Sea's sailing time to Alaska. The United States has also formally advised the Government of Canada that the transit, and the preparations for it, are without prejudice to the position of either country regarding the Northwest Passage. It is on this basis that consultations and the exchange of information have proceeded, and that Canada has agreed to cooperate in the voyage.

At the same time, however, the Government of Canada has expressed to the United States its deep regret that the United States over a period of many years has been unwilling to accept Canada's sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic archipelago. While Canada recognizes that the United States view derives from long-held general concerns about global freedom of navigation, Canada nevertheless considers that the evolution of international law fully supports the Canadian position.

The Polar Sea will enter the Northwest Passage at Lancaster Sound on or about August 1, 1985 and proceed through Viscount Melville Sound, exiting the Passage through Prince of Wales Strait and Amundsen Gulf.

Canada has sought and obtained detailed information and specific assurances on such matters as the routing of the vessel, its design, construction and equipment, and other requirements for the protection of the environment, including contingency plans and liability for costs and damage in the event of a pollution incident. The Canadian Coast Guard has examined the drawings of the ship and has concluded it substantially meets Canadian standards.

The Canadian authorities are satisfied that on the basis of the information and assurances they have obtained, the United States has taken the necessary measures to ensure that the Polar Sea complies with standards substantially equivalent to those prescribed under Canadian regulations, and that all required precautions have been taken to reduce any danger of pollution arising from the voyage.