

The Northwest Passage is a potentially navigable seaway in the Arctic that is delimited by the Beaufort Sea in the west and the Buffin Bay in the east. As the Arctic ice cap melts further each year, the Passage may become navigable in the medium term. This brings to light many important questions and problems closely linked to the Passage's legal status. This thesis first maps the different reasons to deal with the problem and focuses on Canada as the state to be potentially most affected by the Passage's use. Canada takes the view, that the Northwest Passage are internal waters and the U.S. and the EU, that it is an international strait. The work probes the approaches to determine the status in compliance with the international law as they were claimed chronologically. However, the work stipulates the legal solution is not the only one imaginable and can even be potentially harmful to Canada. Therefore, the next part of the thesis deals with mapping them. A political solution on the international level is offered arguing that cooperation should be established in the region to safely and peacefully use the potentially navigable Passage. The last way to solve the situation lies in national policies as Canada has historically dealt with the issue internally several times. Some of its efforts have also been accepted as international norms. The government has strengthened its monitoring and patrolling activities in the region and enhanced its presence there in the last decade. But experts emphasize that hand in hand with stewardship should come diplomacy.