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INFORMATION ON A PROPOSED SHIP REPORTING SYSTEM
IN THE OLD BAHAMA CHANNEL

With reference to SN/Circ.141 of 3 May 1989, the attached information on the proposed ship reporting system in the Old Bahama Channel is brought to the attention of Member Governments pursuant to the request of the Government of the United States.

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ANNEXINFORMATION ON A PROPOSED SHIP REPORTING SYSTEM
IN THE OLD BAHAMA CHANNEL

1. Member Governments have recently been advised by SN/Circ. 141 of 3 May 1989, that the Government of Cuba intends to submit a proposal for a mandatory ship reporting system in the Old Bahama Channel for consideration at the 36th session of the Subcommittee on Safety of Navigation. According to SN/Circ. 141, the ship reporting system is to be implemented on 1 September 1989, even though the Subcommittee meeting has yet to be scheduled.
 2. Although the proposed system is similar to several previously approved by the Organization, it appears that the reporting requirement in the Old Bahama Channel would be mandatory rather than voluntary as are all other previously approved ship reporting systems. Consistent with customary international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Government of the United States of America will not recognize a mandatory ship reporting system through an international strait which would have the practical effect of hampering the right of transit passage.
 3. In addition, the Government of the United States of America objects strongly to any unilateral action which is nominally an International Maritime Organization measure being implemented prior to consideration by the Organization.
 4. While the Government of the United States Of America shares the desire of the Government of Cuba, as expressed in SN/Circ. 141, that the risk of collisions, strandings, and other marine casualties be reduced to the minimum, it believes that a voluntary ship reporting system approved by the International Maritime Organization will be more effective in achieving this objective. Such a system would be consistent with international standards and would enjoy the broad support of maritime nations. The Government of the United States of America is prepared to support appropriate voluntary ship reporting systems submitted for International Maritime Organization approval by Member Governments.
 5. The Government of the United States of America wishes to bring its concerns regarding the proposed ship reporting system in the Old Bahama Channel to the attention of Member Governments and urges Member Governments to express their views to the Organization.
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