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Russia Floats Arctic Shipping Route as 'Viable' Suez Canal Alternative

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An 400-meter cargo ship got stuck in the Suez Canal this week, blocking one of the world's key shipping routes. **Rosatom**

Russia has proposed its strategic Arctic shipping route as an alternative to the Suez Canal after a 400-meter cargo ship got stuck in the canal, blocking one of the world's key shipping routes and sparking fears of a rise in oil prices.

Tracking data showed the ill-fated Ever Given container ship had charted a course resembling a massive phallus through the Red Sea before it got stuck in the Suez Canal — something that did not go unnoticed in Moscow.

The Northern Sea Route has "way more space to draw peculiar pictures using your giant ships," state nuclear energy corporation Rosatom said in a Twitter thread where it listed reasons to choose it as a "viable alternative" Thursday.

"If you get icebound, we have icebreakers, well to break the ice," Rosatom added, attaching an article on Rosatom icebreakers rescuing a cargo ship trapped in the ice in late December

and early January.

Rosatom didn't miss the opportunity to brag about how it provides real-time data on weather, currents, ice motion and other important information for navigating the north.

And finally, Rosatom said, "You might get stuck in the Suez Canal for days."

Embed:

> 3. You might get stuck in the Suez Canal for days pic.twitter.com/Z6slwdyq53
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> — Rosatom Global (@RosatomGlobal) March 25, 2021

Moscow has made expansion of the Northern Sea Route one of its key priorities as Arctic ice cover shrinks. In his May Decrees signed at the start of his current term in 2018, President Vladimir Putin listed increasing annual shipments along the route to 80 million metric tons by 2024 as one of the country's goals.

While sailing the Northern Sea Route cuts about 40% of the distance between China and European ports compared with taking the Suez Canal, traffic along the Arctic route is not yet competitive with the Suez Canal or even sailing around Africa, The Barents Observer wrote Thursday.

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