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THE “PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES” DEFENSE TO PATENT INFRINGEMENT FOR TODAY’S GLOBAL ECONOMY: SECTION 272 OF THE PATENT ACT

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"PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES"

In 2004, for the first time ever, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit applied the little-known "temporary-presence" defense of 35 U.S.C. § 272 in National Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pacific Railway. This Federal Circuit decision demonstrated that § 272 can provide an accused patent infringer with a powerful defense to infringement where a foreign vessel, aircraft, or vehicle enters the United States temporarily.

Although this defense may not be well known yet, the temporary-presence defense of § 272 should become more important as the world continues to become smaller and commerce continues to become more global.

Section 272, entitled "Temporary presence in the United States," provides:

The use of any invention in any vessel, aircraft or vehicle of any

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1 Nat'l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC II), 357 F.3d 1319, 1326 (Fed. Cir. 2004).

2 Id. ("In gross, section 272 provides that the use of certain foreign-owned means of transit or transport entering into the jurisdiction of the United States 'temporarily or accidentally' is not an infringing use provided a host of conditions are satisfied."). Although § 272 and similar provisions distinguish between "vessels," "aircraft," and "vehicles," see United States v. Reid, 206 F. Supp. 2d 132, 139 (D. Mass. 2002), this article sometimes uses the word "vehicle" as shorthand to refer to all three.
country which affords similar privileges to vessels, aircraft or vehicles of
the United States, entering the United States temporarily or accidentally,
shall not constitute infringement of any patent, if the invention is used
exclusively for the needs of the vessel, aircraft or vehicle and is not
offered for sale or sold in or used for the manufacture of anything to be
sold in or exported from the United States. 3

Thus, the temporary-presence defense of § 272 has five requirements:
(1) Vessel, aircraft, or vehicle – the accused invention must be used in a
vessel, aircraft, or vehicle;

(2) Reciprocity – the vessel, aircraft, or vehicle must be from another
country that provides a similar defense to U.S. vessels, aircraft, or
vehicles;

(3) Temporary or accidental presence – the vessel, aircraft or vehicle
must be present in the United States only temporarily or accidentally;

(4) Exclusively for the needs of the vehicle – the accused invention must
be used “exclusively for the needs” of the vessel, aircraft, or vehicle; and

(5) No U.S. sales or manufacturing activity – the accused infringer must
not sell or offer to sell the accused invention, nor use it to manufacture
anything to be sold in or exported from the United States. 4

The major object and underlying policy of § 272 is to prevent patent
enforcement from inhibiting international commerce. 5 According to the
Federal Circuit:

[The temporary-presence defense] demonstrate[s] a concern to leave
the channels of international commerce, or more accurately the vessels
and vehicles that pass through these channels, free from the excessive
burdens that would result if such vessels or vehicles had to conform to the
patent laws of all nations that the vessel or vehicle visited during its
lifetime. Different inventions are likely to be patented in different
countries, and the same invention may be owned by different parties in
different countries. In section 272, Congress intended to join an
international movement to place foreign-owned means of international
transport beyond the reach of domestic patentees’ exclusive rights
because the cost of complying with multiple, inconsistent rights of
exclusion provided by the patent regimes of a large number of countries

4 Id.; see also Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States, 29 Fed. Cl. 197, 240 (1993)
describing the five elements of § 272).
5 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1330.
would likely place an excessive drag on international commerce. Thus, the temporary-presence defense strikes a balance between a patentee’s right to exclude and the exigencies of international trade.

In today’s global economy, the importance of the temporary-presence defense should continue to increase. Since the enactment of § 272 in 1952,

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6 Id.; see also Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1126 (E.D.N.Y. 1974) (“It is difficult to see any other purpose in Section 272 and Article 5ter than to meet the needs and realities of international trade and navigation.”), aff’d, 535 F.2d 1240 (2d Cir. 1975) (unpublished table decision). Similarly, a commentator in 1930 described the policy behind the temporary-presence defense as follows:

The right of the patentee to prevent the use of his invention in foreign vessels or other means of transportation coming temporarily into the jurisdiction of a state may cause much inconvenience to the freedom of communication. It is too rigid to require a foreigner, who may be altogether ignorant of the grant of a patent in a country, to secure a license from the patentee for the use of the invention at the risk of being subjected to seizure of the machine or engine employed in the construction, fitting out, or functioning of his vessel or other means of transportation.


7 See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1330; Dan L. Burk, Patents in Cyberspace: Territoriality and Infringement on Global Computer Networks, 68 TUL. L. REV. 1, 66 (1993); cf. Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1125-26 (“[T]he patent law must not be so interpreted as to impair the treaty-making capacity of the nation or to clog its power to regulate foreign commerce (since that would make patent grants a surrender pro tanto of ‘sovereignty’ to private persons.”) (citations omitted)).

Interestingly, one commentator has proposed using the balance struck by the temporary-presence defense of § 272 as a model for dealing with the issue of “enforc[ing] patent rights infringed by international data communications.” Burk, supra, at 66. He suggests that:

The temporary presence doctrine represents judicial recognition that the balance struck in the quid pro quo patent bargain may be upset by international policy considerations, particularly when the harm to the patent holder is slight. Courts that are asked to enforce patent rights infringed by international data communications will be required to engage in a similar calculus: the patent incentive created by Congress must not be eroded, but at the same time, mechanical application of its provisions cannot be allowed to compromise important international goals. Systematic, substantial inroads into a patent holder’s exclusivity by, for instance, an offshore data haven, are likely to render the patent worthless and must be discouraged. Particularly when such activity by data service providers or subscribers knowingly encroaches on the patent, imposition of liability for direct infringement and inducement would be appropriate.

By contrast, when computer network activity occasionally and unwittingly impinges on the scope of a U.S. patent, the burdens on the U.S. international position imposed on society by judicial enforcement of the patent may exceed the value of the patent incentive.

Id.


Manufacturing of goods now regularly occurs across borders, and lower-cost transportation has played a major role in this phenomenon. Vehicles such as refrigerated trucks, specially modified rail cars, and unique freight aircraft have become more important in facilitating transnational commerce. As the importance of international shipping continues to increase, the temporary-presence defense of § 272 becomes of increasingly greater significance for preventing patent infringement by imported goods. See Arthur Donovan, *The Impact of Containerization: From Adam Smith to the 21st Century*, Rev. of Bus., October 1, 2004, at 10, 14 (“[I]ndustrial production is widely distributed rather than concentrated, and sub-assemblies and semi-finished components are routinely shipped in containers across borders and oceans. . . .”); Binyamin Netanyahu, *We’re Just Getting Started*, Jerusalem Post, Mar. 4, 2005, at 17 (“Today, we live in a world of choice, . . . where goods can be manufactured on the other side of the globe and shipped at a pace scarcely imaginable a few decades ago.”); see also Roger Alcaly, *The New Economy* 128-29 (2003) (describing how Dell Computer ships computers to its customers by having shipping companies combine its computers made in Austin, Texas with monitors made in Mexico).

See Befort, supra note 9, at 617 (“Advances in technology and transportation have created a global economy . . . .”); George K. Walker, *Information Warfare and Neutrality*, 33 Vand. J. Transnat’l L. 1079, 1088 (2000) (“The global economy was made possible by modern transportation.”) (quoting Roberta Cooper Ramo, Executive Foreword to G. Burgess Allison, The Lawyer’s Guide to the Internet, xi (1995)); see also Donovan, supra note 10, at 13-14 (“[C]ontainerization has taken global commerce to new levels of integration and has brought greatly increased wealth to many parts of the world. Before the 1960s, moving general cargoes across oceans cost roughly 10 to 15 percent of the retail value of the goods carried. . . . Today the cost of shipping goods in containers is between one and two percent of retail value, 90 percent less than before containerization.”).

See Chicago: Portal to the World, Transp. & Distribution, May 2003, at 51, 56 (“[I]nternational freight volumes are growing faster than domestic volume and will almost double by 2020.”).
enforcement from interfering with international trade.

As discussed in detail below, the temporary-presence defense first originated in England in the 1850s. The defense then came to America via an 1856 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Duchesne, which held that even though there was no temporary-presence statute in effect at the time, a foreign ship was exempt from patent-infringement liability where it was only temporarily present in the United States. The temporary-presence defense went global in 1925 when it was incorporated into the Paris Convention. Congress enacted § 272 as part of the Patent Act of 1952 to codify the holding of the Supreme Court and the requirements of the Paris Convention.

Although sparse, the case law applying § 272 up to and including National Steel Car shows the variety of transportation means to which § 272 can apply. Before National Steel Car, there were only two cases that interpreted § 272. In the first of these cases, Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., a district court held that § 272 provided a complete defense to patent infringement for aircraft that were temporarily present in the United States. In the second case, Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States, the United States Court of Federal Claims held that § 272 provided a patent-infringement defense for certain spacecraft.

Because temporary-presence-defense statutes analogous to § 272 exist in many countries, foreign cases interpreting these statutes are also instructive. Two cases are notable. In Rolltrailer, a German court held that the German temporary-presence statute protected vehicles called “roll trailers” from infringement liability. In Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd., an English court held that the U.K. temporary-presence statute exempted certain ferries from infringement.

National Steel Car presents the most recent application of the temporary-presence defense in the United States. In National Steel Car, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania held in 2003 that the defense of § 272 did not apply to certain Canadian rail cars that entered the United States, delivered lumber to U.S. destinations, and then returned empty to Canada. Unlike other courts that considered similar issues, the district court narrowly

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14 LADAS, supra note 6, at 247.
16 357 F.3d 1319 (Fed. Cir. 2004).
20 [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66 (Eng.), aff'd [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737 (Eng.).
interpreted the elements of § 272. However, in 2004, the Federal Circuit reversed the district court’s decision and broadly interpreted the terms of § 272. Thus, § 272 remains a potentially powerful defense to patent infringement for operators of foreign vessels, aircraft, and vehicles of many different types that are present only temporarily in the United States – a veritable “planes, trains, and automobiles” defense.

This Article discusses the history and application of the temporary-presence defense of § 272. Part II describes the origins of the temporary-presence defense and § 272. Part III examines the judicial interpretation of § 272 and the temporary-presence defense, discussing the two cases interpreting § 272 before National Steel Car, as well as two foreign cases of interest. Part IV then analyzes the National Steel Car case. This Part discusses the decisions of both the district court and the Federal Circuit, contrasts the two decisions, and argues that the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of § 272 was correct. Finally, Part V considers what may be the limits of the scope of § 272.


This Part discusses the origins of § 272 and the temporary-presence defense. Part II.A discusses the origins of the temporary-presence defense in England in the 1850s. Next, Part II.B examines the first application of the temporary-presence defense in the United States by the Supreme Court in Brown v. Duchesne. After that, Part II.C considers the international adoption of the defense by its incorporation into the Paris Convention as Article 5ter. Finally, Part II.D describes the enactment of § 272 itself.

A. Origins in England

The temporary-presence defense originated in England in the 1850s. After a court rejected the defense, England enacted the first temporary-presence statute. An accused infringer first raised the temporary-presence defense in Caldwell v. Vanvlissengen in the Chancery Court in 1851, but the court rejected the
defense. The patent at issue covered an improvement to a ship’s propeller. The accused infringers were from Holland and used this invention in Dutch ships that traveled between Holland and England to engage in trade. Thus, the ships were only temporarily present in English waters. The patentee sought a preliminary injunction preventing this use. In response, the accused infringers contended that the court should not “grant an injunction restraining the use by foreigners of the patent on board a ship built in a foreign country at amity with England, and manned and owned by the subjects of that country.”

The accused infringers argued:

If a right of this kind were asserted against foreigners coming to [England] it would be a source of great inconvenience. There was not an article which a foreigner might bring to this country for his use or comfort but might be the subject of a patent, and, therefore, the subject of an application against him. The right, if it existed, might even be asserted against a ship accidentally driven into an English port by a tempest or stranded on the coast.

Although the accused infringers did not characterize their defense as a “temporary-presence” defense, the essence of their argument was that their use of an invention covered by an English patent on a foreign ship should not amount to infringement where the ship would be present in English waters only temporarily for the purpose of engaging in international trade.

The court rejected the infringers’ temporary-presence defense. The court first noted the “universal” rule “that foreigners are in all cases subject to the laws of the country in which they happen to be.” The court then observed:

27 Id. at 576-78; LADAS, supra note 6, at 246; Moffat, supra note 24, at 28-30; Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 434.
28 Caldwell, 68 Eng. Rep. at 575. The court referred to the invention as a “screw propeller.” Id.
29 Id. 572-73. Additionally, according to the accused infringers, the invention in question was not covered by a Dutch patent and “had been openly used and exercised in . . . Holland.” Id. at 572.
30 See id. at 527-73.
31 See id. at 575 (describing the issue as “whether the Court will interfere to protect a patentee before he has established his right at law, or will suspend its interference until the right at law has been established”).
32 Id. at 574.
33 Id. at 574. This argument is very similar to the Federal Circuit’s description of the underlying purpose and policy of § 272. Compare id. with NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1330. See supra text accompanying note 6 (quoting this description).
35 Id. at 574-78.
36 Id. at 575.
[U]ndoubtedly [the patent] grant gives to the grantee a right of action against persons who infringe upon the sole and exclusive right purported to be granted by it. Foreigners coming into [England] are, as I apprehend, subject to actions for injuries done by them whilst here to the subjects of the Crown. Why then are they not to be subject to actions for the injury done by their infringing upon the sole and exclusive right, which I have shewn to be granted in conformity with the laws and constitution of this country? And if they are subject to such actions, why is not the power of this Court, which is founded upon the insufficiency of the legal remedy, to be applied against them as well as against the subjects of the Crown.  

The court ultimately observed that the accused infringers’ argument “resolves itself into a question of national policy, and it is for the Legislature, and not for the Courts, to deal with that question: my duty is to administer the law and not to make it.”

Thus, the court rejected the temporary-presence defense and granted the preliminary injunction.

In 1852, responding to the court’s holding in *Caldwell*, Parliament amended the English patent law to provide for a temporary-presence defense to infringement. Members of the House of Commons believed that the absence of such a provision would hamper commerce between England and other countries. This first temporary-presence statute read:

No letters patent for any invention (granted after the passing of this Act) shall extend to prevent the use of such invention in any foreign ship or vessel, or for the navigation of any foreign ship or vessel, which may be in any port of Her Majesty’s dominions, or in any of the waters within the jurisdiction of any of Her Majesty’s Courts, where such invention is not so used for the manufacture of any goods or commodities to be vended within or exported from Her Majesty’s dominions: Provided always, that this enactment shall not extend to the ships or vessels of any foreign state of which the laws authorize subjects of such foreign state, having patents or like privileges for the exclusive use or exercise of inventions within its territories, to prevent or interfere with the use of such inventions in

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37 *Id.* at 576.
38 *Id.* at 577. In contrast, a few years later, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the reasoning of *Caldwell* and did not hesitate to interpret U.S. patent law as incorporating a temporary-presence defense, even in the absence of any explicit statute. See *Brown v. Duchesne*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183, 198-99 (1856). For a discussion of *Brown*, see *infra* Part II.B.
41 Moffat, *supra* note 24, at 28.
British ships or vessels, or in or about the navigation of British ships or vessels, while in the ports of such foreign state, or in the waters within the jurisdiction of its Courts, where such inventions are not so used for the manufacture of goods or commodities to be vended within or exported from the territories of such foreign state.\(^\text{42}\)

Like § 272, the current U.S. temporary-presence provision, the first British statute: (1) applied to foreign ships temporarily present in the country; (2) excluded from the defense the use of the patented invention for manufacturing; and (3) required reciprocity between the two countries with respect to providing a temporary-presence defense.\(^\text{43}\) Two important differences between the current U.S. law and the original British statute are: (1) the British statute applied only to ships and not to aircraft or land vehicles, whereas the U.S. provision applies to all three; and (2) the British statute applied to any use of a patented invention in a vessel or for the navigation of a vessel, whereas the U.S. statute applies only where the patented invention is used exclusively for the needs of the vessel.\(^\text{44}\) The modern U.K. temporary-presence-defense statute is more similar to § 272.\(^\text{45}\)

Soon after its first appearance in England in 1852, the temporary-presence defense migrated across the Atlantic to the United States.

B. The U.S. Supreme Court: Brown v. Duchesne

Soon after the passage of the first British temporary-presence statute but long before the emergence of a similar codified law, the temporary-presence defense was first applied in the United States in 1856 by the Supreme Court in Brown v. Duchesne.\(^\text{46}\) The patent involved “a new and useful improvement in constructing the gaff of sailing vessels.”\(^\text{47}\) The accused infringer was a French

\(^{42}\) Id. at 30 (emphasis omitted) (quoting Patent Law Amendment Act, 1852, 15 and 16 Vict., c. 83, § 26 (Eng.)).


\(^{45}\) Patents Act, 1977, c. 37, § 60 (U.K.). See infra text accompanying note 194 (for selected language from this statute).


\(^{47}\) Brown, 60 U.S. at 193. A “gaff” is “[a] spar attached to the mast and used to extend the upper edge of a fore-and-aft sail.” The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 740 (4th ed. 2000) [hereinafter
citizen, who used the patented invention on a French ship that traveled between a French colony and Boston.\(^48\) No French patent covered the invention.\(^49\) Indeed, the patentee admitted “that the [ship] was a foreign vessel, lawfully in a port of the United States for the purposes of commerce, and that the improvement in question was placed on her in a foreign port to fit her for sea.”\(^50\) Thus, the Court framed the issue as:

whether any improvement in the construction or equipment of a foreign vessel, for which a patent has been obtained in the United States, can be used by such vessel within the jurisdiction of the United States, while she is temporarily there for the purposes of commerce, without the consent of the patentee.\(^51\)

In an opinion authored by Chief Justice Roger Taney, the Supreme Court held that the temporary presence of the ship in the United States provided the accused infringer with a defense to infringement liability.\(^52\) The Court reasoned that such a result flowed from a proper construction of the patent infringement statute.\(^53\) The Court began by noting that a literal interpretation of the language of the statute did not allow for a temporary-presence defense to infringement.\(^54\) However, the Court interpreted the statute by looking beyond its plain language:

\[\text{[I]t is well settled that, in interpreting a statute, the court will not look merely to a particular clause in which general words may be used, but}\]

\[\text{AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY}. \text{ A “spar” is “[a] wooden or metal pole, such as a mast, boom, yard, or bowsprit, used to support sails and rigging.” \textit{Id.} at 1727.}\]

\(^{48}\) \textit{Brown,} 60 U.S. at 193.

\(^{49}\) \textit{See id.} at 194.

\(^{50}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{51}\) \textit{Id.}

\(^{52}\) \textit{Id.} at 198-99.

\(^{53}\) \textit{Id.} at 194-97. The patent infringement provision in effect in 1856 read:

\[\text{If any person shall make, devise and use, or sell the thing so invented, the exclusive right of which shall, as aforesaid, have been secured to any person by patent, without the consent of the patentee, his executors, administrators or assigns, first obtained in writing, every person so offending, shall forfeit and pay to the patentee, a sum, that shall be at least equal to three times the price, for which the patentee has usually sold or licensed to other persons, the use of the said invention; which may be recovered in an action on the case founded on this act, in the circuit court of the United States, or any other court having competent jurisdiction.}\]

\(^{9}\) DONALD S. CHISUM, \textsc{Chisum on Patents} App. 10-3 (2004) (quoting Patent Act of 1793, Ch. 11, 1 Stat. 318-323, § 5 (1793)).

\(^{54}\) \textit{Brown,} 60 U.S. at 194 (“The general words used in the clause of the patent laws granting the exclusive right to the patentee to use the improvement, taken by themselves, and literally construed, without regard to the object in view, would seem to sanction the claim of the plaintiff.”).
will take in connection with it the whole statute (or statutes on the same subject) and the objects and policy of the law, as indicated by its various provisions, and give to it such a construction as will carry into execution the will of the Legislature, as thus ascertained, according to its true intent and meaning.\textsuperscript{55}

The Court further described its approach as follows:

Neither will the court, in expounding a statute, give to it a construction which would in any degree disarm the Government of a power which has been confided to it to be used for the general good – or which would enable individuals to embarrass it, in the discharge of the high duties it owes to the community – unless plain and express words indicated that such was the intention of the Legislature.\textsuperscript{56}

The Court reasoned that Congress did not intend the patent infringement statute to reach foreign vessels temporarily present in the United States because the constitutional authority for the patent laws was the Patent Clause, rather than the Commerce Clause.\textsuperscript{57} The Court observed that where Congress was legislating “to protect authors and inventors,” Congress was presumably acting under the domestic power granted by the Patent Clause, “and it ought not lightly to be presumed that they intended to go beyond it, and exercise

\textsuperscript{55} Id. Such an approach to statutory interpretation was consistent with precedent at the time. See, e.g., United States v. Boisdore’s Heirs, 49 U.S. (8 How.) 113, 122 (1850) (“In expounding a statute, we must not be guided by a single sentence or member of a sentence, but look to the provisions of the whole law, and to its object and policy.”). Indeed, the Court still uses such an approach to statutory interpretation today. See, e.g., Crandon v. United States, 494 U.S. 152, 158 (1990) (“In determining the meaning of the statute, we look not only to the particular statutory language, but to the design of the statute as a whole and to its object and policy.”).

\textsuperscript{56} Brown, 60 U.S. at 195. The Court uses the word “embarrass” several times throughout the Brown opinion. See id. at 195, 197, 198. At the time of Brown, the primary meaning of “embarrass” differed from its current connotation. In 1856, the primary meaning of “embarrass” was “[t]o perplex; to render intricate; to entangle.” Noah Webster, An American Dictionary of the English Language 388 (1854). In contrast, today “embarrass” typically connotes the causing of discomfort or abashment. See, e.g., American Heritage Dictionary, supra note 47, at 600 (“To cause to feel self-conscious or ill at ease; disconcert . . . .”)

\textsuperscript{57} Id. The Patent Clause grants Congress the power “To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.” U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 8. The Commerce Clause grants Congress the power “To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.” U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 3.
another and distinct power, conferred on them for a different purpose."\(^{58}\) The Court then noted that the Patent Clause “confers no power on Congress to regulate commerce, or the vehicles of commerce, which belong to a foreign nation, and occasionally visit our ports in their commercial pursuits.”\(^{59}\)

The Court then further reasoned that there was no infringement liability because there was at most only a minimal “use” of the patented invention in the United States, other than in navigating in and out of the harbor.\(^{60}\) The Court further observed that the patentee had suffered no real damage from a foreign vessel’s use of his patented invention.\(^{61}\) The Court noted that the accused infringer only derived a benefit from the use of the patented invention while the ship was on “the high seas,” not while it was sitting in the harbor in the United States.\(^{62}\) The Court contrasted this minimal use of the patented

\(^{58}\) Brown, 60 U.S. at 195.

\(^{59}\) Id. The Court also noted that the patent laws “do not, and were not intended to, operate beyond the limits of the United States.” Id. Indeed, courts cite Brown most often for this principle – that U.S. patent law has no extraterritorial effect. See, e.g., Deepsouth Packing Co. v. Laitram Corp., 406 U.S. 518, 527, 531 (1972) (citing Brown, 60 U.S. at 195); Int’l Rectifier Corp. v. Samsung Elecs. Co., 361 F.3d 1355, 1360 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (quoting Brown, 60 U.S. at 195). This principle is now axiomatic. See id.

In contrast, the Court in Brown noted that U.S. law does apply to foreigners present in the United States. Brown, 60 U.S. at 194 (“[U]ndoubtedly every person who is found within the limits of a Government, whether for temporary purposes or as a resident, is bound by its laws. . . .”). Similarly, the English court in Caldwell observed that English law applied to foreigners present in Great Britain. Caldwell v. Vanvliissengen, (1851) 68 Eng. Rep. 571, 576 (Ch.). However, unlike the Court in Brown, the court in Caldwell applied this principle to conclude that a foreign ship temporarily present in the country was liable for patent infringement. See id. at 572-75 (rejecting the temporary-presence defense); see also discussion supra Part II.A (discussing Caldwell). Thus, the Supreme Court’s holding in Brown that the patent laws did not apply to a foreign vessel using a patented invention while temporarily present in the United States was far from a foregone conclusion.

\(^{60}\) See Brown, 60 U.S. at 196. The Court stated:

[S]o far as the mere use is concerned, the vessel could hardly be said to use it while she was at anchor in the port, or lay at the wharf. It was certainly of no value to her while she was in the harbor; and the only use made of it, which can be supposed to interfere with the rights of the plaintiff, was in navigating the vessel into and out of the harbor, when she arrived or was about to depart, and while she was within the jurisdiction of the United States.

Id.

\(^{61}\) See id.

\(^{62}\) Id. However, the court interpreting § 272 in Cali in 1974 questioned the Supreme Court’s characterization of the use of the patented invention in Brown as non-damaging. Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1126 (E.D.N.Y.
invention with a hypothetical situation in which the accused infringer made or sold the invention in the United States, where liability for infringement would exist. 63

Thus, the Court concluded that the patent infringement statute could not be construed to cover patented inventions used in foreign vessels while only temporarily present in the United States. 64 According to the Court in Brown:

[S]uch a construction would be inconsistent with the principles that lie at the foundation of [the patent] laws; and instead of conferring legal rights on the inventor, in order to do equal justice between him and those who profit by his invention, they would confer a power to exact damages where no real damage had been sustained, and would moreover seriously embarrass the commerce of the country with foreign nations. We think these laws ought to be construed in the spirit in which they were made – that is, as founded in justice – and should not be strained by technical constructions to reach cases which Congress evidently could not have contemplated, without departing from the principle upon which they were legislating, and going far beyond the object they intended to accomplish. 65

The Court went on to discuss that a construction failing to recognize a temporary-presence defense would improperly confer political power, as opposed to merely a property right, on patentees. 66 The Court explained that such a construction would “enable [patentees] to embarrass the treaty-making power in its negotiations with foreign nations, and also to interfere with the legislation of Congress when exercising its constitutional power to regulate commerce.” 67 The patentee’s proposed construction would give the patentee a

1974) (“Such a use within the United States would not, perhaps, today be characterized as trivial and non-damaging since it was inevitable and necessary . . . .”); see infra Part III.A (discussing Cali).

63 Brown, 60 U.S. at 196.

64 See id. at 196-97.

65 Id. at 197. It is ironic that the Court considered that it would be a “strained . . . technical construction[]” to interpret the statute according to its plain language as applying to any “use within the United States.” Id. Arguably, it is the Court’s interpretation that is strained in its holding that despite the plain language of the statute there is no infringement where a foreign vessel uses a patented invention while temporarily present in the United States.

66 See id. at 197-98.

67 Id. at 197. The Court noted that:

[If a treaty should be negotiated with a foreign nation, by which the vessels of each party were to be freely admitted into the ports of the other, upon equal terms with its own, upon the payment of the ordinary port charges, and the foreign Government faithfully carried it into execution, yet the Government of the United States would find itself unable to fulfill its obligations if the foreign ship had about her, in her
private right at the expense of public rights: “[N]o sound rule of interpretation would justify the court in giving to the general words used in the patent laws the extended construction claimed by the plaintiff, in a case like this, where public rights and the interests of the whole community are concerned.”68

Finally, the Court expressly rejected the patentee’s argument that the Court should adopt the holding of Caldwell v. Vanvlissengen,69 in which the

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68 Id. at 198. Brown provides an early example of where the Supreme Court held that the public interest trumped private property rights. See id. In discussing Brown in the context of § 272, the district court in Cali cited a much later case, Home Building & Loan Ass’n v. Blaisdell, 290 U.S. 398, 442-44 (1934), for the proposition that “Brown v. Duchesne means at minimum that the patent law must not be so interpreted as to impair the treaty-making capacity of the nation or to clog its power to regulate foreign commerce (since that would make patent grants a surrender pro tanto of ‘sovereignty’ to private persons).” Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1125-26 (E.D.N.Y. 1974) (also citing Norman v. Balt. & O.R. Co., 294 U.S. 240, 316 (1935)).

Chancery Court concluded that “the question of the exemption of foreign vessels [from patent infringement] is one of national policy, and to be dealt with by the Legislature, rather than by the courts.”

In rejecting the reasoning of Caldwell, the Supreme Court stated that it “must interpret our patent laws with reference to our own Constitution and laws and judicial decisions.”

Consequently, the Court concluded that the accused infringer should not be liable for patent infringement based on the temporary-presence doctrine:

[The rights of property and exclusive use granted to a patentee does [sic] not extend to a foreign vessel lawfully entering one of our ports; and that the use of such improvement, in the construction, fitting out, or equipment of such vessel, while she is coming into or going out of a port of the United States, is not an infringement of the rights of an American patentee, provided it was placed upon her in a foreign port, and authorized by the laws of the country to which she belongs.]

Thus, by Supreme Court precedent, the temporary-presence defense became part of U.S. patent law in 1856, long before the existence of a temporary-presence statute.

C. Article 5(ter) of the Paris Convention

Eventually, the temporary-presence defense was adopted internationally. The first general temporary-presence-defense provision was added to the

571 (Ch.)). For a discussion of Caldwell, see supra Part II.A.

70 Brown, 60 U.S. at 184.

71 Id. at 198.

72 Id. at 198-99.

73 Although the Paris Convention contained the first general temporary-presence provision covering ships, land vehicles, and aircraft, several years earlier a limited temporary-presence provision was incorporated into the 1919 Convention for the Regulation of Aerial Navigation. LADAS, supra note 6, at 246; Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 434-35. This provision read:

Every aircraft passing through the territory of a contracting State, including landing and stoppages reasonably necessary for the purpose of such transit, shall be exempt from any seizure on the ground of infringement of patent, design, or model, subject to the deposit of security the amount of which in default of amicable agreement shall be fixed with the least delay by the competent authority of the place of seizure.

LADAS, supra note 6, at 246 (quoting Article 18 of the 1919 Convention); accord Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 434-35 n.12. As one commentator described, this provision was quite limited compared to the later provision of the Paris Convention:

This timid attempt concerned only aircraft. Furthermore, it did not declare permissible the use of a patented invention in its construction, fitting out, or functioning. The Convention exempted aircraft from seizure only on condition of deposit of security.

LADAS, supra note 6, at 247; see also Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 434-35.
Paris Convention in 1925.\textsuperscript{74} The Paris Convention was “the first major international treaty designed to help the people of one country obtain protection in other countries for their intellectual creations in the form of industrial property rights,” including patents, trademarks, and industrial designs.\textsuperscript{75} The Paris Convention was ratified and first went into effect in 1883 with fourteen signatory nations.\textsuperscript{76} Since then, the Paris Convention has been revised several times, with the latest revision in Stockholm in 1967.\textsuperscript{77} As of January 2005, the Paris Convention had 169 signatory nations.\textsuperscript{78}

The current version of the temporary-presence provision of Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} of the Paris Convention provides:

In any country of the Union the following shall not be considered as infringements of the rights of a patentee:

1. the use on board vessels of other countries of the Union of devices forming the subject of his patent in the body of the vessel, in the machinery, tackle, gear and other accessories, when such vessels temporarily or accidentally enter the waters of the said country, provided

\begin{itemize}
  \item LADAS, \textit{supra} note 6, at 247; Sharma & Forrest, \textit{supra} note 24, at 435. The original version of this temporary-presence provision, Article 5\textsuperscript{ter}, read:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item In each of the contracting countries the following shall not be considered as infringing the rights of the patentee:
      \begin{enumerate}
        \item The use on board ships of other Unionist countries of anything the subject matter of his patent in the body of the ship, in the machinery, tackle, apparatus, and other accessories when such ships enter temporarily or accidentally the waters of the country, provided that such thing is employed there exclusively for the needs of the vessel.
        \item The use of anything the subject matter of the patent in the construction or functioning of the engines of locomotion for air or land of the other Unionist countries, or of the accessories of these engines, when these enter the country temporarily or accidentally.
      \end{enumerate}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textit{Protection of Industrial Property: Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Certified Copy of a Convention Signed at the Hague on November 6, 1925, by the Plenipotentiaries of the United States and of the Other Governments Members of the International Union for the Protection of Industrial Property, Modifying the International Convention of March 20, 1883, Revised at Brussels on December 14, 1900, and at Washington on June 2, 1911, at 9 (1930) [hereinafter \textit{Original Article 5}\textsuperscript{ter}].}


\textit{Id.} at 241-42.

that such devices are used there exclusively for the needs of the vessel;

2. the use of devices forming the subject of the patent in the construction or operation of aircraft or land vehicles of other countries of the Union, or of accessories of such aircraft or land vehicles, when those aircraft or land vehicles temporarily or accidentally enter the said country.  

The first paragraph of Article 5<sup>ter</sup> addresses the use of patented inventions on ships; the second paragraph relates to aircraft and land vehicles. Overall, the requirements of Article 5<sup>ter</sup> are quite similar to those of § 272: (1) vessel, aircraft, or vehicle; (2) reciprocity; (3) temporary or accidental presence; and (4) exclusively for the needs of the vehicle. However, unlike § 272, Article 5<sup>ter</sup> has no restriction on domestic sales or manufacturing activity. Since its adoption, Article 5<sup>ter</sup> has led to temporary-presence statutes in many countries.

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79 Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property art. 5<sup>ter</sup>, opened for signature Mar. 20, 1883, 25 Stat. 1372, as revised at Stockholm July 14, 1967, 21 U.S.T. 1583, 828 U.N.T.S. 305 [hereinafter Paris Convention art. 5<sup>ter</sup>]. The changes in Article 5<sup>ter</sup> from the original 1925 version to today’s version do not appear to be substantive. Compare Original Article 5<sup>ter</sup>, supra note 74, with Paris Convention art. 5<sup>ter</sup>, supra.

80 See Paris Convention art. 5<sup>ter</sup>, supra note 79; see also LADAS, supra note 6, at 247.

81 Compare Paris Convention art. 5<sup>ter</sup>, supra note 79, with 35 U.S.C. § 272.

82 Compare Paris Convention art. 5<sup>ter</sup>, supra note 79, with 35 U.S.C. § 272.

D. Congress Enacts Section 272

The holding in Brown and Article 5ter of the Paris Convention led to the enactment of the U.S. temporary-presence-defense statute, 35 U.S.C. § 272, as part of the Patent Act of 1952.\footnote{See S. REP. NO. 82-1979, at 9, 28 (1952), as reprinted in 1952 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2394, 2402, 2422.} Section 272 has little legislative history.\footnote{S. REP. NO. 82-1979, at 9 (1952), as reprinted in 1952 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2394, 2402.} The first piece of legislative history reads: “Section 272 is a new section in the law relating to infringement, but it is of relatively little importance and it follows a paragraph in a treaty to which the United States is a party.”\footnote{Id. at 28, reprinted in 1952 U.S.C.C.A.N. at 2422.} The second piece reads: “This section follows the requirement of the International Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, to which the United States is a party, and also codifies the holding of the Supreme Court that use of a patented invention on board a foreign ship does not infringe a patent.”\footnote{Id. at 9 (1952), as reprinted in 1952 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2394, 2402.}

\footnote{S. REP. NO. 82-1979, at 9 (1952), as reprinted in 1952 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2394, 2402.} The Federal Circuit recently relied on this commentary in interpreting the term “vehicle” in § 272. \footnote{NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328; see infra Part IV.B.1 (discussing the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of the term “vehicle” in § 272).} The Federal Circuit recently relied on this commentary in interpreting the term “vehicle” in § 272. \footnote{NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328; see infra Part IV.B.1 (discussing the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of the term “vehicle” in § 272).} The Federal Circuit recently relied on this commentary in interpreting the term “vehicle” in § 272. \footnote{NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328; see infra Part IV.B.1 (discussing the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of the term “vehicle” in § 272).} The Federal Circuit recently relied on this commentary in interpreting the term “vehicle” in § 272. \footnote{NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328; see infra Part IV.B.1 (discussing the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of the term “vehicle” in § 272).} The Federal Circuit recently relied on this commentary in interpreting the term “vehicle” in § 272.**
It is unfortunate that Congress chose to describe § 272 as “of relatively little importance.” Although the revision to § 272 may have been less important than the other major revisions encompassed within the Patent Act of 1952, § 272 nonetheless remains an important defense to accused infringers under the appropriate circumstances. According to the district court in Cali, the “adoption [of § 272] implies that [this provision was] understood to create a useful immunity from infringement liability that was of enough importance to occupy the attention of the Congress and the negotiators of two treaties.” Moreover, the temporary-presence defense of § 272 should become even more important as commerce continues to become more global.

III. JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION OF SECTION 272 AND THE TEMPORARY-PRESENCE DEFENSE BEFORE NATIONAL STEEL CAR

This Part discusses cases interpreting § 272 and the temporary-presence defense before National Steel Car. As discussed below, the case law applying § 272 up to and including National Steel Car shows the variety of means of transportation to which § 272 can apply—namely airplanes, spacecraft, “roll trailers,” ferry boats, and rail cars. This case law includes two U.S. cases interpreting § 272, as well as foreign cases of interest interpreting temporary-presence-defense statutes analogous to § 272. Part III.A examines Cali v. the Paris Convention. See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1326. “[T]he holding of the Supreme Court” to which the legislative history refers is that of Brown. See id.; Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1125 (E.D.N.Y. 1974) (“It will be seen that Brown v. Duchesne is to some extent the source of the ideas and language in Section 272 . . . .”); Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States, 29 Fed. Cl. 197, 231 (1993).

Article 5 itself has no force of law because the Paris Convention is not self-executing. In re Rath, 402 F.3d 1207, 1209-10 (Fed. Cir. 2005) (citing Kawai v. Metlestics, 480 F.2d 880, 884 (C.C.P.A. 1973)). As such, it was necessary for Congress to enact § 272. See id. at 1209 (holding that the Paris Convention had “no direct effect until implemented by domestic law”).

The 1952 Patent Act was a major amendment to the existing patent statutes, completely rewriting the patent statutes “[f]or the first time since 1879.” Federico, supra note 85, at 163. The Act had two purposes: (1) to substantively change some of the existing patent law and (2) to codify the existing patent statutes and some case law. Id. at 170.

See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1325-34; Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1124-28; Hughes Aircraft, 29 Fed. Cl. at 240-41.

See supra notes 9-12 and accompanying text (discussing the importance of the temporary-presence defense in today’s global economy).
Japan Airlines, Inc., in which a district court in 1974 held that § 272 provided a complete defense to patent infringement for aircraft that were temporarily present in the United States. Next, Part III.B discusses Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States, in which the United States Court of Federal Claims in 1993 held that § 272 provided a patent-infringement defense for certain spacecraft. Finally, Part III.C considers two foreign cases of interest—one from Germany and one from the United Kingdom.

A. Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc.

The first case to interpret § 272 was Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., in which the meaning of “entering the United States temporarily” was at issue. In Cali, a patentee sued three foreign airlines for infringement of a patent covering a modification to a jet engine. The patentee claimed that these airlines infringed the patent by using the engines in regularly scheduled flights into, out of, and over the United States. Indeed, the court characterized these flights as “regular, of very considerable extent, long continued, and supported by ground service, marketing facilities, etc.” The patentee argued that § 272 should not provide the accused infringers with an infringement defense.

94 Hughes Aircraft, 29 Fed. Cl. 197.
95 Cali, 380 F. Supp. 1120.
96 Id. at 1124. No other elements of § 272 were at issue in Cali. The accused aircraft in question were clearly aircraft of other countries that provided reciprocal temporary-presence privileges. See id. at 1127. Additionally, the parties did not dispute that the accused engines were used exclusively for the needs of the aircraft. See id. at 1122. Finally, there was no allegation that the accused engines were “offered for sale or sold in or used for the manufacture of anything to be sold in or exported from the United States.” 35 U.S.C. § 272; see Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1122.
97 Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1122 (citing Axial Flow Compressors for Jet Engines, U.S. Patent No. 3,265,290 (filed Sept. 1, 1964)). In an earlier decision in the same case, the Second Circuit described the patentee and his invention as follows:

Cali . . . is a mechanic employed by one of the pioneers in the airlines industry, Pan American World Airways (Pan Am). The kernel of the patented invention which is the subject of this suit was contained in an idea which Cali submitted to Pan Am on a standard form soliciting employees’ suggestions in December 1962. . . . Cali’s proposal apparently resulted in the correction of a persistent defect in the design of the JT-4 jet engine, then used in Pan Am’s Boeing 707 and Douglas DC-8 aircraft before the introduction of the fan jet. Cali’s ‘suggestion-box’ solution had eluded the industry’s professional engineers.

99 Id.
because: (1) the accused aircraft were not “temporarily” present in the United States under a proper interpretation of § 272 and (2) § 272 was unconstitutional. The court rejected both these arguments and held that § 272 and Article 5 of the Paris Convention provided the airlines with “a complete defense to the claims against them for patent infringement.” The court held that “temporarily” means no “less than entering for the purpose of completing a voyage, turning about, and continuing or commencing a new voyage.”

100 Id. at 1123-24.

101 The court also relied on Article 27 of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944. See id. at 1123-24, 1126-28. Article 27, entitled “Exemption from seizure on patent claims,” provides for a temporary-presence defense to patent infringement for aircraft:

(a) While engaged in international air navigation, any authorized entry of aircraft of a contracting State into the territory of another contracting State or authorized transit across the territory of such State with or without landings shall not entail any seizure or detention of the aircraft or any claim against the owner or operator thereof or any other interference therewith by or on behalf of such State or any person therein, on the ground that the construction, mechanism, parts, accessories or operation of the aircraft is an infringement of any patent, design, or model duly granted or registered in the State whose territory is entered by the aircraft, it being agreed that no deposit of security in connection with the foregoing exemption from seizure or detention of the aircraft shall in any case be required in the State entered by such aircraft.

(b) The provisions of paragraph (a) of this Article shall also be applicable to the storage of spare parts and spare equipment for the aircraft and the right to use and install the same in the repair of an aircraft of a contracting State in the territory of any other contracting State, provided that any patented part or equipment so stored shall not be sold or distributed internally in or exported commercially from the contracting State entered by the aircraft.

(c) The benefits of this Article shall apply only to such States, parties to this Convention, as either (1) are parties to the International Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and to any amendments thereof; or (2) have enacted patent laws which recognize and give adequate protection to inventions made by the nationals of the other States parties to this Convention.


102 Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1124. To the extent that the court relied directly on Article 5 as a source of law, rather than just § 272, the court was incorrect because the Paris Convention is not self-executing. In re Rath, 402 F.3d at 1209-10 (citing Kawai v. Metlestics, 480 F.2d 880, 884 (C.C.P.A. 1973)). The procedural posture of Cali was that the patentee had moved “for summary judgment in substance striking the defenses based on Section 272.” Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1128. The court denied the patentee’s motion. Id.
voyage,” and that § 272 was not unconstitutional. The patentee first argued that § 272 should not apply because the accused aircraft would not be “temporarily” present in the United States. The patentee contended that § 272 “cannot be taken to cover the maintenance of a regular and systematic international aircraft service to the United states [sic], including overflights of it.” The court disagreed. The court began by looking at the Supreme Court’s holding in Brown v. Duchesne. The court observed that Brown “means at a minimum that the patent law must not be so interpreted as to impair the treaty-making capacity of the nation or to clog its power to regulate foreign commerce.” The court further reasoned that the holding of Brown “does not mean . . . that only trivial uses” fall under § 272, even though “[t]he [Supreme] Court emphasized the ‘no damage’ aspect in reaching its conclusion.”

Additionally, the court looked to the negotiating history of Article 5 of the Paris Convention for insight into the meaning of “temporarily.” The court observed that a committee considering the adoption of Article 5 at the Hague Conference discussed the meaning of “temporarily.” According to the court, “the committee indicated that the words ‘temporarily’ and ‘accidentally’ were chosen to cover entries into port for more or less brief periods whether periodically or exceptionally and whether unintentionally or not.” Thus, the court concluded that “[t]emporarily . . . could not sensibly mean any less than entering for the purpose of completing a voyage, turning about, and continuing or commencing a new voyage.” The court reasoned:

103 Cali, 380 F. Supp at 1126.
104 Id. at 1127-28.
105 Id. at 1124.
106 Id.
107 Id. at 1124-26 (discussing Brown v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183 (1856)). For an overview of Brown, see supra Part II.B.
109 Id. at 1126.
110 Id. at 1124. The court relied on the negotiating history of this treaty provision in interpreting § 272 because the United States has in substance so interpreted its own patent laws in unhesitatingly becoming a party to the Paris Convention and the Chicago Convention, both of which specifically deal with the very subject matter of Brown v. Duchesne and Section 272, and do so in an historical evolution which furnishes an insight into the meaning of the word ‘temporarily’ as used in the phrase ‘entering the United States temporarily or accidentally.’
111 Id. at 1126.
112 Id.
113 Id.
The enactment of Section 272 and the adoption of Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} would be incomprehensible if they were intended to cover only trivia. Their adoption implies that they were understood to create a useful immunity from infringement liability that was of enough importance to occupy the attention of the Congress and the negotiators of two treaties. Their language was chosen to deal with an internationally significant matter arising in a world in which scheduled freight and passenger services by established international carriers by air and sea were likely to require such an immunity to cover countless articles aboard aircraft or vessels that could turn out to be covered by patents in the United States that were without counterpart abroad. It is difficult to see any other purpose in Section 272 and Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} than to meet the needs and realities of international trade and navigation.\textsuperscript{114}

The court then drew an important distinction between domestic and international traffic:

The distinction would be between a Caravelle,\textsuperscript{115} manufactured in France and powered with such an engine, delivered here for use by an airline in this country for domestic traffic, even though manufactured and sold in France, and a foreign aircraft arriving here on an international flight only to unload, turn about, reload and depart.\textsuperscript{116}

The court concluded that the travels of the accused aircraft were international, rather than domestic, in character.\textsuperscript{117} Therefore, the accused aircraft were “temporarily” present in the United States and covered by § 272.\textsuperscript{118}

The court also considered and rejected the patentee’s argument that § 272 is unconstitutional.\textsuperscript{119} Specifically, the patentee argued “that if an invention is patentable, the Government [sic] is constitutionally precluded from according the inventor anything less than the exclusive grant described in the Constitution and provided for in” 35 U.S.C. § 154.\textsuperscript{120} In rejecting this

\textsuperscript{114} Id.

\textsuperscript{115} The Caravelle was “[a] highly successful French-built medium-range airliner, [which] was one of the first commercial aircraft to place its two jet engines at the tail.” ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AVIATION 42 (1977). The Caravelle made its first flight in 1955 and entered regular service in 1959. Id.

\textsuperscript{116} Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1126.

\textsuperscript{117} See id. at 1124.

\textsuperscript{118} See id.

\textsuperscript{119} See id. at 1123-25, 1127-28.

\textsuperscript{120} Id. at 1123-24. Section 154 provides, in relevant part: “Every patent shall contain . . . a grant to the patentee . . . of the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, or selling the invention throughout the United States or importing the invention into the United States . . . .” 35 U.S.C. § 154(a) (2000).
argument, the court noted that the Patent Clause “is not self-executing.”  

121 The court observed that the Patent Clause “empowers but does not command the Congress to grant patent rights, and the source of any specific right is the statute which defines the nature and extent of the patent right granted.”  

122 The court then noted that under Supreme Court precedent, “Congress having created the monopoly, may put such limitations upon it as it pleases.”  

123 Thus, § 272 merely represents a permissible limitation on the patent monopoly.  

124 The patentee also argued that the application of § 272 and Article 5ter of the Paris Convention amounted to an unconstitutional taking.  

125 The court rejected this argument:  

126 Whatever might have been the case as to patents granted before Brown v. Duchesne, it has not been the case as to patents granted since the expiration of the patents then extant. All such later patents have Brown v. Duchesne read into them. . . . The enactment of the patent law under the constitutional provision simply was not a compact with all future inventors never to make such treaties as the Paris and Chicago Conventions and never to add a Section 272 to the patent laws. That is what Brown v. Duchesne decided in pointing out that the patent law must not be interpreted to abridge the nation’s capacity to carry on its treaty-making powers and its power to regulate foreign commerce.  

127 Thus, because the patent-in-suit was issued in 1966, after the enactment of § 272, Article 5ter of the Paris Convention, and Article 27 of the Chicago Convention, the court reasoned that these provisions “were integral limitations on the [patent] grant.”  

128 Therefore, the court ultimately concluded that the statute, Section 272, and the Paris Convention, Article 5ter, cannot be so narrowly interpreted as [the patentee] contends, and that Article 27 of the Chicago Convention, Article 5ter, of the Paris Convention, and Section 272, are constitutionally valid as applied to the [accused infringers’] uses of [the patentee’s] patented engines, and, therefore, accord [the accused infringers] a complete defense to the claims against them for patent infringement.  

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121 Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1124.  
122 Id.  
123 Id. (quoting Mast, Foos, & Co. v. Stover Mfg. Co., 177 U.S. 485, 494 (1900)).  
124 See id.  
125 Id. at 1127.  
126 Id. at 1127-28.  
127 Id. at 1128.  
128 Id.  
129 Id. at 1124.
The Second Circuit subsequently affirmed this decision without an opinion.130

B. Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States

The second case interpreting § 272 before National Steel Car was Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States.131 In Hughes Aircraft, the Court of Federal Claims held that the temporary-presence defense of § 272 did not apply to spacecraft launched before 1981, but that § 272 did cover the launch of certain spacecraft after 1981.132 The reason for this distinction was that in 1981, Congress passed a statute that brought spacecraft within the definition of “vehicle” for purposes of the § 272 temporary-presence defense.133 This statute, 42 U.S.C. § 2457(k), reads: “Any object intended for launch, launched, or assembled in outer space shall be considered a vehicle for the purpose of section 272 of Title 35.”134 Hughes Aircraft involved a patent covering “an apparatus for controlling the attitude of a spin-stabilized spacecraft.”135 The patentee sought compensation from the United States for its alleged use of the patented invention in numerous spacecraft.136 Five of the spacecraft at issue in Hughes Aircraft were developed in partnership with other nations, such as West Germany and the United Kingdom.137 Before launch in the United States, each of these

132 Id. at 231-33, 240-41.
135 Hughes Aircraft, 29 Fed. Cl. at 201 (citing Velocity Control and Orientation of a Spin-Stabilized Body, U.S. Patent No. 3,758,051 (filed Aug. 21, 1964)).
136 Id. The patentee sought “compensation in excess of four billion dollars” from the United States under 28 U.S.C. § 1498. Id. This statute provides, in relevant part:
Whenever an invention described in and covered by a patent of the United States is used or manufactured by or for the United States without license of the owner thereof or lawful right to use or manufacture the same, the owner’s remedy shall be by action against the United States in the United States Court of Federal Claims for the recovery of his reasonable and entire compensation for such use and manufacture.
spacecraft “was manufactured in another country and funded by another nation.”\textsuperscript{138} In addition to advancing other defenses, the United States contended that 35 U.S.C. § 272 provided a complete defense for any use of the patented invention because the spacecraft at issue would be only temporarily present in the United States.\textsuperscript{139}

The court first considered whether § 272 applied to spacecraft launched before 1981.\textsuperscript{140} The patentee argued that such pre-1981 launches should not fall under § 272 because before the enactment of 42 U.S.C. § 2457(k), spacecraft “were not vessels, aircraft or vehicles.”\textsuperscript{141} The court agreed, reasoning that in the absence of § 2457(k), “such spacecraft would properly be deemed cargo brought to this country for use (i.e., launch), not a vehicle or vessel within the contemplation of the temporary presence doctrine.”\textsuperscript{142} The court noted that spacecraft did not fit under the definition of “vessel” or “vehicle” provided in 1 U.S.C. §§ 3 and 4.\textsuperscript{143} The court then distinguished \textit{Brown}\textsuperscript{144} and \textit{Cali},\textsuperscript{145} observing that:

In those cases, the entries of the vessels and aircraft (operating as means of conveyance) were for purposes of depositing cargo and passengers and initiating new trips elsewhere. When a spacecraft is delivered to the United States for the purpose of allowing the United States to launch it, the spacecraft is the cargo brought here for an essential use, not a “vessel” or “vehicle” which enters the United States as a means of conveyance.\textsuperscript{146}

Thus, the court held that § 272 cannot apply to spacecraft launched before 1981.\textsuperscript{147}

The court also considered whether § 272 applied to a certain spacecraft launched after 1981.\textsuperscript{148} The court held that § 272 did provide the United States

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Id.} at 225.
\textsuperscript{139} \textit{See id.} at 231.
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Id.} at 231-33.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Id.} at 232.
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Id.} (emphasis omitted).
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Id.} at 232 n.46. The definition of “vessel” under § 3 “includes every description of watercraft or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on water.” 1 U.S.C. § 3 (2000). The definition of “vehicle” under § 4 “includes every description of carriage or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on land.” 1 U.S.C. § 4 (2000). These provisions are a part of the Dictionary Act. \textit{See infra} note 302 (discussing the Dictionary Act).
\textsuperscript{144} 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183 (1856).
\textsuperscript{145} 380 F. Supp. 1120 (E.D.N.Y. 1974).
\textsuperscript{146} Hughes Aircraft, 29 Fed. Cl. at 232.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Id.} at 232-33.
\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Id.} at 240-41.
with a defense with respect to the launch of this spacecraft. First, the court concluded that the spacecraft had to qualify as a “vehicle” under § 272 due to the enactment of 42 U.S.C. § 2457(k).

Second, the court held that the spacecraft was “temporarily” present in the United States because the spacecraft “entered the United States one time for the sole purpose of being launched into outer space.” Third, the court observed that “the United Kingdom extends ‘similar privileges’ to ‘vessels, aircraft and vehicles’ of the United States.” Finally, the court held that “[t]here can be no dispute” that “[t]he invention—the attitude control system—was used exclusively for the needs of the vehicle, and the invention was not sold or used for manufacture within the United States.” Therefore, the court concluded that for the spacecraft launched after 1981, § 272 provided the United States with a complete defense to infringement.

149 See id.
150 Id. at 240.
151 Id. The court looked to Cali and reasoned that if the systematic presence of the aircraft in Cali was temporary, then the presence of a spacecraft “in the United States one time for a short duration” must also be temporary. Id. (citing Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1126 (E.D.N.Y. 1974)).
152 Id. The court rejected the patentee’s argument “that the doctrine does not apply because the United Kingdom does not have a statute making the temporary presence doctrine applicable to spacecraft.” Id. at 241 n.67. The court reasoned: Section 272 does not require that the United Kingdom and the United States have identical temporary presence doctrines—only that the United Kingdom have a doctrine relating to “vessels, aircraft and vehicles.” Further, defendant’s expert witness on United Kingdom law testified that the United Kingdom would apply its doctrine to a United States spacecraft entering the United Kingdom temporarily. Id. (citation omitted).
153 Id. at 241. The patentee also argued that an additional condition should be read into § 272—“that the use of the invention be solely by another country and that the use be of no benefit to the United States.” Id. at 240 n.66. However, the court rejected this argument as unpersuasive because the argument was “based on the legislative history of another provision – 42 U.S.C. § 2457(l).” Id.
C. Foreign Cases

Temporary-presence statutes analogous to § 272 exist in many countries. It is interesting to look to the interpretation that foreign courts have given to these counterpart temporary-presence provisions, particularly because such statutes are often based on Article 5 ter of the Paris Convention – the same treaty provision that underlies § 272. In particular, two cases are notable. Part III.C.1 discusses the first such case, Rolltrailer, in which a German court in 1973 held that the German temporary-presence statute protected vehicles called “roll trailers” from infringement liability. Next, Part III.C.2 discusses Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd., in which an English court held that the U.K. temporary-presence statute exempted certain ferries from infringement.

1. Germany: Rolltrailer

In the 1973 Rolltrailer case, a West German court held that Germany’s

REV. 318, 323-24 (1993). The stated object of this IGA was “to establish a long-term international cooperative framework among the Partners . . . for the detailed design, development, operation, and utilization of a permanently manned civil Space Station for peaceful purposes, in accordance with international law.” Space Station IGA, supra, art. 1(1). Article 21(6) of the IGA provides:

The temporary presence in the territory of a Partner State of any articles, including the components of a flight element, in transit between any place on Earth and any flight element of the Space Station registered by another Partner State or ESA shall not in itself form the basis for any proceedings in the first Partner State for patent infringement.

Id. art. 21(6). “[I]t was the purpose of this provision to exclude that the transport of payloads or flight elements of the European partner by US launchers could infringe US patents—a particular concern to the European partner who will be dependent on US launchers for some time.” Vahrenwald, supra, at 323. This “IGA was superseded in 1998 by the Space Station Intergovernmental Agreement.” Malagar, supra, at 363 n.262 (citing 1998 U.S. Treaty Actions, 37 I.L.M. 1495 (1998)).

155 For examples of such provisions, see supra note 83.
156 Cf. Rotec Indus., Inc. v. Mitsubishi Corp., 215 F.3d 1246, 1253 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (looking to U.K. case law to determine whether a provision of U.S. patent law conform to an international agreement); Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (Irish Ferries II), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [67] (Munby, J.) ("I am glad to think that on a point arising in this area of the law, relating to international commerce, whether by sea or in the air, and founded moreover on an international Convention, the courts of this country should feel able to come to precisely the same essential conclusion as courts in Germany and the United States.").
158 [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66 (Eng.).
temporary-presence statute provided a defense to infringement.\textsuperscript{160} The patent at issue in \textit{Rolltrailer} covered couplings used in conjunction with roll trailers, which “are used to transport containers . . . onto ships.”\textsuperscript{161} The court described roll trailers as follows:

They are loaded with the goods for transportation in the departure dock, pulled onto the ship thus laden and parked there for the journey. At the arrival dock they are unloaded onto the quayside with their load where they are unloaded. Having been loaded again they can then be used for transportation on another ship. All in all, they serve to facilitate and speed up the transportation of goods and to shorten the time the ships spend in harbour.\textsuperscript{162}

Roll trailers have no means for self-propulsion; instead, they are pulled by tractors.\textsuperscript{163} The accused infringer was a Finnish shipping company that regularly brought roll trailers allegedly using the patented invention into Germany on German ships, used the roll trailers to unload and load cargo, then exited Germany with the roll trailers on the ships.\textsuperscript{164} The accused infringer asserted a defense under the German temporary-presence statute.\textsuperscript{165} According to the court, pursuant to that statute, “the effect of a German patent does not extend to equipment on vehicles which enter the country only temporarily.”\textsuperscript{166} At issue was whether the roll trailers in question were vehicles under the statute, whether they were of another country, and whether they were temporarily present in Germany.\textsuperscript{167}

The court held that roll trailers are vehicles.\textsuperscript{168} The court relied on a broad

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{160} \textit{Rolltrailer} Translation, \textit{supra} note 159, at B13.
\item \textsuperscript{161} Id. at B6 (citing German Patent No. 1,297,999 (published Mar. 26, 1970) and German Utility Model No. 1,968,449).
\item \textsuperscript{162} Id.; see also SDV Oilfield, Glossary of International Trade Terms, http://www.sdvoilfield.com/genst.htm (last visited Apr. 17, 2006) (“[‘Roll trailer’ is a] generic term for a wheeled trailer used for carrying cargo, also known as a mafi. It may remain on board throughout ocean passage or be used as a ‘slave’ trailer to transport cargo to and from the vessel once on quay. It has an under layer with a steel chassis and equipped with solid rubber tyres. It is attached to a tug master with a gooseneck.”).
\item \textsuperscript{163} See \textit{Rolltrailer} Translation, \textit{supra} note 159, at B6-B7.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Id; see id. at B12.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Id. at B7.
\item \textsuperscript{166} Id. at B8. At the time, this statute had not been amended to conform to Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} of the Paris Convention. See Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (\textit{Irish Ferries II}), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [35] (Eng.) (commenting on the \textit{Rolltrailer} case).
\item \textsuperscript{167} See \textit{Rolltrailer} Translation, \textit{supra} note 159, at B8-B13.
\item \textsuperscript{168} See id. at B9.
\end{itemize}
definition of “vehicle” from German case law: “a vehicle is ‘any object which is arranged to travel on the earth, in water or in the air, either in the manner of one of the known transporting means or in some other manner, and in the use of which the movement plays an essential part.’”\textsuperscript{169} The court discussed other, broader definitions of “vehicle” from the literature.\textsuperscript{170} The court found that roll trailers meet these definitions of “vehicle.”\textsuperscript{171} Even though roll trailers themselves have no means for propulsion, the court still found that roll trailers are vehicles, noting that according to the literature, “it is not crucial how the vehicle moves and whether it has its own driving force.”\textsuperscript{172} The court also rejected the argument that roll trailers are not vehicles because they entered the country on ships “without performing [their] natural function as transporting means.”\textsuperscript{173} The court emphasized that “[t]he only important point is that the vehicles are used as such in the country.”\textsuperscript{174} The court justified its broad interpretation of “vehicle” with the policy behind the temporary-presence defense: “The imposition of any more stringent demands is forbidden . . . by the sense and purpose of the provision[,] which is to promote free international trade.”\textsuperscript{175}

The court next considered whether the roll trailers were of another country.\textsuperscript{176} The patentee argued that the roll trailers were not of another country because the accused infringer used them on German ships owned by third parties, rather than on foreign ships.\textsuperscript{177} The court rejected this argument, stating that “[t]he prerequisite for satisfying this condition of the application of

\textsuperscript{169} Id. This definition includes ships and aircraft as being “vehicles”. See id. Thus, this definition is broader than the U.S. statutory definition of “vehicle,” which includes only land vehicles. Compare id. with 1 U.S.C. § 4 (“The word ‘vehicle’ includes every description of carriage or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on land.”) (emphasis added)).

\textsuperscript{170} Rolltrailer Translation, supra note 159, at B9. One such definition “state[d] that the only essential feature [of a ‘vehicle’] is ‘the ability to travel in space.’” Id. The court also noted that “[t]here is general consent in the literature that all types of vehicles, without any distinctions, are to be regarded as vehicles in the sense of” the temporary-presence statute. Id. The court also noted “that it does not matter whether the vehicle is used for carrying people or objects.” Id. (citations omitted).

\textsuperscript{171} Id.

\textsuperscript{172} Id.

\textsuperscript{173} Id. The court noted that “[v]ehicles which enter the country, for example on a railway truck or ship, are also covered by” the temporary-presence statute. Id.

\textsuperscript{174} Id. at B10.

\textsuperscript{175} Id. at B10-B12.

\textsuperscript{176} See id. The court considered that the roll trailers “take the nationality of the ships on which they were carried.” Id. at B11.
[the temporary-presence statute] is that the vehicle is based in another country.” The court then found that the roll trailers were, indeed, based in Finland. The court again looked for support for its broad interpretation in the policy behind the temporary-presence defense:

One major consideration is that the terms of [the temporary-presence statute] are . . . designed to promote trade wherever possible and must be adapted to the constantly altering circumstances of international transport in a progressive manner. However, this principle would be infringed if in determining the home of the roll[] trailers used by the defendant a decision were based on the ships which carry them. The result of this would be to force the [accused infringers], through German patent law, to refrain from using German ships, irrespective of the increasing cooperation and interdependency of international transport. The freedom of international trade would thus be seriously jeopardised, contrary to the spirit and intention of [the temporary-presence statute].

Thus, the court concluded that the roll trailers were vehicles of another country. Finally, the court considered whether the roll trailers were only temporarily present in Germany. The court found that the roll trailers were temporarily present despite “[t]he fact that the roll[] trailers enter Germany regularly and repeatedly.” Without explicitly defining “temporarily” as used in the statute, the court’s reasoning as to the meaning of “temporarily” was time-based. The court observed that “after this stay, as envisaged from the outset, [the roll trailers] leave Germany again after a relatively short period.” The court then speculated that “a stay in the country can only be regarded as no longer temporary if it lasts for at least several months in one go.”

178 Id. at B10.
179 Id. at B11. The court reasoned as follows:

The [accused infringer] obtained the roll[] trailers from a manufacturer in Finland and brought them from Finland for their own purposes. Irrespective of their use on ships owned by third parties these roll[] trailers continue to be their property and are administered and managed from Finland, the country in which the [accused infringer’s] business is based. They are accordingly based in Finland.

180 Id. at B11-B12 (citations omitted).
181 Id. at B11.
182 Id. at B12-B13.
183 Id. at B12.
184 See id.
185 Id.
186 Id. The court found that “this does not appear to be the case here, as indicated by the purpose and function of the roll[] trailers and the rapidity of modern day sea travel.” Id.
also rejected the argument that the roll trailers were not temporarily present because a number of the accused infringer’s roll trailers might always be present in Germany.\footnote{187}{\textit{Id.} at B12-B13.} The court reasoned that “[a]s the subject of the patent infringement is only the individual roll[...]}\footnote{188}{\textit{Id.} at B13.} trailer, the only important point is whether the individual roll[...]}\footnote{189}{\textit{Id.} at B12.} trailer is only temporarily in the country.”\footnote{190}{\textit{Id.} at B13.} Again, the court supported its conclusion with the policy behind the temporary-presence defense: “This [interpretation] corresponds to the purposes of [the temporary presence statute], which is intended to protect international transport trade from claims arising from patents. Mean-spiritedness is not compatible with this concept.”\footnote{191}{Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (\textit{Irish Ferries II}), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66 (Eng.).} For these reasons, the court dismissed the patentee’s complaint, holding that the temporary-presence statute provided the accused infringer with a complete defense.\footnote{192}{\textit{Id.} at [12]-[38].  The \textit{Irish Ferries} case was the first case in which a U.K. court interpreted the phrase “temporarily or accidentally” in the U.K. temporary-presence statute. Sharma & Forrest, \textit{supra} note 24, at 430 n.2.}

2. United Kingdom: \textit{Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd.}

Another interesting foreign case is \textit{Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd.},\footnote{193}{\textit{Irish Ferries II}, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [12].} in which the English Court of Appeal in 2003 held that the U.K. temporary-presence defense applied to a ferry boat that traveled regularly between Ireland and Wales.\footnote{194}{\textit{Id.} at [24]-[38].  The \textit{Irish Ferries} case was the first case in which a U.K. court interpreted the phrase “temporarily or accidentally” in the U.K. temporary-presence statute. Sharma & Forrest, \textit{supra} note 24, at 430 n.2.}

The U.K. temporary-presence defense is contained in section 60 of the Patents Act of 1977.\footnote{195}{Irish Ferries II, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [12].}

This statute provides, in relevant part:

(5) An act which, apart from this subsection, would constitute an infringement of a patent for an invention shall not do so if—

. . . .

(d) it consists of the use, exclusively for the needs of a relevant ship, of a product or process in the body of such a ship or in its machinery, tackle, apparatus or other accessories, in a case where the ship has temporarily or accidentally entered the internal or territorial waters of the United Kingdom . . . .

. . . .

(7) In this section—

\footnote{187}{\textit{Id.} at B12-B13.}
\footnote{188}{\textit{Id.} at B13.}
\footnote{189}{\textit{Id.} at B12.}
\footnote{190}{\textit{Id.} at B13.}
\footnote{191}{Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (\textit{Irish Ferries II}), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66 (Eng.).}
\footnote{192}{\textit{Id.} at [12]-[38].  The \textit{Irish Ferries} case was the first case in which a U.K. court interpreted the phrase “temporarily or accidentally” in the U.K. temporary-presence statute. Sharma & Forrest, \textit{supra} note 24, at 430 n.2.}
\footnote{193}{\textit{Irish Ferries II}, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [12].}
“relevant ship” and “relevant aircraft, hovercraft or vehicle” mean respectively a ship and an aircraft, hovercraft or vehicle registered in, or belonging to, any country, other than the United Kingdom, which is a party to the Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property signed at Paris on 20th March 1883 or which is a member of the World Trade Organisation . . . . 194

The patent at issue in *Irish Ferries* was for a “multi-hull vessel of the catamaran type which has two or more hulls connected by means of one or more decks and an overlying superstructure.” 195 The accused infringer allegedly employed this patented invention in its catamaran, the *Jonathan Swift*, that operated between Dublin, Ireland and Holyhead, Wales. 196 The court described the use of the catamaran by the accused infringer as follows: “The *Jonathan Swift* is a ferry registered in Eire which sails between Dublin and Holyhead three or four times a day. On each visit it is in UK territorial waters for about three hours.” 197 At issue in *Irish Ferries* was: (1) whether the accused catamaran was temporarily present in the U.K.; and (2) whether the accused use met the requirement of the U.K. temporary-presence statute that it be “of a product or process in the body or operation of the” ship, even though “the invention as claimed was the whole ship” rather than just a part of it. 198

The court first considered whether the accused ship was temporarily present in the United Kingdom. 199 In interpreting the term “temporarily,” the court first looked to the negotiating history of Article 5ter of the Paris Convention, which formed the basis for the U.K. temporary-presence statute. 200 The court noted that the Czechoslovakian delegation “wanted to ensure that regular and periodical entries into a country were covered by the

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194 Patents Act, 1977, § 60 (U.K.). The U.K. temporary-presence statute also includes provisions for land vehicles and aircraft. *Id.* The language of the U.K. temporary-presence statute is similar to that of Article 5ter of the Paris Convention. *Compare id., with Paris Convention art. 5ter, supra note 79.*


196 *See id.* at [2].

197 *Id.* at [13]; *see also Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (Irish Ferries I), [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [62] (“Its home port is Dublin which means amongst other things that, where possible, it berths there overnight.”), aff’d [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [35] (Eng.).

198 *Irish Ferries II*, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [12]-[15]. This requirement of the U.K. temporary-presence statute is part of the “exclusively for the needs of the vessel” element.

199 *Irish Ferries I*, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [64]-[79].

200 *Id.* at [67].
Convention” and thus changed the word “penetrate” to “enter.” The court also considered the holding of the German court in Rolltrailer that regular and repeated entries into a country could be considered temporary.

The trial court observed that the U.K. statute and Article 5ter of the Paris Convention “are concerned to ensure that trade and the carriage of persons between countries is not hindered by patent rights applying to the means of transport.” The court noted that “the underlying principle is that the normal operation of the vehicle is to be taken out of the scope of patent infringement.” Consistent with these policies, the court interpreted the term “temporarily” as follows:

[The U.K. temporary-presence statute] comes into play to protect the vehicle in so far as it is engaged in inter-State passage. The word “temporarily” should be construed in that context. Its primary purpose is to distinguish between vehicles which are engaged essentially in internal operations and those which travel between countries. For that reason, . . . questions of frequency, persistency and regularity have little to do with determining whether a vessel is temporarily within the territorial waters of the United Kingdom. Temporarily means “for a limited period of time.”

The trial court rejected an interpretation of “temporarily” as meaning the opposite of “permanently.” Instead, the court stated that the statute “must be read to be consistent with [its] legislative purpose.” The court reasoned:

It should be noticed that the legislation is concerned with ships and other vehicles which “enter temporarily” the territory of the State. This suggest [sic] that one has to have regard to the intention of the operator of the vehicle at the time of entry. If, at that time, it is the intention that the

201 Id. at [68]-[69]. But see Irish Ferries II, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [32]-[34] (noting that in the original and official French text of Article 5ter, the word “pénétrèrent [sic]” remained unchanged); infra nn.232-236 and accompanying text (discussing the Court of Appeal’s reasoning concerning this discrepancy). A U.S. district court apparently considered the same negotiating history of Article 5ter in Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1126 (E.D.N.Y. 1974).


203 Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [70]-[72].

204 Id. at [73].

205 Id.

206 Id. at [75]. The Irish Ferries trial court’s distinction between internal and international operations is similar to that of the U.S. district court in Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1126.

207 Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [76].

208 Id.
vehicle should move in and then move out, the entry would be temporary. Although an exact date of expected departure may not be necessary, the operator must intend that the vehicle should continue its journey by leaving the territory in reasonable time consistent with carrying out its role as a means of transport used in international carriage of goods and persons. An expectation that the vehicle may well leave the State at some time in the future, and in this sense has not entered the territory on a permanent basis, should not be enough.

The trial court also rejected the patentee’s argument that under a broad interpretation of “temporarily,” “the Jonathan Swift would be held to be temporarily in both Irish and British waters and permanently in neither.” The patentee argued that such an interpretation would allow an infringer to escape liability in both countries because Ireland also has a temporary-presence provision. However, the court reasoned:

It is possible that “enter” should be contrasted with “return”. A vehicle which returns to its operational home may not be treated the same way as one which temporarily visits foreign lands. If that is so, the Jonathan Swift would not be immune from suit in Dublin, its home port. Thus, [the patentee’s] reductio ad absurdum that the ship could not infringe anywhere (other than the place of construction) would not be true.

Applying its interpretation of “temporarily,” the trial court concluded that the accused ship entered the waters of the United Kingdom only temporarily. The court reasoned:

Applying the above principles to the Jonathan Swift, it can only infringe when it is within our territorial waters. The issue of infringement therefore has to be looked each time it is here. Weather permitting, it does not stay in our waters for more than about three hours at a time. That is the intention of the operator . . . . The fact that the same journey is repeated over and over again, does not alter the fact that each entry into our waters is designed to be short-lived. Indeed, the fact that it is repeated so frequently emphasises the temporary nature of its entry and the fact that it is a means of transport being used in the international

\[209\] Id. The trial court did not decide whether an entry would be temporary “if the vehicle enters a country’s territory temporarily but, once there, the operator changes his mind,” though the court did speculate that such an entry would not be considered temporary. Id. at [77].
\[210\] Id. at [65], [77].
\[211\] Id. at [65]; see Patents Act, 1992, § 42(d)-(e) (Ir.) available at http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1992_1.html (last visited Apr. 17, 2006).
\[212\] Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [77].
\[213\] Id. at [78].
carriage of goods and people. Its entry each time is temporary.\footnote{Id.} Next, the trial court considered the patentee’s second argument – that the temporary-presence defense applied only to patents covering “parts of the ship, not . . . the ship as a whole.”\footnote{Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [80]-[82].} The statute at issue read: “exclusively for the needs of a relevant ship, of a product or process \textit{in the body of such a ship} or in its machinery, tackle, or other accessories.”\footnote{Patents Act, 1977, § 60(5)(d) (U.K.) (emphasis added). This language is analogous to the “exclusively for the needs of the vessel, aircraft, or vehicle” language of 35 U.S.C. § 272.} The patentee argued that because the patent claims at issue were directed to “a multihull vessel, it is the \\textit{Jonathan Swift} as a whole which is the infringing article[, which therefore] falls outside the scope of the” temporary-presence defense.\footnote{Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [80].}

The trial court rejected this argument for four reasons.\footnote{Id. at [81].} First, the court said that there was no “logic . . . in having an exclusion effective against parts but not the whole of a vessel.”\footnote{Id.} Second, the patentee’s proposed construction of the statute would “undermine” its purpose – “to prevent patents interfering with the means used to carry international trade.”\footnote{Id.} Third, the patentee’s proposed construction was not consistent with Article 5\textsubscript{ter} of the Paris Convention, in that Article 5\textsubscript{ter} “excludes ‘the use of devices forming the subject of the patent in the construction’” of the vessel, aircraft, or vehicle.\footnote{Id. (quoting Paris Convention art. 5\textsubscript{ter}, supra note 79).} Finally, although the claims of the patent-in-suit were written to cover the vessel as a whole, the invention itself “is much more limited” – “the use of the special strengthening design in part of” the ship, “not the totality of the ship.”\footnote{Id. at [82].} For these reasons, the trial court held that the U.K. temporary-
presence statute applied, providing the accused infringer with a defense to infringement.\textsuperscript{223} The Court of Appeal affirmed,\textsuperscript{224} mainly agreeing with the trial court’s reasoning but considering additional issues.\textsuperscript{225} First, the court considered a case interpreting the word “temporarily” in the context of a vehicle regulation as meaning “for a limited time.”\textsuperscript{226} It rejected this definition, reasoning that the court in that case interpreted “temporarily” in a far different context – that of “particular road traffic regulations,” rather than international commerce as in the temporary-presence statute.\textsuperscript{227}

Next, the court agreed with the trial court’s definition of “temporarily”:

The judge was right . . . that the word “temporarily” should be construed as “transient” or “for a limited period of time”. That word cannot have been intended to be construed so that vessels which regularly went between this country and say New York or Sydney or Rotterdam would not come within the exception, but vessels who did that occasionally would do so. Whether a vessel visits temporarily, in the context of [Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} of the Paris Convention], cannot depend on frequency.\textsuperscript{228}

The court found support for this definition in the U.S. Cali case, which the trial court had not considered.\textsuperscript{229}

The court next disagreed with the trial court’s treatment of the negotiating history of Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} of the Paris Convention.\textsuperscript{230} The trial court relied on the Czechoslovakian delegation’s urging to change the word “penetrate” to “enter” to ensure that Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} would apply to “regular and periodical entries into a

steam whistle. Claim 1 of the patent is to the steam whistle. Claim 10 is to a container ship with a steam whistle attached to the funnel. It would make little sense if claim 1 was caught by the subsection but claim 10 was not. For this reason, even if [the patentee] were otherwise right on this issue, I would hold that the question whether an act “consists of the use, exclusively for the needs of a relevant ship, of a product or process in the body of such a ship” should be answered purposively. In other words, is the invention the whole ship or is it for a part only? In this case the invention or inventive concept is not the totality of the ship but the use of the special strengthening design in part of it.

\textit{Id.}

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Id.} at [83].

\textsuperscript{224} \textit{Irish Ferries II}, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66 (Eng.).

\textsuperscript{225} \textit{Id.} at [19].

\textsuperscript{226} \textit{Id.} at [21]-[25] (citing British Road Servs. v. Wurzal, [1971] 1 W.L.R. 1508 (Eng.)).

\textsuperscript{227} \textit{Id.} at [25].

\textsuperscript{228} \textit{Id.} at [26].

\textsuperscript{229} \textit{Id.} at [26]-[31].

\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Id.} at [32]-[34].
However, the court noted that in the original French text, which the trial court had not considered, the word “pénétreront” [sic; pénétreront] remained unchanged. Thus, the court stated that “it is not possible to come to any conclusion as to the effect of [the Czechoslovakian delegation’s] intervention nor what was the attitude of the Sous-Commission.” However, the word “pénétreront” can mean “will enter” in addition to “will penetrate.” Hence, the lack of change in this wording does not indicate that the committee rejected the Czechoslovakian delegation’s proposal. Thus, the negotiating history of Article 5
ter may indicate that the committee intended to include regular and periodic entries within the scope of Article 5
ter.

Turning to the trial court’s reliance on the Rolltrailer decision, the court observed that the German law applied in Rolltrailer had not been amended to comply with Article 5
ter; hence, reliance on that case “must be treated with caution.” Nevertheless, the Court of Appeal agreed with the trial court that the Rolltrailer decision supported its definition of “temporarily.”

The court further looked to the “Guide to the application of the Paris Convention as revised in 1967 by Professor G. H. C. Bodenhausen who was the Director of the body now known as WIPO,” which the trial court also had not considered. According to this Guide, under Article 5
ter: “Temporary entry includes periodical entries.” This source provided further support for the court’s holding that the accused catamaran was present in U.K. waters only temporarily.

Finally, the Court of Appeal affirmed the trial court’s conclusion that the accused use met the requirement of the U.K. temporary-presence statute that it be “of a product or process in the body or operation of the” ship, even though

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231 Id. at [32]-[33].
232 The word “pénétreront” means “will enter” or “will penetrate” in French. See GRAND DICTIONNAIRE: FRANÇAIS-ANGLAIS – ANGLAIS-FRANÇAIS 655 (1993) [hereinafter GRAND DICTIONNAIRE] (defining “pénétrer” as, inter alia, “to enter” or “to penetrate”).
233 Irish Ferries II, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [34].
234 Id.
235 See GRAND DICTIONNAIRE, supra note 232, at 655.
236 See LADAS, supra note 6, at 248 (“‘Temporairement,’ it was admitted at the Conference of The Hague, on the suggestion of the Czechoslovakian delegation, comprises also the periodical entries of vessels into the territorial waters of another country.”).
237 Irish Ferries II, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, at [35].
238 Id.
239 See id.
240 Id. at [36].
241 Id.
“the invention as claimed was the whole ship” rather than just a part of it\(^\text{242}\) for
the same reasons the trial court gave.\(^\text{243}\) The court stated: “The invention is
that set out in the claim. . . . However the product of the invention is the
features of the claim which are properly referred to as ‘in the body’ of the
ship.”\(^\text{244}\) In sum, the Court of Appeal affirmed the trial court’s holding that the
U.K. temporary-presence defense provided the accused infringer with a
complete defense to patent infringement.\(^\text{245}\)

IV. NATIONAL STEEL CAR, LTD. V. CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

In 2004, the Federal Circuit for the first time interpreted § 272 in National
Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pacific Railway.\(^\text{246}\) The patent in National Steel
Car covered a type of rail car known as “a depressed center-beam flat car” or a
“drop-deck” center-beam car.\(^\text{247}\) Railroads use center-beam cars to haul
lumber.\(^\text{248}\) “The car described in the ’575 patent is a ‘depressed,’ or ‘drop-deck,’ car because the portion of the floor between the [wheels] is lowered relative to the height of the floor over the [wheels].”\(^\text{249}\)

\(^\text{242}\) Id. at [14]-[15].
\(^\text{243}\) Id. at [37].
\(^\text{244}\) Id.
\(^\text{245}\) Id. at [38].
\(^\text{246}\) Nat’l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC II), 357 F.3d 1319, 1326 (Fed.
Cir. 2004). Although the interpretation of § 272 was a case of first impression for
the Federal Circuit, it was not the first time a court of appeals considered the
statute. The Second Circuit necessarily addressed the district court’s interpretation
of § 272 in Cali v. Japan Airlines Co., 535 F.2d 1240 (2d Cir. 1975), although the
Second Circuit did not issue a written opinion.
\(^\text{247}\) NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1322 (citing Depressed Center Beam Flat Car, U.S. Patent
No. 4,951,575 (filed June 9, 1989)).
\(^\text{248}\) Id. The Federal Circuit described the center-beam rail car as follows:
The car described in the ‘575 patent is a “center-beam” car because the primary
structure of the car is a truss-like beam element that runs the length of the center of the
car between the wheel assemblies . . . . Center-beam cars are an industry standard for
hauling lumber, which is piled onto a floor that extends laterally to each side of the car
from the bottom of the center beam and then secured to the center beam.
\(^\text{249}\) Id. The court described two advantages of the drop-deck center-beam “over the
non-drop-deck version”:
First, it can carry a volumetrically larger load. Given the relatively low density of
wood, ordinary center-beam cars reach volume capacity before they reach weight
capacity, leaving each car inefficiently under-loaded in terms of weight. Second, the
dropping of the deck lowers the car’s center of the gravity, permitting safer loading,
transit, and unloading because a higher center of gravity renders the car more
vulnerable to tipping.
\(^\text{249}\) Id.
a Canadian railroad company, entered into a contract to purchase a fleet of drop-deck center-beam cars. The accused infringer intended to use the cars ninety percent of the time to haul lumber from Canada to the United States, and ten percent of the time to haul lumber within Canada only. The court described the use of the cars as follows:

Because there is no market need for American lumber to be shipped into Canada, [the accused infringer’s] center-beam flat cars return to Canada empty 99.2 percent of the time. Measured either on the basis of days or track mileage traveled, a center-beam flat car is in the United States approximately 56 to 57 percent of the time.

The patentee filed a patent infringement suit and moved for a preliminary injunction. The district court granted the motion, holding that “neither of 250

The accused infringer was Canadian Pacific Railway (“CPR”), which “is a Canadian railroad company that owns rail lines in Canada and in the United States and operates trains on these lines.” Id. at 1323 (footnote omitted).

251 Id.

252 Id. At the time the patentee filed suit, and during the pendency of the suit, the accused cars had not yet entered the United States from Canada, where they were manufactured. See id. Thus, interestingly, there could be no actual infringement because the cars had not been in the United States yet. See Deepsouth Packing Co. v. Laitram Corp., 406 U.S. 518, 527 (1972) (“[I]t is not an infringement to make or use a patented product outside of the United States.”); Brown v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183, 195 (1856) (noting that the patent laws, particularly 35 U.S.C. § 271 “do not, and were not intended to, operate beyond the limits of the United States”). Thus, it may seem at first glance that subject matter jurisdiction was lacking, given that the Federal Circuit has held that the patent laws “cannot be interpreted to cover acts other than an actual making, using or selling of the patented invention.” Lang v. Pac. Marine & Supply Co., 895 F.2d 761, 765 (Fed. Cir. 1990). However, subject matter jurisdiction did exist in National Steel Car. According to the Federal Circuit in Lang, “[i]f the controversy requirement is met by a sufficient allegation of immediacy and reality, we see no reason why a patentee should be unable to seek a declaration of infringement against a future infringer when a future infringer is able to maintain a declaratory judgment action for noninfringement under the same circumstances.” Id. at 764. National Steel Car was such a suit for declaratory judgment. See 1st Am. Compl. at 3-4; Nat’l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC I), 254 F. Supp. 2d 527, 557 (E.D. Pa. 2003), rev’d, 357 F.3d 1319 (Fed. Cir. 2004). Therefore, subject matter jurisdiction did exist.


254 The patentee was National Steel Car, Ltd. (“NSC”), which is “a manufacturer of railway cars.” Id. at 1322.

255 Id. at 1324. The patentee also sued The Greenbrier Companies, Inc., the manufacturer of the accused rail cars, in a separate action in the District of 256
the two defenses raised by [the accused infringer] had substantial merit.”

However, the Federal Circuit reversed the district court’s decision.

Because of the contrast between the district court’s interpretation of the language of § 272 and that of the Federal Circuit, it is interesting to first consider the district court’s opinion in detail. Therefore, Part IV.A first discusses the district court’s opinion in National Steel Car. Next, Part IV.B examines the Federal Circuit’s opinion and concludes that the Federal Circuit correctly interpreted § 272.

A. The District Court Narrowly Interprets Section 272

In concluding that the accused infringer’s temporary-presence defense lacked substantial merit, the district court interpreted the language of § 272 narrowly. At issue before the district court were almost all the elements of § 272: (1) whether the accused cars were vehicles of another country; (2) whether the accused cars would be temporarily present in the United States; (3) whether the patented invention was used exclusively for the needs of the vehicle; and (4) whether the accused cars were sold in the United States.

1. Whether the Accused Cars Were Vehicles of Another Country

After discussing the history of § 272 and examining cases interpreting § 272, the district court first considered whether the accused cars were


256 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1324.

257 Id. To succeed in its preliminary-injunction motion, the patentee had to, inter alia, “demonstrate a reasonable likelihood of success on the merits.” Id. at 1324-25. However, no preliminary injunction could issue if the accused infringer “raise[d] a substantial question concerning either infringement or validity, i.e., assert[ed] an infringement or invalidity defense that the patentee [could not] prove lack[ed] substantial merit.” Id. at 1325 (internal quotation marks omitted).

In addition to its temporary-presence defense under § 272, the accused infringer asserted an invalidity defense. Id. at 1324. Moreover, the accused infringer also asserted a defense of unenforceability due to inequitable conduct. Nat’l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC I), 254 F. Supp. 2d 527, 572-73 (E.D. Pa. 2003), rev’d, 357 F.3d 1319 (Fed. Cir. 2004).

258 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1340.

259 NSC I, 254 F. Supp. 2d at 555-57.

260 See id. at 555. As part of this discussion the court examined Brown v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183 (1856). See supra Part IIB.

261 NSC I, 254 F. Supp. 2d at 555-56 (referring to Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120 (E.D.N.Y. 1974), and Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States, 29 Fed. Cl. 197 (1993)). For discussions of these cases, see supra Parts III.A and III.B, respectively.
vehicles of another country. With no analysis or explanation, the district court stated: “The accused rail car, itself, is not a vehicle. It is part of a vehicle – a train. A train satisfies the vehicle requirement of § 272. The question is whether the train carrying the accused rail cars is a vehicle of another country.”

The court then went on to hold that the U.S. trains that would be carrying the accused cars were not vehicles of another country. The court reasoned that these trains were not foreign vehicles because the railroad intended to routinely transfer the accused cars from trains pulled by Canadian locomotives to trains pulled by U.S. locomotives upon reaching particular destinations in the United States. The court distinguished Brown, Cali, and Hughes Aircraft because the patented inventions at issue in those cases “remained a part of a vehicle that was under the flag of the other country when the vehicle and the invention were in the United States.” Thus, the court concluded that the relevant vehicle, the train, would not be a vehicle of another country.

2. Whether the Accused Cars Would Be Temporarily Present in the United States

The district court next concluded that for two reasons the accused rail cars would not be temporarily present in the United States. First, the court reasoned that the cars would not be temporarily present because “an accused rail car [would] spend the majority of its time delivering lumber to United

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262 NSC I, 254 F. Supp. 2d at 556.
263 Id.
264 Id.
265 Id. The court observed:

The accused rail cars will be brought into the United States on a train powered by a CPR locomotive, and for as long as CPR’s rail lines continue in the United States, the cars will remain part of a train powered by a CPR locomotive. During this period, the accused rail cars are part of a vehicle of another country.

After the CPR rail lines end in the United States, the cars will be switched to trains powered by locomotives owned and operated by United States companies. The cars will then continue to travel to various destinations in the United States. The cars will not return to trains powered by CPR locomotives until the cars return to places in the United States served by CPR. During the time the accused rail cars are part of trains powered by locomotives owned and operated by United States companies, the accused rail cars are not used in a vehicle of another country.

Id.
266 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183 (1856); see supra Part II.B.
267 380 F. Supp. 1120 (E.D.N.Y. 1974); see supra Part III.A.
268 29 Fed. Cl. 197 (1993); see supra Part III.B.
269 NSC I, 254 F. Supp. 2d at 556.
270 Id.
271 Id.
States destinations.” The court observed: “This is not the same as the airplanes in Cali that returned home after flying into the country, the ship in Brown which returned home after sailing to Boston, or the spacecraft in Hughes [Aircraft] which went to outer space after being in the United States for the spacecraft’s takeoff.” Second, the court held that the cars would not be temporarily present because the accused infringer would “derive significant benefits from using [them] in the United States by transporting its lumber on the . . . cars to various destinations throughout the United States.” The court again distinguished Brown, Cali, and Hughes Aircraft: “The presence in the United States of the patented invention in Brown, Cali, and Hughes Aircraft was temporary because the only real benefits of using the accused product for the defendants in those cases came when the product was used outside of the United States.” Thus, the court concluded that the cars would not be temporarily present in the United States.

3. Whether the Patented Invention Was Used Exclusively for the Needs of the Vehicle

The district court next concluded that the patented invention was not used exclusively for the needs of the vehicle. The court contrasted the situation in National Steel Car with that in Brown, Cali, and Hughes Aircraft, observing that in those cases, “the accused product was being used in a part of the vehicle that was essential to making the vehicle work.” According to the court, in National Steel Car “the trains can work without the accused rail car. The accused rail car does not help propel the trains, help in positioning the trains, or help in any other way to make the trains work.” Thus, the court held that the patented invention was not used exclusively for the needs of the vehicle.

4. Whether the Accused Cars Were Sold or Offered for Sale in the United States

Finally, the district court considered whether the accused rail cars were sold in the United States. This portion of the district court’s opinion has been

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272 Id.
273 Id.
274 Id.
275 Id.
276 Id.
277 Id. at 557. Recall that the court considered the relevant vehicle to be a train carrying the accused rail cars, not the rail car itself. Id. at 556.
278 Id. at 557.
279 Id.
280 Id.
281 Id.
However, the Federal Circuit described the district court’s conclusions as follows:

[T]he district court held that the use of the [patented] invention in the [accused rail car] did not qualify as a noninfringing use under section 272 because the language of section 272 requires that the invention not be “offered for sale or sold in . . . the United States.” The district court found that [the car’s manufacturer] had “offered the accused rail car for sale to at least three different companies in the United States,” and that “[the accused infringer], itself, may sell the accused rail cars to leasing companies in the United States.”

Therefore, the district court concluded:

Because at least three of the required elements—being part of a vehicle of another country, temporary presence in the United States, and use exclusively for the train’s needs—are not present and because it appears that the accused rail cars will be sold in the United States, [the accused infringer’s] defense based on Section 272 lacks substantial merit.

The accused infringer appealed the decision to the Federal Circuit.
B. The Federal Circuit Reverses the District Court and Correctly Interprets Section 272

The Federal Circuit in National Steel Car reversed the district court’s order granting the patentee’s preliminary-injunction motion. The Federal Circuit held “that the district court abused its discretion in holding that [the accused infringer’s] section 272 defense lacked substantial merit.” Unlike the district court, the Federal Circuit broadly interpreted the language of § 272. This broad interpretation of § 272 is consistent with applicable statutes, precedent, and international obligations, as well as with the policies underlying the temporary-presence defense. Indeed, the Federal Circuit’s broad interpretation of § 272 bolsters the value of the temporary-presence defense in today’s global economy.

The interpretation of § 272 was an issue of first impression for the Federal Circuit in National Steel Car. The court first set the stage by addressing the statute’s legislative history. Next, the court discussed the Supreme Court’s holding in Brown. After that, the court quoted Article 5ter of the Paris Convention and briefly summarized Cali and Hughes Aircraft. Analyzing the accused infringer’s defense under § 272, the court then addressed each of

The bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee. Since then, Congress has taken no further action. See Bill Summary and Status, http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:HR01946:@@@L&summ2=m& (last visited Aug. 8, 2005). Indeed, such an amendment is arguably no longer necessary in light of the Federal Circuit’s decision in National Steel Car reversing the district court’s decision and holding that the scope of § 272 does include a rail car entering and leaving the United States on a recurring basis.

286 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1340.
287 Id. at 1334. Additionally, the Federal Circuit held “that the district court erred in its conclusion that [the patentee] demonstrated that [the accused infringer’s] obviousness defense lacked substantial merit.” Id. at 1335.
288 See id. at 1325-34.
289 See supra notes 9-12 and accompanying text (discussing the importance of the temporary-presence defense in today’s global economy).
290 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1326.
291 Id. For a discussion of the legislative history of § 272, see supra Part II.D.
292 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1326-27 (citing Brown v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183 (1856)). For a discussion of Brown, see supra Part II.B.
293 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1327 (citing Paris Convention art. 5ter, supra note 79). For a discussion of Article 5ter of the Paris Convention, see supra Part II.C.
295 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328-34. The court reviewed the district court’s statutory
the four elements of § 272 at issue: (1) whether the accused rail cars were vehicles of another country;\(^{296}\) (2) whether the accused cars would be only temporarily present in the United States;\(^{297}\) (3) whether the patented invention was used exclusively for the needs of the vehicle;\(^{298}\) and (4) whether the accused cars were sold or offered for sale in the United States.\(^{299}\)

1. Whether the Accused Cars Were Vehicles of Another Country

The Federal Circuit disagreed with the district court’s reasoning that the focus should be on the train rather than the individual accused cars.\(^{300}\)

Although we recognize that in some instances there may be ambiguity between containers that are merely the cargo of a vessel or vehicle, and vessels or vehicles that are themselves aggregated and transported in a collective fashion for greater efficiency, we discern no such ambiguity here: Congress has defined “vehicle” with sufficient breadth to include an individual rail car.\(^{301}\)

The Federal Circuit looked to the statutory definition of “vehicle” in the Dictionary Act,\(^{302}\) concluding that “[t]his definition controls our interpretation of § 272 “without deference.” Id. at 1325.

\(^{296}\) Id. at 1328-29.
\(^{297}\) Id. at 1329-32.
\(^{298}\) Id. at 1332-33.
\(^{299}\) Id. at 1333-34.
\(^{300}\) Id. at 1328-29 (“According to the district court, the train, not the rail car, is the relevant vehicle to examine under section 272, and the nationality of the locomotive determines the nationality of the train.”).
\(^{301}\) Id. at 1328.
\(^{302}\) 1 U.S.C. § 4. A district court recently applied the Dictionary Act to determine whether an aircraft was a vehicle under the USA Patriot Act of 2001 in a case involving the so-called “shoe bomber,” Richard C. Reid. United States v. Reid, 206 F. Supp. 2d 132, 138-39 (D. Mass. 2002) (granting motion to dismiss one count against the defendant because an aircraft is not a vehicle under the USA Patriot Act of 2001); see Kevin Cullen, More Suspects Are Charged in July 21 London Conspiracy, BOSTON GLOBE, Aug. 8, 2005, at A7 (describing Richard Reid as “the ‘shoe bomber’ who was convicted . . . of trying to down a Paris-to-Miami flight with explosives hidden in his sneakers in December 2001”). The court described the Dictionary Act:

The Dictionary Act of the United States Code, 1 U.S.C. § 1 et seq., provides general definitions for a handful of words appearing within the code, along with general rules of construction, that apply to the entire code in the absence of a more specific indication within the statute being analyzed. Although the Dictionary Act defines but a few words appearing in the code, the word “vehicle” is one of them.

Reid, 206 F. Supp. 2d at 138 (citation omitted). The court in Reid further observed that “the Dictionary Act is not an obscure, forgotten portion of the United States
“PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES”

of ‘vehicle’ in section 272.”

The Dictionary Act broadly defines “vehicle” as follows: “The word ‘vehicle’ includes every description of carriage or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on land.” The Federal Circuit reasoned that “[t]his definition . . . leads us to define a rail car individually—not only the train as a whole—as a vehicle within the meaning of section 272.” Therefore, the court “conclude[d] that [an accused rail car] may be a foreign vehicle and therefore” may be covered by § 272.

The Federal Circuit’s reasoning is sound. The Dictionary Act, which the district court ignored, mandates that a rail car be considered a “vehicle” under Code, but instead remains vital to the process of interpreting the rest of the code.”

Interestingly, some commentators have argued that the Dictionary Act is unconstitutional for violating separation-of-powers concerns. Gary E. O’Connor, Restatement (First) of Statutory Interpretation, 7 N.Y.U. J. LEGIS. & PUB. POL’Y 333, 348 & n.78 (2004).

This statute is entitled ‘‘Vehicle’ as including all means of land transportation.”

Further emphasizing the breadth of the definition of “vehicle,” this statute is entitled “‘Vehicle’ as including all means of land transportation.”

To determine whether a rail car falls within the Dictionary Act definition of vehicle, the court determined that “[t]he ordinary meaning of ‘carriage’ . . . is defined to encompass ‘means of conveyance,’ ‘a wheeled vehicle for people,’ or ‘a wheeled support carrying a burden,’ such as ‘a gun carriage.’”

Moreover, the court concluded that the accused rail cars were “vehicles of Canada [and that Canada] afford[s] similar privileges to United States vehicles as required by the reciprocity provision in section 272.”

The current Canadian temporary-presence statute provides:

No patent shall extend to prevent the use of any invention in any ship, vessel, aircraft or land vehicle of any country entering Canada temporarily or accidentally, if the invention is employed exclusively for the needs of the ship, vessel, aircraft or land vehicle, and not so used for the manufacture of any goods to be sold within or exported from Canada.

Patent Act, R.S.C., ch. P-4, § 23 (Can.). Although the Canadian and U.S. statutes are, for the most part, very similar, the scope of the Canadian statute is broader in that it does not require reciprocity, whereas the U.S. statute does. Compare id. with 35 U.S.C. § 272.
Indeed, where Congress supplies an “explicit definition” of a statutory term, courts must follow that definition.

Moreover, even in the absence of such an explicit definition, a rail car falls under the ordinary meaning of the word “vehicle.” When § 272 was enacted in 1952, the relevant dictionary definition of “vehicle” was: “Any kind of a carriage moving on land, either on wheels or runners, comprehending coaches, chariots, buggies, wagons, carts of every kind, sleighs, sleds, and the like; a conveyance.” Thus, because a rail car is “a carriage moving on land . . . on wheels,” a rail car is a “vehicle” under the ordinary meaning of the word at the time of the enactment of § 272.

Additionally, the Federal Circuit was correct in rejecting the district court’s implicit view that something must provide its own propulsive power to be a “vehicle.” There is ample legal authority that a “vehicle” need not be capable of self-propulsion. For example, under U.S. statutory and case law, a non-self-propelled spacecraft is considered a vehicle under § 272.

307 See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328.
308 Stenberg v. Carhart, 530 U.S. 914, 942 (2000); accord AK Steel Corp. v. United States, 226 F.3d 1361, 1372 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (holding that courts may not “substitute their own definition for that of Congress”).
310 “[T]he most relevant time for determining a statutory term’s meaning” is when the statute “became law.” MCI Telecommunications Corp. v. AT&T Co., 512 U.S. 218, 228 (1994).

There are even broader dictionary definitions that include aircraft and watercraft as vehicles. See United States v. Reid, 206 F. Supp. 2d 132, 138 (D. Mass. 2002) (“An example is found in the seventh edition of Black’s Law Dictionary (1999), which defines vehicle as ‘any conveyance used in transporting passengers or merchandise by land, water, or air.’”); cf. McBoyle v. United States, 283 U.S. 25, 26 (1931) (“No doubt etymologically it is possible to use the word [vehicle] to signify a conveyance working on land, water or air, and sometimes legislation extends the use in that direction . . . .”).
313 49 U.S.C. § 2457(k); Hughes Aircraft Co. v. United States, 29 Fed. Cl. 197, 239-40 (1993) (holding that a non-self-propelled spacecraft attached to a rocket is
many federal regulations treat non-self-propelled rail cars as vehicles. Additionally, non-self-propelled truck trailers are considered to be vehicles under federal regulations, state vehicle codes, and case law. The Federal Circuit’s interpretation of “vehicle” is consistent with that of the Rolltrailer court in Germany, which lends further support to the conclusion that the Federal Circuit’s interpretation was correct. In Rolltrailer, the court held that non-self-propelled roll trailers were vehicles, stating that “it is not crucial how the vehicle moves and whether it has its own driving force.” The court further held that the Finnish roll trailers remained vehicles of another country even though they were deposited on and transported by German ships. Therefore, based on the reasoning of the German court in Rolltrailer, a rail car is a vehicle, and it remains a vehicle of another country even if is switched from a Canadian locomotive to a U.S. locomotive.

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314 See, e.g., 40 C.F.R. § 201.1(t) (2005) (“Rail car means a non-self-propelled vehicle designed for and used on railroad tracks.”) (emphasis added); 26 C.F.R. § 1.190-2(2) (2005) (referring to “a vehicle, such as a bus, a railroad car . . .” (emphasis added); 49 C.F.R. § 661.3 (2005) (“Rolling stock means transit vehicles such as buses, vans, cars, railcars . . . . ”) (emphasis added). But cf. Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (Irish Ferries II), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [21]-[25] (Eng.) (concluding that the definition of “temporarily” from case law concerning vehicle regulations was not applicable to a temporary-presence provision because of differing policy considerations).

315 See, e.g., 49 C.F.R. § 571.3 (2005) (“Trailer means a motor vehicle with or without motive power, designed for carrying persons or property and for being drawn by another motor vehicle.”); 75 PA. CONS. STAT. § 102 (defining a “trailer” as “[a] vehicle designed to be towed by a motor vehicle”); United States v. A Single Story Double Wide Trailer, 727 F. Supp. 149, 152 n.3 (D. Del. 1989) (holding that a trailer is a vehicle under Delaware law).

316 LG Hamburg, GRUR Int. 1973, Heft 12, at 703 (F.R.G.), translated in Rolltrailer Translation, supra note 159. For a discussion of the Rolltrailer case, see supra Part III.C.1.

317 Cf. Rotec Indus., Inc. v. Mitsubishi Corp., 215 F.3d 1246, 1253 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (looking to U.K. case law to determine whether a provision of U.S. patent law conformed to an international agreement); Irish Ferries II, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [67] (Munby, J.) (“I am glad to think that on a point arising in this area of the law, relating to international commerce, whether by sea or in the air, and founded moreover on an international Convention, the courts of this country should feel able to come to precisely the same essential conclusion as courts in Germany and the United States.”).

318 Rolltrailer Translation, supra note 159, at B9.

319 Id. at B9-B10.
2. Whether the Accused Cars Would Be Temporarily Present in the United States

The Federal Circuit next interpreted the phrase “entering the United States temporarily” of § 272.\(^{320}\) The Federal Circuit rejected the district court’s conclusion that whether a vehicle enters “temporarily” hinges on “either the duration of the vehicle’s stay in the United States, in relation to the duration of its stay elsewhere, or the benefit of which the patent owner is deprived by virtue of the exception to patent rights created by section 272.”\(^{321}\) Instead, the court “define[d] a vehicle entering the United States ‘temporarily’ as a vehicle entering the United States for a limited period of time for the sole purpose of engaging in international commerce.”\(^{322}\)

The court began its analysis by observing that the term “temporarily” in § 272 is ambiguous.\(^{323}\) The court stated that the plain meaning of “temporarily” is either “for a brief period” or “during a limited time.”\(^{324}\) However, the court noted that neither of these definitions was satisfactory.\(^{325}\) With respect to “for a brief period,” the court stated that the term “‘brief’ is itself indeterminate.”\(^{326}\) The court reasoned that “[b]rief is only a relative concept and must be measured in relation to something, but the plain statutory language, considered in isolation, does not provide sufficient context to determine the appropriate meaning of brief.”\(^{327}\) The court also rejected “during a limited time” as unsatisfactory.\(^{328}\) The court explained:

\[T\]he idea of an entering for a “limited time” provides a rule that is determinable, but that seems to lead to absurdly broad results if applied literally without any further qualifications. Limited means nothing more than “restricted in . . . duration.” Entry is literally limited provided only that it is not permanent. An interpretation of section 272 that only required a limited entry in this literal sense—that only required a vehicle to exit the United States at some point before the end of its useful life—and nothing more would create a loophole in a patentee’s rights too large.

\(^{320}\) Nat’l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC II), 357 F.3d 1319, 1329-32 (Fed. Cir. 2004).
\(^{321}\) Id. at 1329.
\(^{322}\) Id.
\(^{323}\) Id.
\(^{324}\) Id. (quoting Webster’s Third International World Dictionary 2353 (1993)).
\(^{325}\) Id.
\(^{326}\) Id.
\(^{327}\) Id.
\(^{328}\) Id.
to be a rational interpretation of Congress’ intent.329

Because the use of the term “temporarily” in § 272 is ambiguous, the court turned to the legislative history of § 272 to determine Congress’ intent with respect to the meaning of “temporarily.”330 According to the legislative history, Congress enacted § 272 to codify the Supreme Court’s holding in Brown v. Duchesne331 and meet the requirements of Article 5ter332 of the Paris Convention333 to which the United States is a party.333 The court noted that both Brown and Article 5ter “suggest that ‘temporarily’ should be interpreted in light of a vehicle’s purpose to participate in international commerce at the time of entry – namely, a purpose to enter the United States, engage in international commerce, and then depart.”334 The court explained:

Both Brown and Article 5ter of the Paris Convention demonstrate a concern to leave the channels of international commerce, or more accurately the vessels and vehicles that pass through these channels, free from the excessive burdens that would result if such vessels or vehicles had to conform to the patent laws of all nations that the vessel or vehicle visited during its lifetime. Different inventions are likely to be patented in different countries, and the same invention may be owned by different parties in different countries. In section 272, Congress intended to join an international movement to place foreign-owned means of international transport beyond the reach of domestic patentees’ exclusive rights because the cost of complying with multiple, inconsistent rights of exclusion provided by the patent regimes of a large number of countries.
would likely place an excessive drag on international commerce.\footnote{335}{Id. at 1330. The court also reasoned that the reciprocity requirement in “both Article 5ter of the Paris Convention and section 272 demonstrate the centrality of international commerce in the statutory scheme.” \textit{Id}.} The court also considered as persuasive authority the definition of “temporarily” in \textit{Cali}.\footnote{336}{Id. at 1330-31 (citing Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1122, 1126 (E.D.N.Y. 1974)).} The Federal Circuit noted that like the way it defined the term, the \textit{Cali} court defined “temporarily” “in relation to the ‘international trade’ that section 272 was intended to protect, not in relation to the duration of the entry.”\footnote{337}{Id. (citing \textit{Cali}, 380 F. Supp. at 1126). The Federal Circuit’s consideration of the accused infringer’s purpose for being in the country in its interpretation of “temporarily” is similar to that of the English trial court in \textit{Irish Ferries}. \textit{See} Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (\textit{Irish Ferries I}), [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [76] (Eng.) (“Although an exact date of expected departure may not be necessary, the operator must intend that the vehicle should continue its journey by leaving the territory in reasonable time consistent with carrying out its role as a means of transport used in international carriage of goods and persons.”), \textit{aff’d} [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66 (Eng.).}  

The Federal Circuit rejected both of the district court’s reasons for its conclusion that the accused rail cars would not be “temporarily” present in the United States.\footnote{338}{\textit{NSC II}, 357 F.3d at 1331. The district court’s two reasons that the cars would not be temporarily present in the United States were: (1) “[a]n accused rail car [would] spend the majority of its time delivering lumber to United States destinations”; and (2) the accused infringer would “derive significant benefits from using [the cars] in the United States by transporting its lumber on the . . . cars to various destinations throughout the United States.” \textit{Nat’l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC I)}, 254 F. Supp. 2d 527, 556 (E.D. Pa. 2003), \textit{rev’d}, 357 F.3d 1319 (Fed. Cir. 2004).} The Federal Circuit stated that the fact that the accused rail cars would be present in the United States a majority of time was “not relevant to the section 272 analysis.”\footnote{339}{\textit{NSC II}, 357 F.3d at 1331.} Based on its definition of “temporarily,” the court reasoned:

If the cars are entering the United States for a limited time – that is, they are not entering permanently – and are entering only for the purpose of engaging in international commerce – that is, they are entering to unload foreign goods and/or to load domestic goods destined for foreign markets – they are entering “temporarily” for the purposes of section 272 regardless of the length of their stay within the jurisdiction of the United States.\footnote{340}{Id.}
Further, the Federal Circuit observed that “neither the magnitude of the benefit derived by [the accused infringer] from use of the cars nor the burden imposed on [the patentee] from the carve-out of [the accused infringer’s] use from the scope of its right to exclude . . . is relevant to the section 272 analysis.” Therefore, the Federal Circuit held that the patentee failed to demonstrate that the accused infringer’s defense under § 272 “lack[ed] ‘substantial merit’ because the entering ‘temporarily’ condition [was] not satisfied.”

The Federal Circuit’s broad interpretation of the term “temporarily” is correct. The definition is workable, and it properly takes into account the policy underlying § 272 based on the statute’s origins in Brown and Article 5ter of the Paris Convention. The court was correct in holding that § 272 includes vehicles that regularly or periodically enter the United States to engage in international trade, as opposed to only vehicles that enter the United States infrequently. Such an interpretation is consistent with the conclusions of the courts in Cali in the United States, Rolltrailer in Germany, and Irish

341 Id. The Federal Circuit adopted the reasoning of the Cali court that although the subtraction from the patentee’s right to exclude may be large as a result of § 272, “[t]hat subtraction . . . appears nevertheless plainly to be what the statutory and treaty immunities intend.” Id. (quoting Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1127).

342 Id. In addition, the patentee asserted an argument that “raise[d] a question regarding whether [the accused infringer would] succeed on the merits of the section 272 noninfringement defense.” Id. at 1331-32. The patentee noted the testimony of a witness employed by the accused infringer that “sometimes . . . the U.S. [r]ailway will grab one of our [center-beam flat] cars with[out] our permission . . . [a]nd . . . they will move it, you know load it to another point [in the United States].” Id. at 1332 (omissions and all but the final alteration in original; footnote omitted). The patentee argued that this testimony showed that the accused infringer’s cars would enter the United States “in part with a purpose to engage in domestic, rather than international, commerce.” Id. In response, the court commented:

Certainly, the unforeseen “grabbing” of one of [the accused infringer’s] large fleet of cars without [its] permission cannot lead to a reasonable inference that [the accused infringer] had a purpose to engage in commerce other than international commerce. However, if [the accused infringer] regularly condones such repeated “grabbing” of its cars for domestic commerce and [the accused infringer] receives remuneration for the “grabbing” that is substantial in relation to the income that the cars produce through their use in international commerce, a factfinder could infer that [the accused infringer’s] intent is not to engage in essentially international commerce. Based on the current record, however, we hold that [the patentee’s] allegations do not deprive [the accused infringer]’s section 272 defense of substantial merit.

Id. (footnote omitted).

343 See Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1126 (“[T]he language of § 272] was chosen to deal with an internationally significant matter arising in a world in which scheduled freight and passenger services by established international carriers by air and sea were likely to require such an immunity to cover countless articles . . . that could
Furthermore, such an interpretation is consistent with the negotiating history of Article 5ter, in which a committee considering the adoption of Article 5ter at the Hague Conference “indicated that the words ‘temporarily’ and ‘accidentally’ were chosen to cover entries into port for more or less brief periods whether periodically or exceptionally . . . .”

The Federal Circuit was correct in rejecting the district court’s definition that would exclude from § 272 vehicles that spend a majority of their time in the United States. Such an interpretation would fail to further the policy behind § 272 of encouraging international commerce. Additionally, such an interpretation would artificially discriminate between vehicles based on the

turn out to be covered by patents in the United States . . . .” (emphasis added)).

344 See Rolltrailer Translation, supra note 159, at B12 (“The fact that the defendant’s roll trailers enter Germany regularly and repeatedly does not alter the fact that the roll[] trailers enter the country only temporarily.” (citations omitted)).

345 See Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (Irish Ferries II), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [26] (Eng.) (“Whether a vessel visits temporarily . . . cannot depend on frequency.”).

346 Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1126 (emphasis added); accord Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [68]-[69], aff’d [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66; LADAS, supra note 6, at 248 (“Temporairement,’ it was admitted at the Conference of The Hague, on the suggestion of the Czechoslovakian delegation, comprises also the periodical entries of vessels into the territorial waters of another country.”). But see Irish Ferries II, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [32]-[34] (concluding that the negotiating history was inconclusive because the word “pénétreront” remained unchanged in the official French text after the Czechoslovakian delegation had urged changing “penetrate” to “enter” to cover regular and periodic entries).

Additionally, the patentee in National Steel Car could have argued that § 272 should not protect the use of the accused rail cars because of the very nature of these cars. The main use of these cars was to deliver lumber from Canada into the United States and then return to Canada. See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1323-24 (“Ninety percent of [the accused infringer’s] lumber shipments travel from Canada to the United States. . . . Because there is no market need for American lumber to be shipped into Canada, [the accused infringer’s] cars return to Canada empty 99.2 percent of the time.”). Thus, the temporary-presence defense of § 272 arguably should not apply to these rail cars whose main purpose is to regularly travel between Canada and the United States. Cf. Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 436 (“Surely there is an argument that an international ferry that regularly plies only between two ports and if it is built and acquired solely for the purpose of voyages between only the United Kingdom and Ireland, cannot claim [temporary-presence] protection. An owner or operator of such a vessel should take precautions against infringing third-party rights.”). However, such an interpretation of § 272 would be inconsistent with the underlying purpose of § 272 – to protect even regular and periodic entries of foreign vehicles from patent infringement so as to prevent patent enforcement from inhibiting international commerce.
locations of their countries of origin and their destinations. For example, a Canadian airplane flying from Toronto to Atlanta, unloading in Atlanta, and immediately returning to Toronto would spend a majority of its time within the United States because of geography. In contrast, a British airplane flying between London and New York would not spend a majority of its time within the United States because of geography. There is no reason to differentiate between these two situations in determining whether § 272 applies. Thus, an artificial distinction based on whether the vehicle spends a majority of its time in the United States makes no sense.  

On the other hand, a pair of commentators has suggested that a broad interpretation of “temporarily” in a temporary-presence provision is improper because it would unacceptably decrease the incentive for innovation with respect to inventions used in means of transportation. These commentators argue that would-be infringers can register their ships in “flag of convenience” states that offer little patent protection, thus allowing their ships to be temporarily present in every other country in which they travel while remaining immune from infringement liability in all those countries. Hence, they argue, such patentees could enforce their patent rights only for the making (as opposed to the using) of their inventions in the countries in which these ships were built.  

According to these commentators:

From a practical perspective, this means that companies involved in innovation will be required to maintain a large portfolio of patents and will need to register in a large number of countries. The extra cost associated with maintenance of intellectual property rights can be expected to reduce drastically the incentive to seek patent protection and, in turn, diminish the incentive to engage in research and development activities.  

This argument is somewhat specious, however. It ignores the fact that

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347 Similarly, a test solely involving the actual duration of a vehicle in the United States would be improper. Such a test would artificially discriminate between different types of vessels, aircraft, and vehicles. For example, a truck or a rail car traveling from Toronto to Atlanta to deliver goods and then return to Toronto would be in the United States for several days because trucks and rail cars are relatively slow-moving vehicles. In contrast, an airplane making that same trip for the same purpose would be in the United States only a few hours. There is no reason to make such an artificial distinction.

348 Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 436-37 (commenting on the English Court of Appeal’s broad interpretation of “temporarily” in the U.K. temporary-presence statute, which was similar to the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of § 272).

349 Id. at 436.

350 Id.

351 Id. at 436.
vessels, aircraft, and vehicles can normally be used not only for international travel but also for purely domestic travel, for which the temporary-presence defense provides no haven for infringers. The amount of domestic travel that occurs is significant, particularly in geographically large countries such as the United States. Indeed, even if would-be infringers were registering their vessels, aircraft, and vehicles in “flag of convenience” countries to avoid infringement for international travel under the temporary-presence defense, patentees still could enforce their patent rights against infringers using their patented inventions domestically. The patent system will continue to provide incentives for innovation in technologies used in means for transportation in spite of a broad interpretation of the term “temporarily” of § 272.

3. Whether the Patented Invention Was Used Exclusively for the Needs of the Vehicle

Next, the Federal Circuit considered whether the patented invention was used exclusively for the needs of the vehicle. The district court concluded that it was not, because as a structural invention, it did not “help propel the trains, help in positioning the trains, or help in [some] other way to make the trains work.” The Federal Circuit rejected this reasoning, holding that the phrase “exclusively for the needs of the . . . vehicle” should not be interpreted “so narrowly as to exclude inventions . . . pertaining to the

352 See Nat’l Steel Car, Ltd. v. Canadian Pac. Ry. (NSC II), 357 F.3d 1319, 1331 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (defining “temporarily” as requiring entry “only for the purpose of engaging in international commerce” (emphasis added)); Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1126 (E.D.N.Y. 1974) (“The distinction would be between [an aircraft] manufactured in France, delivered [to the United States] for use . . . in this country for domestic traffic . . . and a foreign aircraft arriving here on an international flight only to unload, turn about, reload and depart.”).

353 For example, in the United States, the number of domestic airline flights far outpaces the number of international flights. In 2004, there were 11,007,185 domestic departures, whereas there were only 715,294 international departures. U.S. DEP’T OF TRANSP. BUREAU OF TRANSP. STATISTICS, AIR CARRIER TRAFFIC STATISTICS, available at http://www.bts.gov/xml/air_traffic/src/index.xml (last visited Apr. 17, 2006). (To access this data, in the “Customize Table” section: (1) check the boxes “Domestic” and “International” for “Service Type”; (2) check the box “Total” for “Schedule Type”; (3) check the box “Departures” for “Airline Operating Statistical Type”; (4) select a date range of January 2004 through December 2004; and (5) click the “Submit” button.)

354 Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 436.

355 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1332-33.

356 Id. at 1332 (alteration in original).

construction of a vehicle.” According to the Federal Circuit, “[t]he district court erroneously overlaid the concept of ‘propulsive needs’ onto the statute; ‘structural needs’ are also encompassed within the plain meaning of the statute.”

Importantly, the court observed that its broader interpretation was consistent with Brown v. Duchesne and Article 5 of the Paris Convention, unlike the district court’s narrower interpretation. The court noted that in Brown, the Supreme Court described its holding as applying to “inventions ‘used in the construction, fitting out, or equipment’ of a vessel.” Further, the court noted that Article 5 applies “to inventions used ‘in the construction or operation of . . . land vehicles . . . or of accessories of such . . . land vehicles.’” As the court stated, “[t]he text of the Paris Convention expressly applies to inventions used in either the construction or the operation of a vehicle, whereas the district court limited the meaning of the ‘exclusively for the needs of the . . . vehicle’ language in section 272 to only the latter.”

Once again, the Federal Circuit’s broad interpretation is correct. Importantly, the interpretation is consistent with Article 5 of the Paris Convention. Such consistency is necessary to avoid conflicting with the United States’ international obligations under the Paris Convention. Indeed, any interpretation of § 272 that was inconsistent with Article 5 would improperly “impair the treaty-making capacity of the nation or . . . clog its power to regulate foreign commerce.” Additionally, the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of the “exclusively for the needs of the . . . vehicle” element is

358 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1332.
359 Id. at 1332-33.
361 Paris Convention art. 5, supra note 79.
362 See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1332.
363 Id. (quoting Brown, 60 U.S. at 198).
364 Id. (omissions in original) (quoting Paris Convention art. 5, supra note 79).
365 Id. (omission in original).
366 See id.
367 See Fed.-Mogul Corp. v. United States, 63 F.3d 1572, 1581 (Fed. Cir. 1995) (“[A]bsent Congressional language to the contrary, statutes should not be interpreted to conflict with international obligations.”); cf. Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (Irish Ferries I), [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [81] (holding that the U.K. temporary presence provision “should be construed in a way which is consistent with the meaning of” Article 5).
368 Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1125-26 (E.D.N.Y. 1974) (discussing Brown); cf. The Amiable Isabella, 19 U.S. (6 Wheat.) 1, 71 (1821) (“[T]o alter, amend, or add to any treaty, by inserting any clause, whether small or great, important or trivial, would be on our part an usurpation of power, and not an exercise of judicial functions.”).
consistent with the holding of the English court in *Irish Ferries*,\(^{369}\) that the U.K. temporary-presence statute applied where the claims of the patent-in-suit covered the entire vessel as opposed to just a part of it.\(^{370}\) Likewise, in *National Steel Car*, the Federal Circuit held that the U.S. provision applied where the claims of the patent-in-suit covered the entire vehicle—a drop-deck center-beam rail car.\(^{371}\)

4. Whether the Accused Cars Were Sold or Offered for Sale in the United States

Finally, the Federal Circuit considered the district court’s determination that § 272 did not apply because the accused rail cars were offered for sale or sold.\(^{372}\) The district court based its conclusion on its findings that the cars’ manufacturer “had ‘offered the accused rail car[s] for sale to at least three different companies in the United States,’ and that ‘[the accused infringer], itself, may sell the accused rail cars to leasing companies in the United States.’”\(^{373}\) However, the Federal Circuit rejected this reasoning.\(^{374}\) With respect to sales by the third-party manufacturer, the court held that “[t]he ‘offered for sale or sold in . . . the United States’ provision of section 272 does not apply to sales made by third parties of embodiments of the invention other than those [embodiments] that temporarily enter the United States.”\(^{375}\) With respect to the finding that the accused infringer “may” sell the accused cars, the Federal Circuit concluded that “a finding that [the accused infringer] ‘may’ engage in such conduct is, alone, insufficient to deprive [the accused

\(^{369}\) See *Irish Ferries II*, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [18], [37]; See also *Irish Ferries I*, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [80]-[82].

\(^{370}\) *Irish Ferries II*, [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [18], [37]; *Irish Ferries I*, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [80]-[82].

\(^{371}\) *NSC II*, 357 F.3d at 1332-33.

\(^{372}\) *Id.* at 1333-34.

\(^{373}\) *Id.* at 1333.

\(^{374}\) *Id.*

\(^{375}\) *Id.* (omission in original). The Federal Circuit noted that this reasoning was consistent with the language of *Brown*, explaining:

In *Brown*, the Court noted that the captain would be liable under the patent laws “if the captain had sold [the invention] there,” namely in the port of Boston. This concept—the prohibition on selling the very embodiment of the invention that had been used in the vessel or vehicle while the vehicle was temporarily or accidentally in the United States—has been codified in the language of section 272 that permits the statute’s application only “if the invention . . . is not offered for sale or sold in . . . the United States.”

*Id.* (alteration and omissions in original; citations omitted) (quoting *Brown* v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183, 196 (1856)).
The Federal Circuit correctly interpreted the “offered for sale or sold” element of § 272 as applying only to sales of the actual temporarily-present vehicles themselves, rather than to sales of other vehicles embodying the patented invention, including those by third parties. No object or policy of § 272 supports making a foreign party’s defense to infringement contingent upon the actions of third parties. Section 272 is directed to what does and does not constitute infringement. There is no support for the view that a third party’s sales activities are applicable to the infringement defense of § 272.

Additionally, the Federal Circuit correctly rejected the district court’s interpretation of the term “offered for sale or sold” because the district court’s interpretation contradicts Congress’ use of the same or similar language in other parts of the Patent Act to refer solely to the activities of accused infringers, not third parties. “[T]he normal rule of statutory construction [is] that identical words used in different parts of the same act are intended to have the same meaning.” The sections in the Patent Act in which Congress used terms such as “offered for sale or sold” or “offers to sell or sells” are all directed toward the activities of accused infringers. Notably, Congress used

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576 Id. at 1334. The Federal Circuit accepted this finding of fact by the district court. Id. Moreover, according to the Federal Circuit:

[W]e agree with the district court’s implicit conclusion that a sale-leaseback arrangement between [the accused infringer] and a U.S. company would, even at this preliminary-injunction phase, remove substantial merit from [the accused infringer’s § 272 defense]. . . . Not only might the sale-leaseback arrangement constitute a sale of “the invention,” as prohibited by the language in the second half of section 272, it also might transform the rail car into a vehicle of the United States and thus remove the use of the invention from the scope of the uses provided for in the first half of section 272.

Id. The court also noted that if in the future, the patentee could show that the accused infringer decided to sell the cars to a U.S. company and then lease them back, “and that [this] chosen ownership structure would deprive [the accused infringer’s] section 272 defense of substantial merit, [the patentee might] request appropriate relief at that time.” Id.

577 Cf. Doyon, Ltd. v. United States, 214 F.3d 1309, 1314 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (quoting Crandon v. United States, 494 U.S. 152, 158 (1990) (“[T]o fully understand the meaning of a statute, [a court] look[s] ‘not only to the particular statutory language, but to the design of the statute as a whole and to its object and policy.’”)). The major object and underlying policy of § 272 is to prevent patent enforcement from inhibiting international commerce. NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1330.


580 See, e.g., 35 U.S.C. § 154(a)(1) (providing patentees with the right to exclude
the term “offers to sell or sells” in § 271, the section immediately preceding § 272. In § 271, the term “offers to sell or sells” refers exclusively to the activities of an accused infringer, not the activities of third parties. There is no reason that Congress would use the phrase “offers to sell or sells” one way in § 271 dealing with infringement and intend the phrase “offered for sale or sold” to mean something else in § 272 – the very next section of the statute – which deals with a defense to infringement.

Moreover, where Congress intended to include the activity of third parties in sales or offers to sell, Congress used the term “on sale,” rather than the term “offered for sale or sold.” By its use of the term “on sale,” “Congress indicated that it does not matter who places the invention ‘on sale'; it only matters that someone – inventor, supplier or other third party – placed it on sale.” Hence, had Congress intended the sales activity of § 272 to apply to any sales of the patent invention, including those by third parties, it would have used the words “on sale” instead of “offered for sale or sold.” Therefore, like its interpretation of all the other elements of § 272, the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of this element is also correct.

V. THE LIMITS OF SECTION 272

Although the Federal Circuit’s interpretation of § 272 in National Steel Car provides much guidance as to the scope and meaning of the elements of § 272, it does not resolve all questions that might arise. Thus, this Part considers what the outer limits of the scope of § 272 might be. This part examines what the limits might be of each of the following elements of § 272: (A) “vessel,” “aircraft,” or “vehicle” of another country; (B) “affords similar privileges”; (C) “temporarily or accidentally” present; and (D) “exclusively for the needs of the vessel, aircraft or vehicle.”

infringers from selling or offering to sell the invention); 35 U.S.C. § 252 (2000) (providing provisional rights to those who would otherwise be infringers); 35 U.S.C. § 271 (2000) (defining the activities by an infringer that constitute infringement).

381 35 U.S.C. § 271(a) (“Except as otherwise provided in this title, whoever without authority makes, uses, offers to sell, or sells any patented invention, within the United States or imports into the United States any patented invention during the term of the patent therefor, infringes the patent.”)

382 See Lundy, 516 U.S. at 249-50 (“[W]e have been given no reason to believe that Congress meant the term ‘claim’ to mean one thing in § 6511 but to mean something else altogether in the very next section of the statute.”).


384 Special Devices, Inc. v. OEA, Inc., 270 F.3d 1353, 1355 (Fed. Cir. 2001).
“PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES”

A. “Vessel,” “Aircraft,” or “Vehicle” of Another Country

Section 272 applies to “vessels, aircraft or vehicles.” This language “is consistent with the general structure of the United States Code, which distinguishes among three types of conveyances: vessels, which provide transportation on water; vehicles, which provide transportation on land; and aircraft, which provide transportation through the air.”

The Dictionary Act definition of “vessel” applies to § 272. The Dictionary Act broadly defines “vessel” as “includ[ing] every description of watercraft or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on water.” Thus, § 272 should clearly apply to any type of ship or boat. Indeed, under the broad Dictionary Act definition of “vessel,” § 272 should apply to even a raft, a kayak, a small rowboat, or a JET SKI® watercraft. However, it is doubtful that such a vessel would meet the “entering the United States temporarily” element of § 272 as the Federal Circuit has defined it – “entering for a period of time of finite duration with the sole purpose of engaging in international commerce” – because a vessel of

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388 1 U.S.C. § 3.
389 When it emerged in the nineteenth century, the temporary-presence defense applied only to watercraft. See Brown v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183, 198-99 (1856) (“[T]he rights of property and exclusive use granted to a patentee does not extend to a foreign vessel lawfully entering one of our ports; and that the use of such improvement, in the construction, fitting out, or equipment of such vessel, while she is coming into or going out of a port of the United States, is not an infringement of the rights of an American patentee, provided it was placed upon her in a foreign port, and authorized by the laws of the country to which she belongs.” (emphasis added)); Moffat, supra note 24, at 30 (quoting the first British temporary-presence statute as applying to “any foreign ship or vessel”). Thus, given its origins, it is logical that § 272 should apply broadly to any type of ship or boat.
390 1 U.S.C. § 3.
391 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1331 (emphasis added).
this type would likely not be used to engage in international commerce.

The Dictionary Act does not define the term “aircraft.” However, the plain meaning of “aircraft” according to a dictionary definition is: “A machine or device, such as an airplane, a helicopter, a glider, or a dirigible, that is capable of atmospheric flight.” Thus, keeping with the broad definitions of “vessel” and “vehicle” under the Dictionary Act, “aircraft” should be defined broadly under § 272. Hence, any type of flying machine should be included – even a balloon or a blimp, for example.

With respect to “vehicle,” the Dictionary Act definition applies. The Dictionary Act defines “vehicle” as “includ[ing] every description of carriage or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on land.” This broad definition encompasses every type of land vehicle—such as rail cars, trucks, and automobiles. Even small land vehicles such as motorcycles, bicycles, and skateboards fit within this definition. However, as discussed above in connection with small watercraft, it is doubtful that such small vehicles would meet the “entering the United States temporarily” element of § 272 because vehicles of this type would likely not be used to engage in international commerce.

With respect to the limits of what constitutes a “vehicle” under § 272, the Federal Circuit noted in *National Steel Car* “that in some instances there may be ambiguity between containers that are merely the cargo of a vessel or vehicle, and vessels or vehicles that are themselves aggregated and transported in a collective fashion for greater efficiency.” The German court in *Rolltrailer* confronted a similar issue and held that roll trailers were vehicles

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394 AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY, supra note 47, at 38.
396 *NSC II*, 357 F.3d at 1328 (“[The Dictionary Act] definition controls our interpretation of ‘vehicle’ in section 272 . . . .”); Federico, supra note 85, at 214 (“The general definition of vessel and vehicle in 1 U.S.C.A. §§ 3 and 4 would be applicable here [to § 272].”).
398 Cf. LADAS, supra note 6, at 250 (“Engines of locomotion for land [under Article 5ter of the Paris Convention] may range from a train to a bicycle.”).
399 See supra p. 69.
400 See *NSC II*, 357 F.3d at 1331.
401 Id. at 1328.
under the German temporary-presence statute. Roll trailers “are used to transport containers . . . onto ships.” Roll trailers lack any means for self-propulsion; instead, they are pulled by tractors on and off of the ships. Nevertheless, the court held that such roll trailers were vehicles rather than cargo.

An interesting question that might arise in this context relates to intermodal containers—containers used to ship goods on multiple forms of transportation, usually ships, rail cars, and trucks. Such containers typically arrive in the United States on ships from foreign countries. These containers are then transferred to rail cars, which take the containers to their next destinations. Eventually, when the containers are near their final destination, the containers are transferred to trucks, which then deliver them to their final destinations. Intermodal containers are much like the roll trailers at issue in Rolltrailer. However, unlike roll trailers, intermodal containers do not have wheels. As such, they must be loaded and unloaded from ships, rail cars, and trucks.

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402 Rolltrailer Translation, supra note 159, at B8-B10.
403 Id. at B6.
404 See id. at B6-B7.
405 See id. at B8-B10.
407 Miller, supra note 406. Many such containers arrive on the west coast containing goods from Asia. See id.
408 Not surprisingly, rail cars that haul intermodal containers are called intermodal rail cars. See CYCLOPEDIA, supra note 406, at 205. Such intermodal rail cars are often “double-stack” cars, which provide for two containers to be stacked on top of each rail car. See id.; WIKIPEDIA, supra note 406.
409 Miller, supra note 406.
410 Id. Before the use of containers became popular, intermodal operations involved the use of trailers with wheels, rather than containers. See CYCLOPEDIA, supra note 406, at 205; WIKIPEDIA, supra note 406. This use of trailers on rail cars was commonly called “piggyback” service. Id.
A court could consider that intermodal containers are “vehicles” under § 272. Intermodal containers are “artificial contrivance[s] used . . . as . . . means of transportation on land.” After arriving on foreign ships, intermodal containers are used to transport goods on land on rail cars or trucks. After being loaded onto rail cars or truck, the containers essentially become part of the rail cars or trucks – i.e., they are “vehicles that are themselves aggregated and transported in a collective fashion for greater efficiency.” Applying § 272 to intermodal containers is consistent with the importance of containerized intermodal shipping to today’s global economy.

On the other hand, intermodal containers could be outside the scope of § 272. They arguably fall into the category of “containers that are merely the cargo of a vessel or vehicle.” Indeed, they are called containers. Although in some sense they do essentially become part of the rail cars or trucks onto which they are loaded, in another sense they are more like boxes of goods loaded onto rail cars or trucks rather than aggregated vehicles. Arguably, if intermodal containers were considered to be vehicles under § 272, then boxes of goods would also have to be considered to be vehicles. Moreover, because they lack wheels, intermodal containers could never themselves be used “as a means of transportation on land,” even with the help of a trailer or other source of propulsion, unlike the roll trailers at issue in the German Rolltrailer case.

In sum, intermodal containers lie near the edge of what constitutes a “vehicle” under § 272.

411 Miller, supra note 406 (“A gantry crane . . . is used to transfer large cargo containers onto trucks.”).
413 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328.
414 See Donovan, supra note 10, at 13 (“[C]ontainerization has taken global commerce to new levels of integration and has brought greatly increased wealth to many parts of the world.”); see also supra notes 9-12 and accompanying text (discussing the importance of the temporary-presence defense in today’s global economy).
415 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1328.
B. “Affords Similar Privileges”

Section 272 requires reciprocity in that it applies to “any vessel, aircraft or vehicle of any country which affords similar privileges to vessels, aircraft, or vehicles of the United States.” An issue could arise as to whether the “affords similar privileges” language means that the foreign country must merely have a temporary-presence provision similar to § 272, or whether it means that the foreign country must interpret its temporary-presence provision as applying to the situation at hand. For example, in the situation in National Steel Car, although Canada has a temporary-presence provision similar to § 272, Canadian courts could have narrowly interpreted this provision as not covering a rail car entering Canada to deliver lumber and then returning to the United States. In this hypothetical example, in spite of the existence of a Canadian temporary-presence statute, Canada really would not “afford similar privileges” to U.S. rail cars present under similar circumstances in Canada. Hence, § 272 arguably could not apply to Canadian rail cars in this example.

However, the court in Hughes Aircraft rejected such an argument. In Hughes Aircraft, the patentee argued “that the doctrine does not apply because the United Kingdom does not have a statute making the temporary presence doctrine applicable to spacecraft.” The court concluded that “[s]ection 272 does not require that the United Kingdom and the United States have identical temporary presence doctrines – only that the United Kingdom have a doctrine relating to ‘vessels, aircraft and vehicles.’” Indeed, the wording of § 272 is “affords similar privileges to vessels, aircraft, or vehicles of the United States,” not “affords similar privileges to similar vessels, aircraft, or vehicles.” Thus, the reciprocity requirement of § 272 is likely met where the foreign nation in question merely provides for a temporary-presence defense similar to that of § 272.

C. “Temporarily or Accidentally” Present

The Federal Circuit interpreted “entering the United States temporarily” in § 272 as meaning “entering for a period of finite duration with the sole purpose

420 Id.
421 Id.
423 Such a provision could be created by a statute (such as § 272 today), case law (such as in Brown v. Duchesne, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 183 (1856), before the enactment of § 272), or a self-executing treaty between the United States and the country in question.
of engaging in international commerce.\(^{424}\) A vehicle goes beyond the limits of being temporarily present under § 272 once it engages in any domestic commerce, rather than purely international commerce.\(^{425}\) Thus, the rail cars in National Steel Car would have been outside the protection of § 272 had they entered the United States with Canadian lumber, dropped it off, reloaded with cargo, and delivered that cargo to another U.S. destination.\(^{426}\) On the other hand, § 272 would still protect these rail cars if they were to reload with cargo in the United States and ship the cargo directly back to Canada, instead of returning empty to Canada.\(^{427}\)

No court has yet interpreted what constitutes “accidental” presence under § 272. “Temporarily” and “accidentally” cannot mean the same thing; otherwise the use of “accidentally” in addition to “temporarily” would be redundant.\(^{428}\) Unlike the case of temporary entry,\(^{429}\) there should be no time or purpose restriction on an accidental entry into the United States. Indeed, if a vessel, aircraft, or vehicle enters the United States accidentally, it should be immune from infringement liability under § 272 even if it then remains in the United States permanently.\(^{430}\)

\(^{424}\) NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1331.

\(^{425}\) See id. at 1331-32; Cali v. Japan Airlines, Inc., 380 F. Supp. 1120, 1126 (E.D.N.Y. 1974) (“Temporarily, then, could not sensibly mean any less than entering for the purpose of completing a voyage, turning about, and continuing or commencing a new voyage. The distinction would be between [an aircraft] manufactured in France, delivered [to the United States] for use . . . in this country for domestic traffic . . . and a foreign aircraft arriving here on an international flight only to unload, turn about, reload and depart.”).

\(^{426}\) See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1332.

\(^{427}\) See id. at 1331 n.12.


\(^{429}\) NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1331 (restricting temporary entries under § 272 to those of “finite duration with the sole purpose of engaging in international commerce”).

\(^{430}\) Cf. Stena Rederi AB v. Irish Ferries Ltd. (Irish Ferries II), [2003] EWCA (Civ) 66, [25] (Eng.) (“The purpose of [Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} of the Paris Convention] was to prevent national patents impinging upon foreign vessels coming into and out of territorial waters temporarily and also permanently if the cause was accidental.”) (emphasis added); Irish Ferries I, [2002] EWHC (Pat) 737, [66] (“These two words are intended to deal with unrelated activities, [“temporarily”] being concerned with deliberate short-term entries, [and “accidentally”] being concerned with unintentional entries, no matter how long they last.”) (emphasis added)). But cf. Cali, 380 F. Supp. at 1126 (“[T]he committee [drafting Article 5\textsuperscript{ter} of the Paris Convention] indicated that the words ‘temporarily’ and ‘accidentally’ were chosen to cover entries into port for more or less brief periods whether periodically or
The ordinary meaning of “accidental” is: “Occurring unexpectedly, unintentionally, or by chance.” Hence, any unexpected or unintentional entry into the United States should be accidental under § 272. For example, the following should be accidental entries into the United States: (1) a foreign ship taking unplanned refuge in a U.S. port because of a storm; (2) a foreign airplane making an emergency landing at a U.S. airport because of engine trouble; and (3) a foreign rail car entering the United States on a train diverted to an alternate track to avoid a derailment on the foreign track on which it was originally supposed to have traveled.

D. “Exclusively for the Needs of the Vessel, Aircraft or Vehicle”

The interpretation of the “exclusively for the needs” element of § 272 must be consistent with Brown v. Duchesne and Article 5ter of the Paris Convention. The holding of Brown applies to inventions used “in the construction, fitting out, or equipment of such vessel.” Similarly, Article 5ter applies to inventions used “in the body of [a] vessel, in the machinery, tackle, gear and other accessories” or “in the construction or operation of aircraft or land vehicles . . . or of accessories of such aircraft or land vehicles.” Thus, the “exclusively for the needs” language of § 272 should be broadly interpreted. As one commentator suggested in 1930 concerning Article 5ter:

This wide exemption is justified by the nature of the modern vessel, by the fact that a ship enters only the territorial waters of a country, and by a desire to

431. AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY, supra note 47, at 11.

432. See, e.g., Asgrow Seed Co. v. Winterboer, 513 U.S. 179, 187 (1995) ("[W]here terms used in a statute are undefined, [a court must] give them their ordinary meaning.").

433. See NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1333.


435. Paris Convention art. 5ter, supra note 79. Unlike § 272, Article 5ter has different provisions for vessels on the one hand and vehicles and aircraft on the other hand with respect to the “exclusively for the needs” requirement.

436. Cf. LADAS, supra note 6, at 249 (“The needs of the vessel [under Article 5ter of the Paris Convention] must be understood in a broad sense, as including every apparatus or machine necessary for the navigation, fitting out, and good equipment of a vessel.”); Moffat, supra note 24, at 40 (“It might well be argued that every piece of equipment throughout a ship, whether it be a winch or a can-opener, is employed exclusively for the needs of the ship [under Article 5ter.”]. But cf. Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 436 (“The wording of [the U.K. temporary-presence statute and Article 5ter] shows that the exemption is narrow, covering only ‘use’ of patented invention [sic] and that which is ‘exclusively for the needs’ of the vessel.”).
exempt vessels from all unnecessary inconveniences and impediments.**437

Under such a broad interpretation of this element, something such as the heating and air conditioning system of a vehicle should be included within the scope of § 272.**438 Even something such as a DVD player built into a minivan could be considered within the scope of § 272 because it is part of the “construction . . . or equipment”**439 of the minivan and used for the needs of its passengers.**440 Moreover, different vessels, aircraft, and vehicles have different needs.**441 For example, the needs of a cruise ship involve the entertainment of its passengers. Thus, even a slot machine built into such a cruise ship could be considered to be used exclusively for the needs of the vessel.**442 This interpretation is consistent with the underlying purpose of § 272 and would allow such a cruise ship to travel from country to country unfettered by the burden of “complying with multiple, inconsistent rights of exclusion provided by the patent regimes of [these] countries.”**443

VI. CONCLUSION

Although it may not be well-known, the temporary-presence provision of 35 U.S.C. § 272 offers a potentially powerful defense under proper circumstances. This defense protects foreign vessels, aircraft, or vehicles from patent infringement liability where these vessels, aircraft, or vehicles enter the United States temporarily or accidentally. Thanks to the Federal Circuit’s recent

**437 LADAS, supra note 6, at 249; see also NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1330 (“Article 5ter of the Paris Convention demonstrate[s] a concern to leave the channels of international commerce, or more accurately the vessels and vehicles that pass through these channels, free from the excessive burdens that would result if such vessels or vehicles had to conform to the patent laws of all nations that the vessel or vehicle visited during its lifetime.”).

**438 Cf. LADAS, supra note 6, at 249 (“[The needs of a vessel under Article 5ter of the Paris Convention] include machinery necessary for the lighting of the ship, its heating, and the like.”).

**439 Brown, 60 U.S. at 198.

**440 See 5 CHISUM, supra note 53, § 16.05[4], at 16-247 (“The phrase ‘exclusively for the needs of the vessel, aircraft of vehicle’ in Section 272 should cover any use for the benefit of the passengers or crew or for the operation of the vessel.” (emphasis added)). But cf. Sharma & Forrest, supra note 24, at 436 (“If the device, for instance, is equipment for entertainment, then this should not be covered by the exemption [in the U.K. temporary-presence statute].”).

**441 See LADAS, supra note 6, at 249 (“Every vessel has different needs. A floating hospital, a cargo boat, a sailboat, and a steamer have not the same needs.”).

**442 If the slot machine were not actually part of the construction of the boat, however, it should not be considered to be used exclusively for the needs of the vessel.

**443 NSC II, 357 F.3d at 1330.
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broad and correct interpretation of the scope of § 272, the temporary-presence defense should assume an increasingly important role in today’s global economy. Indeed, the Federal Circuit’s decision should ensure that the temporary-presence defense will continue to prevent patent enforcement from interfering with the “planes, trains, and automobiles” of international commerce.