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CANADA-UNITED STATES EAST COAST MARITIME BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT TREATY ENTERS INTO FORCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, announced today that Canada and the United States will refer the Gulf of Maine maritime boundary dispute to an international tribunal for binding settlement. A treaty to this effect was brought into force today when instruments of ratification were exchanged in Ottawa by Dr. MacGuigan and Mr. Richard Smith, Minister at the U.S. Embassy.

The treaty is officially entitled "A Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America to Submit to Binding Dispute Settlement the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary in the Gulf of Maine Area".

The treaty and the annexed "special agreement" provide for the final determination of the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Maine area by a five-member Chamber of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. If, for any reason, the International Court of Justice does not constitute the Chamber in accordance with the treaty and with the special agreement within six months, either Canada or the United States may terminate the special agreement. In that event an arbitration agreement, also annexed to the treaty, will come into force and the dispute will then be referred to a five-member international arbitral tribunal that would be specially constituted by Canada and the United States to hear the case.