

MARITIME BOUNDARIES

Several of Canada's maritime boundaries remain unsettled.

Gulf of Maine - Landward and Seaward Extensions

Under the terms of the agreement submitting the Gulf of Maine maritime boundary dispute to a Chamber of the ICJ, the Chamber was to fix the single maritime boundary seaward from a point 39 nautical miles from the terminus of the land boundary. The reason for not having the Chamber rule on the maritime boundary landward from this point related largely to the dispute over Machias Seal Island, which is claimed by both countries. The eventual seaward extension of the continental shelf dividing line will also have to be agreed in due course.

Strait of Juan de Fuca

The international boundary inside the Strait was fixed in the last century and is not the subject of dispute.

There is no agreement between Canada and the United States regarding the extension of the maritime boundary seaward of the Strait. The United States position has been to espouse equidistance, using a line drawn by reference to coastal sinuosities, while the Canadian equidistance line is based on straight baselines.

Dixon Entrance

Inside the Entrance, the Canadian position is that the "A-B Line", established by the 1903 Alaska Boundary Tribunal, is the international boundary with respect to both land and sea. The United States claims that the maritime boundary should follow an equidistance line, more or less equally dividing the waters inside the Entrance between Canada and the United States. There is also no agreement between Canada and the United States regarding the extension of the maritime boundary seaward of the Dixon Entrance.

Beaufort Sea

The Canadian position is that the maritime boundary should follow the 141st meridian, in effect a direct seaward extension of the land boundary. This is based on the 1825 Convention of St. Petersburg, historical usage, and the fact that this is the most equitable maritime boundary line. The USA claims a maritime boundary based on equidistance from the termination of the land boundary on the 141st meridian.