

The dispute began in 1969 when the United States protested Canada's issuance of oil and gas exploration permits on Georges Bank, and it was expanded in scope in 1977 when the two countries extended their fisheries jurisdiction to 200 nautical miles.

In 1979 the two Governments signed a Treaty to Submit to Binding Dispute Settlement the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary in the Gulf of Maine Area. A Special Agreement annexed to the Treaty was notified to the International Court of Justice on November 25, 1981. It provided for the final determination of the maritime boundary by a five-member Chamber of the Court. The Chamber was composed as follows: Judge Roberto Ago of Italy (presiding), Judge André Gros of France, Judge Hermann Mosler of the Federal Republic of Germany, Judge Stephen Schwebel of the United States and Judge ad hoc Maxwell Cohen of Canada.

The decision is the culmination of several years of intensive work in both countries. Following the submission of three rounds of written pleadings by the two sides, hearings were conducted before the Chamber in The Hague, from April 2 to May 11, 1984. Ambassador L.H. Legault, Q.C., Legal Adviser to the Department of External Affairs, was the Agent for Canada and was responsible for the preparation and presentation of the Canadian case.

The boundary drawn by the International Court in today's decision divides both the fishing zones and the continental shelf in the Gulf of Maine area. The claims of the two Parties and the boundary line determined by the Court are illustrated on the attached map.