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THE LAW OF THE SEA CONVENTION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, expressed Canada's "profound disappointment" with President Reagan's announcement that the United States will not sign the Law of the Sea Convention. The President said in a statement on July 9 that the Convention failed to meet objectives relating to seabed mining which he had set out prior to the eleventh and final negotiating session in New York. In a Note delivered to the United States Embassy on July 14, the Department of External Affairs pointed out that the Convention will not be open for signature until December. In these circumstances, Canada is convinced that the United States announcement at this time could undermine the Convention.

The Note underlines the importance Canada attaches to consultations with the United States and other western countries on matters affecting our mutual economic, political and security interests. The fact that the USA announcement was made without adequate consultations in a matter of further concern to canada. Indications that the Convention is gaining increasing acceptance, even among states which abstained when it was adopted in New York, demonstrates the importance and utility of continuing close consultations, in particular among allies, on this subject of crucial national and international interest.

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Canada believes that the Convention provides a real opportunity to make a major contribution to world peace and security by reducing the potential for conflict in the competing uses of the oceans. If the United States stays out of the Convention, or acts in a manner contrary to it, this will seriously damage the value of the Convention and the resulting uncertainty about the Law of the Sea will heighten the potential for conflict. There are therefore compelling reasons for a reconsideration of this decision.

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