



news release

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For release

CANADA FILES THIRD WRITTEN ARGUMENT IN GULF OF MAINE BOUNDARY CASE

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, announced today that Canada has filed with the International Court of Justice its third set of written arguments (in a document known as a "reply") in the case concerning delimitation of the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Maine area. This case centres on a dispute between Canada and the United States as to the single maritime boundary that divides the continental shelf and 200-mile fishing zones of the two countries on the Atlantic coast. The same boundary will also apply to the 200-mile exclusive economic zone proclaimed by President Reagan.

Both the Canadian and United States Replies were filed on 12 December, 1983, with the Registrar of the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The first written pleadings in this case (the "Memorials") were submitted to the Court on 27 September, 1982. The second written pleadings (the "Counter-Memorials") were submitted to the Court on 28 June, 1983.

The Canadian Reply identifies the issues that divide the Parties in the case and rebuts the contentions made in the United States Memorial and Counter-Memorial regarding the United States and Canadian boundary claims in the Gulf of Maine area. It reaffirms the Canadian view that the equidistance line claimed by Canada represents an equitable solution that takes account of all the relevant circumstances.

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By agreement between Canada and the United States, their respective written pleadings are not to be made public until the opening of the oral proceedings in this case. It is expected that these proceedings will be held in the Hague in the spring or early summer of 1984.

The Gulf of Maine area maritime boundary case will be heard by a special five-member Chamber of the International Court of Justice. The President of the Chamber is Judge Roberto Ago of Italy. The other members are Judge André Gros (France), Judge Hermann Mosler (Federal Republic of Germany), Judge Stephen Schwebel (United States) and Judge ad hoc Maxwell Cohen (Canada). The Agent for Canada in the case is L.H. Legault, Q.C.; the U.S. Agent is Davis Robinson, Legal Adviser to the State Department.