RESTRICTED

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

WT/DSB/M/18

12 June 1996

(96-2213)

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY
6 June 1996

MINUTES OF MEETING

Held in the Centre William Rappard
on 8 May 1996

Chairman: Mr. Celso Lafer (Brazil)

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1. Canada - Certain measures concerning periodicals
- Request by the United States for the establishment of a panel (WT/DS31/2)

The Chairman drew attention to the communication from the United States contained in document WT/DS31/2.

The representative of the United States said his Government was requesting the establishment of a panel to examine its complaint with regard to the measures imposed by Canada concerning the treatment of periodicals imported into Canada. These measures included an import ban on certain periodicals as well as discriminatory excise taxes and postal rates on other periodicals. Such measures were inconsistent with Canada's obligations under GATT 1994, and nullified and impaired benefits accruing to the United States under the WTO Agreement. The United States had raised this matter with Canada on a number of occasions, both informally and in formal consultations under the DSU. In the absence of a resolution of the matter in consultations, the United States requested the establishment of a panel.

The representative of Canada said that his country's cultural policies were designed to ensure that Canadians had access to periodicals of Canadian interest. Canada's cultural measures in the magazine sector reflected long-standing principles and practices, and were directly related to its overall cultural policy objectives. Canada did not impose any market restrictions on the availability of foreign magazines. Indeed over 80 per cent of all English-language magazines sold in Canada were non-Canadian, with 90 per cent coming from the United States. Over 450 different US magazines were sold in Canada. His country was not in a position to agree to the establishment of a panel at the present meeting.

The DSB took note of the statements and agreed to revert to this matter at its next meeting to be held on 19 June.