



INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

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Press Release

Unofficial

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Oil Platforms

(Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)

The Court will hold public hearings from
Monday 17 February to Friday 7 March 2003

THE HAGUE, 20 January 2003. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, will hold public hearings in the case concerning Oil Platforms (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America) from Monday 17 February to Friday 7 March 2003 at the Peace Palace in The Hague, seat of the Court.

The schedule of the hearings will be as follows:

First round of oral argument

Monday 17 February 2003	from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. : Iran
Tuesday 18 February 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : Iran
Wednesday 19 February 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : Iran from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Iran
Friday 21 February 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : United States of America
Monday 24 February 2003	from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. : United States of America
Tuesday 25 February 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : United States of America
Wednesday 26 February 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : United States of America from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.: United States of America
Friday 28 February 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : Iran (with respect to the counter-claim of United States of America)

Second round of oral argument

Monday 3 March 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : Iran from 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.: Iran
Wednesday 5 March 2003	from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. : United States of America from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. : United States of America
Friday 7 March 2003	from 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. : Iran (with respect to the counter-claim of United States of America)

History of the proceedings

On 2 November 1992 the Islamic Republic of Iran filed in the Registry of the Court an Application instituting proceedings against the United States of America in respect of a dispute concerning the destruction of three Iranian oil platforms. In its Application the Islamic Republic founded the jurisdiction of the Court on Article XXI (2) of the Iran/United States Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights, signed at Tehran on 15 August 1955 and which entered into force on 16 June 1957. Iran alleged that the destruction caused by a number of warships of the United States Navy, on 19 October 1987 and 18 April 1988, to three offshore oil production complexes, owned and operated for commercial purposes by the National Iranian Oil Company, constituted a fundamental breach of various provisions of the Treaty of Amity and of international law. Iran referred in particular to Article I of the Treaty which provides: "There shall be firm and enduring peace and sincere friendship between the United States of America and Iran." It also referred to Article X (1) which provides: "Between the territories of the two High Contracting Parties there shall be freedom of commerce and navigation." At the end of its Application, the Islamic Republic accordingly requested the Court to adjudge and declare that "in attacking and destroying the oil platforms referred to in the [above-mentioned] Application on 19 October 1987 and 18 April 1988, the United States breached its obligations to the Islamic Republic"; that "in adopting a patently hostile and threatening attitude towards the Islamic Republic that culminated in the attack and destruction of the Iranian oil platforms, the United States breached the object and purpose of the Treaty of Amity, including Articles I and X(1), and international law"; and that "the United States [was] under an obligation to make reparations to the Islamic Republic for the violation of its international legal obligations in an amount to be determined by the Court at a subsequent stage of the proceedings."

On 16 December 1993, the United States of America filed a preliminary objection to the Court's jurisdiction. Pursuant to Article 79, paragraph 3, of the Rules of Court of 14 April 1978, the proceedings on the merits were suspended. After the filing by Iran of a written statement on the preliminary objection followed by public hearings, the Court, by a Judgment of 12 December 1996, rejected the preliminary objection and found that it had jurisdiction, on the basis of Article XXI, paragraph 2, of the Treaty of 1955, to entertain the claims made by Iran under Article X, paragraph 1, of that Treaty.

Within the time-limit fixed by the Court, the United States of America filed its Counter-Memorial together with a counter-claim, requesting the Court to adjudge and declare that "in attacking vessels, laying mines in the Gulf and otherwise engaging in military actions in 1987-88 that were dangerous and detrimental to maritime commerce, the Islamic Republic of Iran [had] breached its obligations to the United States under Article X of the 1955 Treaty", and that "the Islamic Republic of Iran [was] accordingly under an obligation to make full reparation to the United States for violating the 1955 Treaty in a form and amount to be determined by the Court at a subsequent stage of the proceedings."

By a letter of 2 October 1997 Iran informed the Court of its position that the counter-claim as formulated by the United States did not meet the requirements of Article 80, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Court. After each Party had filed written observations, the Court, by an Order of 10 March 1998, found that the counter-claim presented by the United States in its Counter-Memorial was admissible as such and formed part of the proceedings.

Within the time-limits fixed by the Court and extended at the request of the Parties, Iran filed a Reply and the United States of America filed a Rejoinder. Iran was moreover authorized to file an additional pleading relating solely to the counter-claim and did so within the time-limit fixed.

NOTE TO THE PRESS

1. The public hearings will be held in the Great Hall of Justice of the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. Mobile telephones and beepers are allowed in the courtroom **provided they are turned off or set on silent mode**. Any offending device will be temporarily retained.

2. Members of the Press may attend on presentation of a press card. The tables reserved for them are situated to the far left of the public entrance to the courtroom.

3. Photographs and TV shots may be taken for a few minutes at the opening of each sitting. The Court's proceedings will be displayed live on a large TV screen in the Press Room, located on the ground floor of the Peace Palace (Room 5). **In the Press Room, it will be possible for TV crews to connect recording equipment directly to the Court's new video system**, but advance notice of this should be given to the Information Department. There is also a facility for the connection of sound-only equipment to the Court's audio system during the proceedings.

4. Telephone calls may be made from the phone located in the Press Room (collect calls only) or from the public payphones in the Post Office in the basement of the Peace Palace.

5. Verbatim records of the hearings will be published daily on the Court's website (www.icj-cij.org), with translations to follow as soon as practicable thereafter.

6. Mr. Arthur Witteveen, First Secretary of the Court (tel: +31-70-302 2336), as well as Mrs. Laurence Blairon and Mr. Boris Heim, Information Officers, are available to deal with any requests from the Press (tel: +31-70-302 2337; e-mail address: information@icj-cij.org).
