

15/12/2002

Islands hanging on the scales of justice

Carolyn Hong

Chronology of events

October 1991: Inaugural Malaysia-Indonesia Joint Commission Ministerial meeting on the dispute held in Kuala Lumpur.

January 1994: Malaysia and Indonesia end talks without resolving the dispute.

September 1994: Malaysia proposes that the dispute be brought to the ICJ. Indonesia objects, asking that the case be referred to the Asean High Council. Malaysia disagrees for fear of Asean countries having vested interests.

Oct 7, 1996: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian President Suharto agree to refer the dispute to the ICJ.

May 31, 1997: Malaysia and Indonesia sign a Special Agreement to bring it to the ICJ.

Nov 2, 1998: The Special Agreement is filed in the ICJ.

March 2000: The Philippines apply to intervene in the proceedings. Both Malaysia and Indonesia object.

June 2001: The ICJ hears the Philippines' application.

Oct 23, 2001: The application is rejected by a 14-1 majority.

June 3 to 12, 2002: The ICJ hears the case of Sipadan and Ligitan, in two rounds of arguments.