
INTERNATIONAL LAW CAN'T SOLVE THE GRECO-TURKISH ISLAND PROBLEM

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By Andreas Kluth

Kastellorizo is one of those places that might become a cause for war even though most people couldn't find it on a map.

The combatants would be Greece and Turkey, formally NATO allies but in reality perennial foes since the sloppy unraveling of the Ottoman Empire. And their war would be less about the island as such than about the Mediterranean waters said to belong to it. That's because underneath the sea bed, there may be lots of oil and gas.

Kastellorizo derives from red castle, after its landmark as seen in the evening light. Known to the Turks as Meis, the island is a charming place inhabited by a few hundred people. After a lively history – Byzantine, Maltese, Ottoman and so forth – it was transferred in 1947 by the victors of World War II from the defeated Axis power Italy to Greece. This all but guaranteed trouble forever after.

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