



Turkey-Greece Stand-off

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Why in News

Recently, France has deployed its military in the eastern Mediterranean Sea amid **tensions between Greece and Turkey** over **recently-discovered gas reserves**.

According to France the military has been deployed **to strengthen the autonomous assessment of the situation** and to **affirm France's commitment to free movement**, to the security of maritime navigation in the Mediterranean and **respect for international law**.

Key Points

The Stand-off:

- **Reason:** The **European Union (EU)** and its allies in West Asia and North Africa made **plans to build a gas pipeline** from the Mediterranean to Europe's mainland to transport the gas. However, **they have kept Turkey out of it**, which has infuriated Turkey.
 - The gas transport would help **reduce the EU's dependency on Russia**.
 - Earlier in 2019, the **EastMed Gas Forum** was formed by **Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan and Palestine**, and **Turkey was again excluded**.
- **Turkey's Counter:** Turkey challenged the EU pipeline project and reached an agreement with **Libya** to form an **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** from its southern shores to Libya's northern coast across the Mediterranean.
 - However, Greece **claimed the Turkish zone violated its maritime sovereignty** and later announced its EEZ with Egypt, which clashed with Turkey's zone.
 - Reacting to the deal, Turkey sent its survey ship near the **island of Kastellorizo** area mentioned in the **Greece-Egypt agreement**.
 - This is not the first time Greece and Turkey have been at odds. Over the past four decades, the **countries have gone to war at least three times**.

- Excluding Turkey, which has a long Mediterranean coast, is unwise. Allowing a resurgent Turkey to bully smaller powers in the region would be strategically disastrous. The EU has to **strike a balance** between these two options.

Source: TH