

Diomed Islands [Symbolism and Monument]

Ben Rambadt – Diplomacy Thesis

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Physical

Physical land separations that are defined by international borders with unique geographical locations that set the site apart from other conditions. Relevant governing instruments are the visible faces of a nation representing the spatial acknowledgment for international relations. The small American island of Diomede has in recent years been the highlight and interest of international relations due to its proximity to Russia and the actual physical visibility that is provided by the location of the island; acting as the fore-front for the United States without it really feeling the pressures to do so.

The physical characteristics of the island are cold, isolated, and the two islands represent two countries; Russia (Big Diomed) and United States (Little Diomed).

Even though the two islands are only 2.4 miles apart from each other (east and west) they operate on either side of the international date line, making Big Diomed 20 hours ahead of Little Diomed.¹ (Fig. 1)

Big Diomed (Russia) is 11.2 sq. miles in size with no population but with a periodic military presence.² Little Diomed (USA) is 2.8 sq. miles in size with a population of 170 (unknown last recording) comprising mainly of Inupiat Inuit.³ (Fig. 2)

Each island is governed by their respective national governments and Little Diomed is also under Alaskan state law.

The use of the islands is to provide a physical land marker to define the international boundaries between USA and the once USSR (now Russia).⁴

Also, the talk or mentions of a Bering Strait International bridge has been in and out of talks for years with the possibility of connecting east Russia with western Alaska.⁵ (Fig. 3 & 4)

Condition

Not to be discredited by Governor Palin's alleged awareness of international relations with Russia because she can see the country from a bush plane that flies over Little Diomed. I see the sight as a possibility for international relations on a symbolic level by creating a spatial experience for visitors interested in both islands adjacencies to each other and what they could possibly represent in terms of international diplomacy.

As of today there are no apparent complications surrounding the islands, but during the Cold War the site was considered the, "Ice Curtain" where during the conflict no air or boat transitions were allowed for many of the natives on Little Diomed.⁶

*"During the Cold War, that gap constituted the border between the USA and the USSR, and became known as the "Ice Curtain". In 1987, however, Lynne Cox swam from one island to the other, and was congratulated by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan."*⁷

1, 4, 5, 7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diomed_Islands October 23, 2011

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Diomed October 23, 2011

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Diomed_Island October 23, 2011

6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bering_Strait October 23, 2011

Fig. 1. <http://jkgi.blogspot.com/2010/05/first-and-last-place.html#links> October 23, 2011

Fig. 2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Little_Diomed_Island_village.jpeg October 23, 2011

Fig. 3 & 4. http://www.bustler.net/index.php/article/off_architectures_bering_strait_project_allows_views_at_arctic_marine_fauna/. October 23, 2011

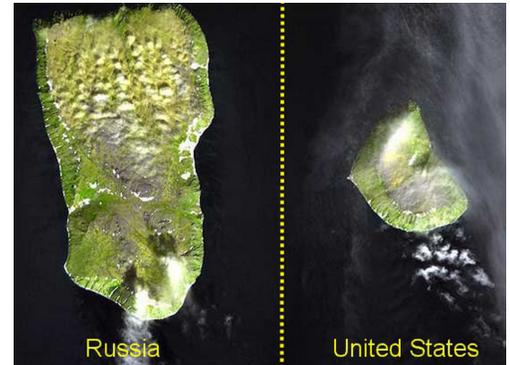


Fig. 1 Aerial View of Diomed Islands in Bering Strait



Fig. 2 Town of Diomed (Igloolik) on west side of Little Diomed



Fig. 3 Competition entry for transcontinental bridge

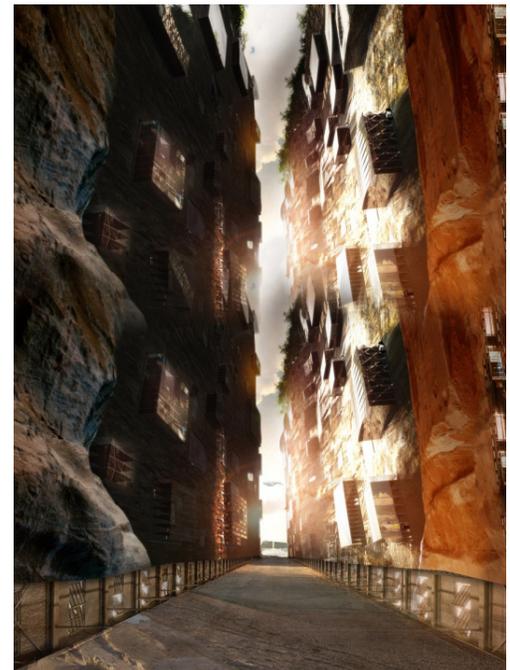


Fig. 4 Competition entry for transcontinental bridge

Possible Case Studies



Boris Iofan's Soviet Pavilion and Albert Speer's German Pavilion



Grmec, Bosnia-Herzegovina



OKRA: Historic Landmarkers