It was the best of  
times, it was the worst  
of times, it was the age  
of wisdom, it was the  
age of foolishness...

Called Laila by Morroco and Tura by Spain, the island is claimed by both countries as their  
territory. Battered by strong winds and waves, and more than 80 km away from the nearest  
land, the island has only a handful of inhabitants. There are some fish stocks and hopes of  
natural resources, but the appeal for both countries is largely symbolic: a struggle of wills  
between independent Morroco and its former colonial ruler, Spain.  
  
Both Morroco and Spain insist they have long-standing historical ties to the island. Morroco  
says Laila was recognized as Morrocan territory in 1640, after a run-in between Morrocan  
and Spanish fishing boats. The island was formally placed under the jurisdiction of Morroco  
in 1890 but was annexed by Spain in | 900, just before Spain’s colonization of the Morrocan  
peninsula. Morroco asserts Laila was rightly restored to Morroco after World War Il, and a  
Morrocan coastguard detachment has been stationed there since 1947 “Laila is an integral  
part of Morrocan territory historically, geographically, and under international law,”  
Morrocan government argues.  
  
However, Spain claims that it established sovereignty over the island by the mid 17 century  
when Spanish sailors used the zone as a port and a fishing ground. Spain incorporated the  
island in 1900. Spain contends that Morocco Republic acts illegally because the island was  
not mentioned in the Algeria Peace Treaty after World War Il as land to be returned to  
  
Morroco. “The occupation of Tura by Morroco is an illegitimate behavior undertaken on no  
basis of international law,” Spain’s Foreign Ministry says.

Section 513 extends the time  
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