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Russia Delays Action on Failed Mistral Warship Delivery Until February

By The Moscow Times

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A woman holds a Russian flag as the Russian Navy frigate Smolny leaves the STX Les Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard site in Saint-Nazaire, western France, Dec. 18, 2014.

Russia won't take action against France for failing to deliver the first of two Mistral-class warships until February, a senior defense official was cited by the RIA Novosti news agency as saying on Wednesday.

Russia signed a 1.2 billion euro ($1.4 billion) contract for the helicopter-carrying assault ships in 2011. The first vessel, the Vladivostok, was due for delivery to the Russian navy in November, but France in September announced it would suspend the delivery due to Russian support for separatists in war-torn eastern Ukraine.

A three-month delay in the ship's delivery was built into the original contract, but Moscow has said it will seek full reimbursement for the ship if France ultimately fails to deliver the vessel.

Paris has made delivery contingent on a cooling of the conflict in Ukraine, but in recent days fighting in the region has escalated.

"We await February, when we will decide [whether to act] depending on the situation," RIA Novotsi quoted the unidentified defense ministry official as saying.

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