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Russian Shipbuilder Ready To Make Analogue to France's Mistral Warship

By The Moscow Times

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Russian sailors board their Russian Navy frigate Smolny as they leave the STX Les Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard site in Saint-Nazaire, western France, Dec. 18, 2014.

Russian shipbuilding is up to the task of building an all-Russian analogue to France's Mistral-class helicopter assault carriers if Paris doesn't make good on its 1.2 billion euro ($1.3 billion) deal, the head of the United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) said Tuesday.

"Of course we will build one, there's nothing super hard about it," USC president Alexei Rakhmanov was quoted by state news agency RIA Novosti as saying Tuesday on radio station Ekho Moskvy.

"On the other hand, we perfectly understand that this requires a clearly defined order [from the Defense Ministry]," he added.

The contract for two of the French-built ships — some of the most advanced vessels of their

type available on the global market — was signed in 2011 as part of a 1.2 billion euro deal.

The agreement stipulated that France build two ships with Russian engineers on site to learn the techniques necessary to build a second two vessels in Russian domestic yards.

However, in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea last year, Paris withheld delivery of the first ship, which was due in November. The fate of the deal is not yet known, as France has yet to formally cancel it.

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