

Russian Military Ship Barred From Finnish Port During Zapad Drills

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The Kruzenshtern **Bernd Wüstneck / DPA / TASS**

A Russian military ship, the Kruzenshtern, has been barred from docking in Mariehamn by the Finnish military, according to the [Hufvudstadsbladet](#) newspaper.

Russian officials had asked permission for the 91-year-old, four-masted vessel to dock at the demilitarized Aland province between Sept. 28-30, but were denied by the Finnish Defense Forces.

The dates coincide with Russia's Zapad 2017 military exercise in Belarus, prompting security analysts to speculate whether the request was meant to provoke Finnish authorities.

Senior Lecturer at the Swedish National Defence College Thomas Reis said the request was “no coincidence,” and was in fact “carefully calculated and thought through.”

“Russia wanted to test Finland, to try to push the boundaries of what Finland would find acceptable,” Reis told Hufvudstadsbladet.

The Kruzenshtern was originally built in 1926 at Geestemünde in Bremerhaven, Germany, but was surrendered to the Soviet Union in 1946 as reparation for World War II.

The vessel now belongs to a Russian academy in Kaliningrad that trains cadets in marine research.

The Kruzenshtern accidentally sunk the Master Diver off the Danish coast in 2014 when a line between the two vessels failed to release.

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The Kruzenshtern also ended its 2015 visit to Reykjavík by [ramming](#) into two docked Icelandic coastguard ships.

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