

U.S. reportedly bought France-bound face masks for cash from China



Paris, April 2 (RHC)-- The U.S. bought out a planeload of Chinese-made face masks right on the tarmac just as the haul of the much needed protective gear was about to set off for France, the head of a French region told RT.

Facing shortages of protective equipment amid the coronavirus outbreak, France has turned to China to procure the much-needed face masks. After French legislature adopted a law on the emergent medical situation, local authorities were able to place an order on the equipment in China, paying for it upfront.

All in all, his and other regions ordered some 60 million masks, the head of the south-eastern Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region Renaud Muselier told RT France on Wednesday.

“The masks have been already produced and are currently in China. There are troubles with their delivery, though,” Muselier said, adding that the haul was set to arrive in France on Thursday evening. The country, however, ran into unexpected logistics troubles and not-that-friendly competition from the U.S., Muselier revealed.

Today in the morning in China, the Americans bought out the French order for cash right on the tarmac. The France-bound plane departed to the United States instead.

The local authorities will now have to stick to major logistics companies, Muselier said, to ensure that the haul is not outbid or bought out in the loading area again. He added that the delivery is now expected later this week.

The Americans are trying to procure any masks already available, disrupting deliveries to other nations, another report by French daily Liberation indicated. "They pay double and cash, even before seeing the goods," an anonymous source told the newspaper.

The U.S. is by far the worst pandemic-affected country in the world as its coronavirus tally is rapidly approaching the 200,000 mark and its death toll surpasses 4,100. France is badly hit by the outbreak as well, with over 50,000 cases registered and some 4,000 dead.

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