The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

A Fifth of Defense Budget Is Stolen

May 24, 2011



A fifth of state defense spending is stolen every year by corrupt officials, dishonest generals and crooked contractors, the chief military prosecutor said in an interview published Tuesday.

"Huge money is being stolen — practically every fifth ruble — and the troops are still getting poor quality equipment and arms," Sergei Fridinsky told Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

"Every year more and more money is set aside for defense, but the successes are not great," he said, adding that kickbacks and fictitious contracts were being used to defraud the state.

Fridinsky did not give specific figures, but the government has set aside more than 1.5 trillion rubles ($53 billion) for national defense in its 2011 budget, indicating theft of more than $10 billion a year.

While Western countries roll back defense spending, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has promised to spend nearly 20 trillion rubles over the next decade to renew the country's rusting armaments with new submarines, nuclear missiles and air defense systems.

President Dmitry Medvedev has repeatedly warned the notoriously corrupt defense sector

to clean up its act and this month sacked several industry chiefs over what the Kremlin said were unfulfilled contracts.

When asked whether he thought that senior officials were involved in the corruption, Fridinsky said: "Work it out for yourself."

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/05/24/a-fifth-of-defense-budget-is-stolen-a7173