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New Criminal Case Opened Into Disgraced Defense Contractor

By The Moscow Times

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Investigators have opened yet another criminal case into Oboronservis, the defense contractor whose alleged misdeeds prompted the firing of former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov.

Defense Ministry officials and Oboronservis subsidiaries attempted to illegally sell an oil transit complex in the Murmansk region, investigators said in a statement on Thursday.

The Defense Ministry's property department prepared documents, signed by then-Minister Serdyukov, that provided for the sale of the complex, including rail links and fuel oil reservoirs, at more than 242 million rubles ($7.9 million) below its market value, investigators said.

The sale, to a company called Kommandit Servis, was concluded in mid-October despite protests from naval officials, investigators said, adding that they later managed to thwart

the deal.

A criminal case has been opened into attempted abuse of authority and attempted abuse of official powers, both involving grave consequences.

In recent weeks, investigators have opened a slew of criminal cases into sales of military property at below-market prices involving Oboronservis, whose management has close links to Serdyukov.

The sales have cost the federal government billions of rubles, investigators have estimated.

On Nov. 6, President Vladimir Putin fired Serdyukov as defense minister, citing the need to "create the conditions for an objective investigation" of the Oboronservis case.

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