

Rogozin Calls for Tighter Control in the Face of \$500M Loss

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 17, 2013

The  Moscow Times

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin on Friday called for tougher control over budget spending on equipping the army with state-of-the-art weapons after a check uncovered violations that lead to over 16 billion rubles in budget losses.

A check by the Federal Service for Defense Contracts revealed about 1,500 cases of illegal use of state money earmarked for defense spending, RIA Novosti reported Friday, citing the watchdog's statement.

The misuse cost the federal budget 16.1 billion rubles (\$536 million), the statement said.

The defense industry gets "huge money," but since spending is not being controlled properly, such violations happen, Rogozin said, adding that those funds "fuel the interests of many different kinds of vultures."

He also pushed for tightening punishment for embezzlement in the defense industry and recommended the defense watchdog carry out unscheduled checks "when even the smallest doubts arise about the legal nature and efficiency of using those funds," Interfax reported.

As part of its ambitious military reform, the government plans to spend over 20 trillion rubles by 2020 to completely update the country's military hardware.

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