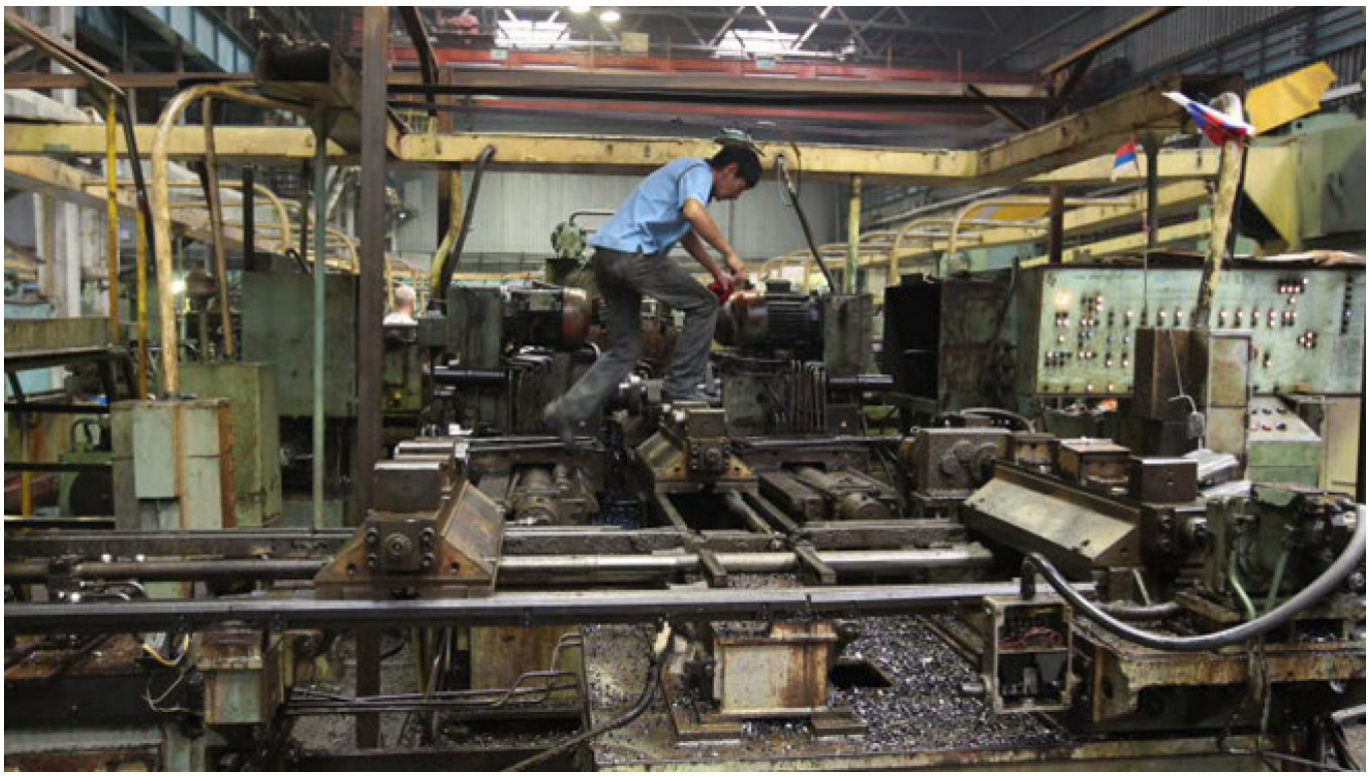
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Graft Has Cost Russia's Defense Ministry 7 Billion Rubles

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Russia's Defense Ministry has been plagued by numerous corruption scandals in recent years.

Corruption has cost the Defense Ministry more than 7 billion rubles ($135 million), Prosecutor General Yury Chaika said in a report prepared for the Federation Council, Interfax reported Tuesday.

"Military prosecutors have identified 1,896 corruption-related crimes. These include misappropriations, embezzlements, frauds and forgeries. The accumulated damage has surpassed 7 billion rubles," according to Chaika's report, entitled "On the State of Lawfulness in the Country."

Hundreds of people have been charged in connection with these crimes, including 257 officers, 154 of them senior ones, the report said.

According to Chaika, 1,400 tons of fuel have been stolen from the Pacific Fleet alone, amounting to a total loss of 50 million rubles ($1 million).

Russia's Defense Ministry has been plagued by numerous corruption scandals in recent years, with President Vladimir Putin having dismissed former minister Anatoly Serdyukov from his post in 2012 amid allegations of massive fraud involving another high-profile ministry official, Yevgenia Vasilyeva.

Serdyukov was subsequently charged with negligence but was later granted amnesty.
On Friday, prosecutors asked the court to give Vasilyeva a suspended sentence for her involvement in fraud schemes that cost the state some 3 billion rubles ($60 million).

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