



## Anti-Bribery Training

**OE Watch Commentary:** A key component of the Kremlin's current narrative revolves around the assertion that the country has overcome the criminality and lawlessness of the 1990s. Under President Putin's firm leadership, the Kremlin has been able to gain the upper hand over unscrupulous businessmen and bureaucrats, restoring order and discipline, allowing the country to focus on more serious foreign threats. Even though the pro-Kremlin media continues to repeat this assertion, according to the accompanying excerpt from a local Krasnodar source, *Yugopolis*, citing recent poll data, Russians still label bribery and corruption as the country's third most pressing problem (behind rising prices and poverty).

As a military will often reflect the values of the country it purports to defend, it is not surprising that the Russian military also continues to struggle with criminality in its ranks, to include among high-level officers. Indeed, the excerpt from a recent article in the pro-business daily *Kommersant*, describes how Lieutenant-General "Sergey Chvarkov, the former head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of the Warring Parties in Syria," and now "deputy head of the General Staff's Military Academy, [was] accused of having stolen six million rubles over three years during the implementation of a 400-million-rouble state contract with a commercial firm."

In response to these corruption challenges within the military, the excerpt from the pro-Kremlin source, *Izvestiya*, points out that, "the Defense Ministry has devised a special guide on how to avoid taking bribes." The article asserts that the anti-bribery "booklet's development was no accident," pointing out that the number of crimes linked to bribe-taking [within the Ministry of Defense] has "increased since 2016." It quotes an expert who asserts that "the level of general legal culture in both society and the Army in our country is low," worrying that perhaps this booklet will be "just another boilerplate response in the context of the fight against corruption." While today's Kremlin narrative remains filled with dark warnings about external threats, the articles show how Russia's greatest challenges may reside closer to home. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

**Source:** "Россияне назвали самые острые проблемы страны (Russians named the most acute problems of the country)," *Yugopolis*, 27 February 2019. <http://www.yugopolis.ru/news/rossiyane-nazvali-samye-ostrye-problemy-strany-118490>

*Economic problems remain the most significant for the majority of the population. This is evidenced by a survey conducted by the Levada Center on February 15–20, 2019... Thus, 62% of respondents are most concerned about rising prices, 44% - impoverishment of the population, 41% - corruption, bribery, 36% - rising unemployment, 34% - sharp stratification into rich and poor, inequitable distribution of income...*

**Source:** Oleg Rubnikov and Ivan Safronov, "Примирителя Сирии обвинили «по ощущениям» Генералу Минобороны вменяют мошенничество как лицу Академии Генштаба (Syrian Peacemaker Charged 'On Feelings': Defense Ministry General Blamed for Fraud as Face of General Staff's Academy)," *Kommersant*, 21 November 2018. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3805715>

*Kommersant has learnt that one of the defendants in a criminal case for fraud is Sergey Chvarkov, the former head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of the Warring Parties in Syria. The Lieutenant-General, who currently holds the post of deputy head of the General Staff's Military Academy, is accused of having stolen six million rubles over three years during the implementation of a 400-million-rouble state contract with a commercial firm.*

*...According to Kommersant's information, investigators have evidence from several witnesses who have stated that they handed over envelopes to the General, in which "money could be felt."*

**Source:** Aleksey Kozachenko and Bogdan Stepovoy, "За жесты под солнцем: Минобороны описало способы получения и виды взяток (For Gestures in the Sunshine: The Defense Ministry Has Described Methods of Taking Bribes and Forms of Bribery)," *Izvestiya*, 5 February 2019. <https://iz.ru/841725/aleksei-kozachenko-bogdan-stepovoi/za-zhesty-pod-solntcem-minoborony-opisalo-sposoby-polucheniia-i-vidy-vzjatok>

*The Defense Ministry has devised a special guide on how to avoid taking bribes. The practical recommendations are presented in the form of a methods guide booklet, but they will be consolidated by a departmental [Ministry] order. The military have taken a detailed approach to compiling the booklet: It contains a whole section devoted to dealing safely with a potential briber....*

*...The booklet is an attempt by the Defense Ministry to mobilize the fight against corruption. How effective it will be is another matter, Oleg Zherdev, the chairman of the Gvardiya security departments' association of lawyers, told Izvestiya.*

*"It will do no harm to remind military personnel one more time about their rights and obligations," the expert reflects. "The level of general legal culture in both society and the Army in our country is low. The main thing is that these recommendations should not turn into just another boilerplate response in the context of the fight against corruption."*

*The booklet's development was no accident. The Defense Ministry reports that the level of corruption-based criminality was successfully reduced by 12 percent in 2017-2018. However, the number of crimes linked to bribe-taking has increased since 2016. Within the overall number of corruption-based violations, this kind of crime constitutes 48.5 percent.*

**"The Defense Ministry has devised a special guide on how to avoid taking bribes."**