

**Aruba, February 25, 2015** - Russia is seeking backing from Abu Dhabi investors to build a giant airport in Cuba seen as an international gateway to Latin America, a report said today.

Talks on the proposal have been held between Moscow and Abu Dhabi state investment fund Mubadala, The National newspaper reported citing Russian Industry Minister Denis Manturov. Manturov, who was visiting Abu Dhabi to participate in a military exhibition, said Russia would invest at least USD 200 million in the project.

He said Cuba planned to convert a former military base into "a big airport hub for Latin America". The project could also include redeveloping a seaport and constructing a railway line. A Mubadala spokesman told the Abu Dhabi-based National that the company was "regularly reviewing a number of different investment opportunities with its Russian partners".

The newspaper said that Russia was trying to boost its ties with trading partners in the Middle East, Asia and Latin America in the face of international sanctions over the Ukraine conflict. In December, US President Barack Obama and Cuba's Raul Castro announced their two nations would begin normalising ties, ending a half-century of enmity between the former Cold War foes.

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