

# *Cuba to Buy Russian Jets*

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Moscow, Mar 29, (RHC), – Russia's Voronezh Aircraft Plant will supply Cuba with Antonov An-148 regional jets, officials in the region where the factory is based told RIA Novosti news agency on Friday.

"Today's decision on An-148 supplies to Cuba opens a new market for us," Alexei Gordeyev, the acting Governor of Voronezh Region said after a meeting with senior Cuban officials, including scientific advisor Fidel Castro Diaz-Balart and the country's ambassador to Russia, Emilio Lozada García.

Russian and Cuban authorities discussed other potential areas for increased bilateral cooperation during the meeting, including in healthcare and education.

The Voronezh Aircraft company is the region's largest factory and one of the biggest manufacturers of passenger and cargo aircraft in the country. The factory specializes in the production of the Il-96 wide-body long-haul passenger airliners and the An-148 regional jet.

Russia and Cuba have enjoyed close cooperation since the days of the Soviet Union. In recent years, Russia has moved to step up ties with Cuba.

In December, Moscow wrote off most of Havana's Soviet-era debt, estimated at about \$30 billion, and denounced the US economic blockade against Cuba.

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