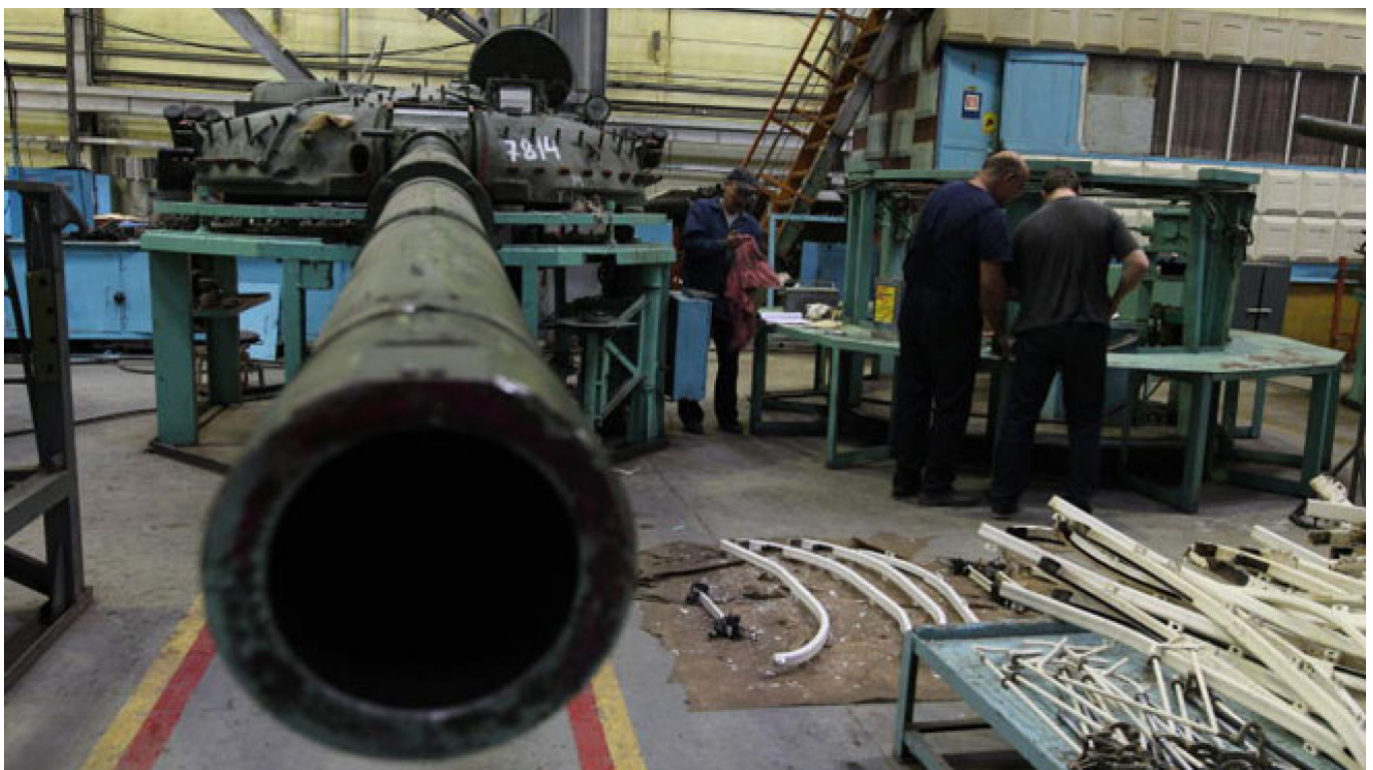


# Russia Ready to Give Thailand Weapons in Exchange for Fruit, Rubber

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia is prepared to trade military hardware for Thai rubber, fruit and vegetables as Moscow seeks to boost its ties with Asia amid worsening relations with the West over the Ukraine crisis, news reports said Wednesday.

Russian Trade Minister Denis Manturov said Wednesday that Russia intends to sell Thailand more than \$160 million worth of weapons in exchange for an amount of rubber valued at around the same price, RIA Novosti reported.

A contract on the purchase of at least 80,000 tons of rubber should be signed by September, with the delivery to come next year, Manturov was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti. He added that the deal would not be a "direct barter," as Thailand is likely to buy more weapons than Russia buys rubber.

Also on Wednesday, Oleg Siyenko, the CEO of Russian tank and train maker Uralvagonzavod, said his company was ready to sell both civilian and military equipment to Thailand

in exchange for fruit and vegetables.

These barter arrangements come as Russia looks to boost its trade ties with Southeast Asia as U.S. and EU sanctions on Moscow over its role in the Ukraine crisis choke off investment from the West.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev visited Thailand in April, becoming the first Russian prime minister to visit the country in 25 years. During the visit, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said the countries were intent on boosting trade turnover from the current \$5 billion to \$10 billion by 2016.

Manturov also said Wednesday that Thailand had expressed interest in creating a free trade zone with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), a Russia-led economic alliance of post-Soviet states, RIA Novosti reported. Nearby Vietnam signed a free trade agreement with the EEU in May.

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