

photo # Paul N. Whelan, 48, of Novi was arrested Dec. 28, 2018, by the Russian government and accused of espionage. His family insists he's innocent, saying he is a world traveler and was detained by mistake. In this undated photograph, Paul Whelan is seen at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. Whelan family photo Interested in this topic? You may also want to view these photo galleries: # " As to the possibility of exchanges of one sort of another, it's impossible and incorrect to consider the question now, when an official charge hasn't even been presented, " he was quoted as saying by the state news agency RIA-Novosti. # " Charges will be presented in the near future, " he said, according to the Interfax agency. # Some Russian news reports earlier had cited unnamed sources as saying Whelan had been indicted on charges that could bring 20 years in prison if convicted. # Officials haven't given details of Whelan's suspected activities and he was initially identified only as an American. His other citizenships became known on Friday. # U.S. Ambassador Jon Huntsman Jr. visited Whelan on Wednesday in Moscow's Lefortovo Prison, a 130-year-old facility noted for its strict conditions. Britain, Canada and Ireland have applied for consular access to him. # The 48-year-old Whelan, a former U.S. Marine who left the military with a bad-conduct discharge, is global security director for a U.S. automobile parts manufacturer. # His family back home says his presence in Moscow was nothing more than a visit to attend a wedding. In a Washington Post op-ed published Friday, his twin brother, David, urged the U.S. government to pressure Russia to release