

of American Paul Whelan last week in Moscow. # An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment on the arrest of Dmitry Makarenko on Dec. 29, which Russia's foreign ministry disclosed Saturday. # U.S. court records show Makarenko, who lives in Russia, was indicted in Miami in 2017 on charges he broke American laws against exporting military equipment. He was also charged with money laundering. A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment on the case. # There has been widespread speculation that 48-year-old Whelan, who was arrested on Dec. 28 under the relatively broad charge of espionage with zero details on what he is accused of doing, would be exchanged for a Russian citizen. # " To speak about any kind of ' swaps' at this stage is inappropriate and wrong, " Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Rybakov told the state-run RIA news agency. # Whelan's arrest came weeks after Russian national Maria Butina, 30, pleaded guilty in a U.S. court to acting as an agent for the Kremlin in conspiring with a senior Russian official to infiltrate conservative American circles ahead of the 2016 presidential campaign. # Whelan's case, which continues to zigzag as details about his past emerges, has further heightened tensions between Washington and Moscow: The United States and Russia are at loggerheads over a range of issues from election interference to the crises in Syria and Ukraine. # Whelan, a Michigan resident who served in the Marines, was court-martialed and discharged for trying to steal thousands of dollars from the U.S. government. He also claims citizenship in the United Kingdom, Canada and Ireland. # The Russian Embassy in Washington found out about Makarenko's detention from those close to him, not the U.S. government, violating the Vienna