

Kremlin Hints at 'Contacts' with U.S. Over Jailed Reporter

By [AFP](#)

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Evan Gershkovich **Yaroslav Chingaev / Moskva News Agency**

The Kremlin said Tuesday there were "certain contacts" with the U.S. over detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, responding to a question about a possible prisoner exchange.

U.S. Ambassador Lynne Tracy was allowed to visit Gershkovich in prison on Monday after a gap in visits of more than two months.

Russian state media reported that Russian consular officials were also on Monday given access to Vladimir Dunaev, an alleged cybercriminal extradited from South Korea who is currently in detention in the United States.

Peskov was asked if the coincidence of these visits indicated a possible exchange.

"There are certain contacts on this matter but we do not want them made public at all. They

should take place and continue in total silence," Peskov said.

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He did not give further details but said that "the right to consular contact should be respected by both sides."

Gershkovich was arrested on March 29 during a reporting trip in the Urals.

The reporter, who previously worked for AFP, was the first Western journalist arrested and accused of espionage by Moscow since the Soviet era, amid a sharp deterioration of relations over the conflict in Ukraine.

The United States, The Wall Street Journal and Gershkovich deny he was working as a spy.

In December, Russia freed basketball star Brittney Griner, who was arrested over traces of cannabis, in return for the release of Viktor Bout, imprisoned in the United States over weapons smuggling.

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