

Russia 'Prepared to Consider' U.S. Prisoner Swap – Senior Diplomat

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Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov. **Maxim Shemetov / POOL / EPA / TASS**

Russia could be open to exchanging prisoners with the United States to improve relations under the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov [said](#) in an interview Tuesday.

Moscow would "definitely be prepared to consider" a prisoner swap similar to the landmark exchange that took place on Aug. 1, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told NBC News.

In that historic exchange, eight Russians held in Western countries were freed in exchange for 16 journalists, anti-war dissidents and other political prisoners held in Russia.

Ryabkov said a similar deal would require a "multiphased or multistep approach on both sides," including pardoning those currently serving prison sentences.

A potential exchange would be a "healthy step forward, especially at the beginning of the next administration," Ryabkov said while clarifying that he did not "want to pre-empt anything."

The prisoner exchange could take place in February 2025 a few weeks after Trump's inauguration, according to last month's [report](#) by the Mash Telegram channel, which is believed to have links to Russia's security services.

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Russia's Foreign Ministry maintains a list of 70 Russians convicted of espionage or sanctions evasion in the U.S., according to Mash.

The outlet said Washington listed jailed U.S. soldier [Gordon Black](#), U.S. citizen [Joseph Tater](#) and U.S.-Russian citizen [Ksenia Karelina](#) as part of a potential exchange.

According to Mash, the European Union reportedly requested that some young Russians, many of whom are minors accused of committing terrorist acts or sabotage on Russian railroad tracks, be included in a potential swap.

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