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U.S. Is Offering to Exchange Soviet Agent for an American

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WASHINGTON, March 22—The State Department has proposed to the Soviet Government that it exchange Sarkis O. Paskalian, who pleaded guilty last Sept. to a charge of spying for Moscow, for an American intelligence agent now in Soviet custody, an American official confirmed today.

The official said he did not know the identity of the American agent or whether the Soviet Government had responded favorably to the proposal.

Mr. Paskalian, a 36-year-old Armenian, was arrested last June in New York by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and charged with having transmitted a top secret study of the North Atlantic Treaty Organi-

zation to Soviet agents. He was sentenced to 22 years in prison, a term he is now serving at the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

John Corbett, Mr. Paskalian's court-appointed lawyer, said today that he had been telephoned recently by a Washington lawyer, representing the family of the American agent, who wanted to know "whether Paskalian would be interested in going back" to the Soviet Union in return for the American's freedom.

"I said, if you were doing 22 years in Leavenworth, wouldn't you be interested in going back?" Mr. Corbett recalled, adding that "the last word I had on it was that the Russians would let us know something this week."