

25 DEC 24 1971  
**Hope Admits Doubt  
North Will Permit  
A Visit to P.O.W.'s**

NYTimes

CAMP EAGLE, South Vietnam, Dec. 24 (AP) — Bob Hope said today that he and a North Vietnamese diplomat in Laos had discussed a children-to-children aid program and prisoner exchange.

He said they had also discussed his offer to visit American prisoners of war in North Vietnam, but, the comedian said, "the odds are very long." If he could get there, he added, he would like to negotiate "some kind of a deal" with North Vietnamese officials to get American prisoners released.

Speaking to newsmen after a show before some 12,000 G.I.'s on a sweltering Christmas Eve, Mr. Hope reported that "there were several proposals made" in his meeting yesterday with Nguyen Van Thanh, first secretary of the North Vietnamese Embassy in Vientiane.

He gave no details of any plans other than applying for a visa to enter North Vietnam.

Asked whether recent United States air strikes in North Vietnam might lengthen the odds against a visa, Mr. Hope replied that there were "a lot of things I'm not going to tell you about, because it might hurt the chances of getting over there and getting a visa."

He said Mr. Thanh had submitted the visa request to the Foreign Ministry in Hanoi and that "they said they'd get back to us." An aide to Mr. Hope said that a reply was expected before the troupe leaves Southeast Asia after its last show tomorrow, Christmas Day.

**Nixon Is Appreciative**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24 (UPI) — President Nixon said today that he deeply appreciated Bob Hope's effort to seek the freedom of American prisoners of war.

The President, at an impromptu news conference as he left Bethesda Naval Hospital following his annual Physical check-up, was asked for comment on Mr. Hope's proposal to ransom prisoners for a \$10-million contribution to North Vietnamese charity. Mr. Nixon said: "I can only say that the efforts he makes, that anybody makes, are deeply appreciated."