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Nobel**Wald Talks****To POWs**

SFWxaminer

HONG KONG — (AP) — An American Nobel Prize winner said today he saw and talked to a number of captured U.S. pilots in Hanoi last week, including one taken prisoner less than two months ago.

George Wald, a professor at Harvard University, said the POWs were in excellent shape physically and mentally.

He is believed to be the first visiting American to talk to any U.S. POWs held by the North Vietnamese for at least two years.

Wald, who holds strong anti-war views, was interviewed in Hong Kong after completing a one-month visit to China and a one-week trip to North Vietnam.

Wald declined to identify any of the pilots he spoke to.

"I saw one pilot who was shot down Dec. 30. I saw one who was shot down in 1968," he said.

Radio Hanoi broadcasts said two American pilots were shot down and captured Dec. 30. They were Lt. Cmdr. David Wesley Hoffman, 30, and Lt. (j.g.) Norris Alphonso Charles, 26.

Wald said the men he saw did not include five pilots captured Feb. 16-17.

He was reticent about divulging information concerning the POWs and indicated he plans to speak more freely about them when he returns to New York City on Thursday.

The biologist, who won the 1967 Nobel Prize for medicine-physiology, said he spoke to the POWs in Hanoi, away from the detention camps. The North Vietnamese were "extremely wary" about the camps because of the unsuccessful U.S. raid on a camp at Son Tay in 1970, he said.