

AP Wirephotos

Dr. George Wald talked with POW Commander Walter E. Wilber

2 POWs' Dim View Of Peace Efforts

Washington

Two U.S. prisoners of war in Hanoi have been quoted as saying they have little hope that President Nixon's eight-point peace plan and China trip will lead to their release.

Nor do they believe that Mr. Nixon's steps are likely to bring peace.

The statements were attributed to Navy Lieutenant Commander David Wesley Hoffman of San Diego and Commander Walter Eugene Wilber of Columbia Crossroads, Pa.

Dr. Wald, a Nobel Prize winning biologist, said the officers expressed those views in a tape-recorded interview with him last February 19 during his visit to Hanoi.

PRESTIGE

"Of course, a presidential visit to Peking doesn't look like it's any way to stop the war," Wilber said in the interview. "It looks like a spectacular move to increase his prestige for the American people, for the presidential election."

Wald asked Wilber if he knew of Mr. Nixon's latest peace proposal.

"Yes, I've heard about that," replied Wilber, a prisoner since 1968. "Here again the wording in the eight-point program doesn't look sincere to me. It looks like it misses the point — to end the war is not in there."

Hoffman, who was shot down last December 30, said of the Nixon plan, "I don't have the full details of all the points. The proposal is on the surface pretty good, but when does this 'agreement' start and when does the withdrawal begin?"

Wald answered that Mr. Nixon's plan calls for withdrawal to be complete six months after an agreement is reached but he said that completing the agreement "could take years."

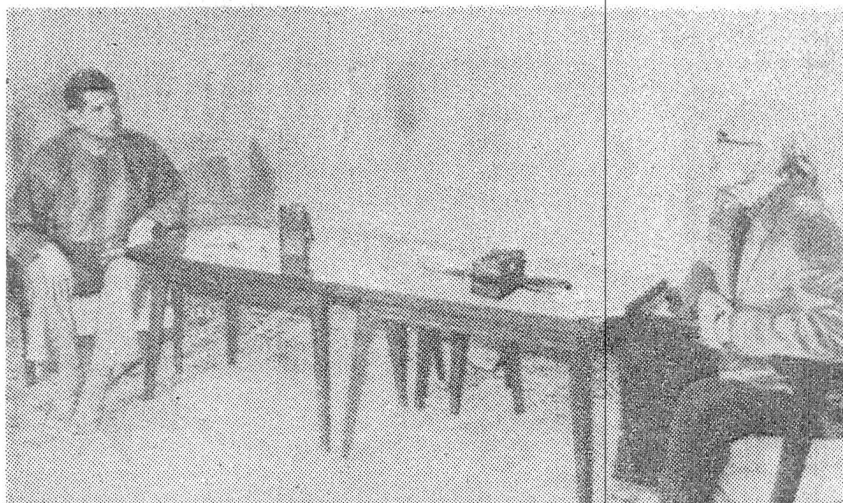
OPINION

"I don't see how," injected Hoffman. "I'm sorry to interrupt — how could it take years because I frankly don't see how Mr. Nixon can be re-elected unless something is done, unless I read American opinion very, very wrongly — and it hasn't been that long since I've been away."

"Is the country going to be able to elect a President who can end this thing?" Hoffman asked. "It seems to us that it's perfectly obvious that we have to withdraw to end this war, and that's the only way we're going to go home."

Both men said they had been captured by North Vietnamese peasants after parachuting from their airplanes. They said they were treated well at the time of capture and during imprisonment.

Associated Press



Lieutenant Commander David Hoffman met with Dr. Wald