

U.S. WRITER TOLD TO LEAVE VIETNAM

Disclosure of 'Tiger Cages'
Is Blamed in Saigon

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 27—The South Vietnamese Government has ordered Don Luce, a 36-year-old American writer, to leave the country before May 16.

The Ministry of Interior said in a letter that Mr. Luce must leave for a "special reason." Mr. Luce said that the special reason was his part in disclosing the use of the so-called tiger cages at Con Son prison. These were small stone compartments where hundreds of prisoners were confined under wretched conditions.

Last October Mr. Luce was informed by the National Press Center, which is run by the South Vietnamese, that his press credentials would not be renewed because of his trip to Con Son, an island off South Vietnam.

Mr. Luce is scheduled to testify on May 13 before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on the effects of the war in Vietnam.

He has lived in South Vietnam for 12 years. Since 1969, staff of the World Council of Churches, Mr. Luce has been writing for its Ecumenical Press Service as well as doing research.

"I am going and I have decided not to come back to South Vietnam until there is peace," he said today. "Vietnam is better off without any foreigners. If I do come back it will only be to visit."

Mr. Luce was able to enter the "tiger cages" last July with Representative Augustus F. Hawkins, Democrat of California, Representative William R. Anderson, Democrat of Tennessee, and Thomas R. Harkin, a Congressional aide, who photographed some of the cages.

They were not willingly shown to the American visitors and the United States Embassy here was displeased with Mr. Luce for having made it possible for the Congressmen to see them. Subsequent publicity about the prison conditions was believed to be embarrassing for the embassy since there is an

American advisory program for prisons in South Vietnam.

Mr. Luce feared that he would be forced to leave the country last February, but the intervention of several Congressmen, and some indignation among American correspondents in Saigon, helped him get a temporary extension of his visa.

"This month I was told at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that I could stay in Vietnam if I supported the Thieu Government and changed my policies," Mr. Luce said. He added that an official at the ministry named Pham Dinh Tan told him this on April 20.

Mr. Luce has been a controversial figure in South Vietnam—for both American and Vietnamese officials—since 1967 when he resigned as director of the International Voluntary Services in Vietnam. This agency has young, Vietnamese-speaking Americans helping in agriculture, social work, community development and rehabilitation projects.

The resignation sought to protest the United States program of defoliation in Vietnam, the policies that made refugees and the bombing of North and South Vietnam.