

Saigon Too Harsh, U.S. Writer Says

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Saigon Too Harsh,

By LANNY THOMAS

Political prisoners in South Vietnam's jails are receiving "far worse" treatment than American POWs did in the North, journalist Don Luce said here today.

"While I share the joy of the families of returning POWs, I am concerned about the thousands of political prisoners in the South," he said. "They are not being released and there is little likelihood of their ever being released."

Torture of these prisoners is "commonplace," he said.

Luce, who has spent most of the last 14 years in Vietnam, made headlines in 1970 when he along with two congressmen discovered the notorious tiger cages in one of South Vietnam's largest prisons.

In a press conference at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, 1100 Broadway, Luce said despite all the controversy over the torture cages, the United States still gives the Saigon

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government money to build them.

A \$400,000 Navy contract was awarded last year to the American construction firm of Raymond, Morrison Knudson — Brown, Root and Jones to build 384 more tiger cages, he said. "And they are actually smaller."

About 200,000 persons, including farmers, Catholic leaders, Buddhist monks, professors, labor leaders and others, remain political prison-

ers, Luce said.

"Peace won't come to Vietnam until the prisoners are released and refugees are allowed to go back to their families," he said.

Luce, who is touring with the American Friends Service Committee, said he is trying to awaken the American public to the plight of political prisoners. He spoke later today at Tulane University.