

New Fonda Statement On Torture

Los Angeles

Antiwar activist Jane Fonda said yesterday she believes some American prisoners of war were tortured in North Vietnam but it probably was not widespread.

"I'm quite sure that there were incidents of torture," the actress said. "I think probably some of these professional pilots were probably beaten to death by the people whose homes and families they were bombing and napalming.

"But the pilots who are saying it was the policy of the Vietnamese and that it was systematic, I believe that that's a lie."

Miss Fonda, interviewed on KNBC-TV here, has been widely criticized for an earlier remark that she thought the returning prisoners who said they had been tortured were "hypocrites and liars."

"These men were bombing and strafing and napalming the country," she said. "If a prisoner tried to escape it is quite understandable that he would probably be beaten and tortured."

Miss Fonda said common sense tells her that the North Vietnamese prisoners being released by South Vietnam received much worse treatment because they looked worse than the American POWs.

She also said the returning Americans should not be considered heroes. She termed them "professional pilots whose business it is to kill."

Associated Press