

## Thousands of Vietnamese Told To Display Portrait of Thieu

By GLORIA EMERSON  
Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 12—Hundreds of thousands of large photographs of President Nguyen Van Thieu, who is running for re-election this October, are being handed out in the provinces by local officials who are ordering the Vietnamese to display them.

The black and white glossy photograph of the 48-year-old President, taken in a studio here and retouched, makes him look younger and thinner than he is. It also shows him with considerably fewer gray hairs than he in fact has.

Officials in provincial capitals, villages and hamlets are not only telling people to display the photographs but insisting that, at their own expense, they have them framed.

In other areas either the national police or members of local information services are doing the job. The orders to do so come from the Ministry of Information in Saigon, but a spokesman refused today to comment.

In the grubby, worn provincial capital of Quangnai, a plump woman in pajamas hung her photograph of the President high on the walls of the coffee shop she runs on Phanboichau Street.

"The officials came two weeks ago and gave me the picture to put up in my shop," she said last week. The frame cost her \$1.85 and she was not pleased with the expense.

In Phuoc Tuy Province, which is East of Saigon and which faces the China Sea, the presidential photographs, have "literally saturated the market of Baria, a town on the highway between Saigon and the coastal resort of Vungtau.

In his report for July, the advisor mentioned the suspicions of some Vietnamese that "furtive United States support is implied."

The photographs, which measure 14 by 10 inches including a white border, have no American or Vietnamese catalogue markings on them. But the paper is thick and expensive looking, which to many Vietnamese suggests that rich foreigners footed the bill.

One high-ranking United States official, who asked that his name be withheld, said he believed that the photograph of President Thieu had been taken in 1968 or 1969 at American expense and stored by the Ministry of Information here.

"Six months ago an aide at the palace called us to help them set up a new portrait of Thieu but we said no," the official said.

"The President doesn't like this photography," he added.

"The great batches" of the photographs were printed in the Philippines, he said. He also said that a Vietnamese officer

in the Presidential Palace had recently called the Joint United States Public Affairs Office, known as JUSPAO to ask for masking tape to use on the bundles of photographs being sent to the provinces. This request was also refused.

A Vietnamese photographer named Le Minh, however, said he took the picture in October, 1970. He could give no details as to who paid for the numerous copies.

The Ministry of Information, which for years has depended on JUSPAO to pay for its printing and publishing, has a severely limited budget.

In Danang, the port city where there is a large allied air base, an American official said that 50,000 photographs had arrived by truck and were at City Hall.

In Phuoclong Province, on the Cambodian border, the province chief, Luu Yem, confirmed that the Saigon ministry had sent the orders to have the photographs framed and hung in residences, shops and restaurants.

While some Vietnamese are annoyed at the instructions, there are others who find it easier to acquiesce and stay silent.

"Whatever they tell us to do, we do," said one housewife in the little town of Songbe. "That way we don't get into trouble."