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Thieu, Retinue Reach Taiwan

From News Dispatches

TAIPEI, April 26—Former South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu slipped into Taiwan today aboard a special U.S. military aircraft with 15 companions and 10 tons of baggage, eyewitnesses reported.

Taipei's airport was closed four hours before Thieu's arrival and armed guards were strung out on the ramp and around the airport building.

The London Evening News said Thieu planned to live in London when South Vietnam falls and that he is trying to smuggle an estimated \$76 million in gold to Europe. The South Vietnamese embassy in London confirmed that Thieu has secretly sent his 12-year-old son to England. He is believed to be attending school near London. The Foreign Office said the re-

port that Thieu is coming to Britain is "purely a piece of speculation.")

Thieu was accompanied by his elder brother Nguyen Van Kien, Saigon's ambassador to Taipei, and met by Nationalist Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, H. K. Yang, the witnesses said.

Both the Foreign Ministry and the South Vietnamese embassy, however, said they had no knowledge of it.

Also traveling with Thieu were his wife and Premier Tran Thien Khiem—whose wife has purchased a home in Taipei, an informed source said.

Thieu, who resigned Monday, after saying he hoped to open the way to talks with the Communist forces threatening Saigon, is regarded by Taiwan officials as a tough anti-Communist leader and close friend of Taipei.