

21 Tons of Gold Seen in Viet Booty

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

The triumphant Communists presumably have captured a fabulous 21 tons of gold, worth more than \$200 million, in Saigon.

This was the amount President Nguyen Van Thieu left behind, according to classified State Department cables, when he abandoned Saigon and fled to Taipei.

The keys to the treasury were left with his successor, President Duong Van (Big) Minh, who reportedly used the gold hoard as a bargaining card in his negotiations with the Communists.

Far more valuable was the awesome arsenal, which the Saigon regime received from the United States and abandoned to the Communists. One Pentagon estimate sets its value at \$5 billion.

The Communists have also taken over airfields, piers, docks, warehouses, hospitals, oil tanks and other facilities which the United States built in South Vietnam. At one time, the construction costs ran over \$1 million a day.

Our sources have been unable to find out how much gold and armaments were abandoned to the Communists in Cambodia. The assets of both fallen govern-

ments in the United States, meanwhile, have been frozen by the Treasury Department. This amounts to an estimated \$80 million in Vietnamese assets, \$4 to \$5 million in Cambodia assets.

Footnote: Intelligence reports, strictly unconfirmed, claimed that Thieu smuggled enough gold bullion out of Saigon to live comfortably the rest of his life. Cambodia's deposed President Lon Nol also got away, according to unconfirmed reports, with several million dollars.

Martinet Martin—Secret State Department cables contain more details on the arbitrary behavior of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's former man in Saigon, Ambassador Graham A. Martin, who escaped with his black poodle, Nitnoy, on one of the last helicopters out of Saigon.

We reported last month that Martin had stubbornly resisted the massive evacuation of both Americans and their Vietnamese supporters until the last minute. He informed anyone who questioned him that he was the top U.S. authority in Saigon and that he was making the decisions.

In one cable to Kissinger, Martin advised "the people in Washington" bluntly to "throw

away the panic button." They had his reassurance that "there is no panic here."

For far too long, he opposed bringing in transport planes to speed up the evacuation and resisted the Pentagon's attempts to recover U.S. military equipment from South Vietnam.

He contended this would cause the South Vietnamese leaders to panic and, possibly, to turn on the remaining Americans. Our State Department sources say that Martin, like Thieu, steadfastly believed until the Saigon government was collapsing upon his head that a last-minute miracle would save South Vietnam.

It must be said for Martin that he remained unruffled to the last. He calmly picked up his poodle and boarded one of the final helicopters while U.S. Marines used tear gas to keep the frantic South Vietnamese crowd from mobbing the helicopters.

Left behind, thanks to Martin's policies, were tens of thousands of Vietnamese who had been on the U.S. payroll and who expect to be executed by the victorious Communists. At the end, Martin himself agreed that all Vietnamese who had any dealings with the Americans should be evacuated. But by this time, it was too late.

Watch on Waste—For the last two years, the taxpayers have shelled out \$2 million for the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, whose name is long but whose duties are short.

White House budget chief Roy L. Ash recently questioned Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger as to what the committee was doing.

It seems the committee's main task is to solicit signatures from employers stating they support the national reserve system.

After some haggling, the White House agreed to fund the dubious committee for another year—at a cost of \$686,700 to the taxpayers.

Opium Report—Cypriot President Makarios has confided to congressional narcotics experts that Turks on Cyprus are cutting down orange orchards and growing opium poppies.

While recognizing that the archbishop's charge may be self-serving, Rep. Lester L. Wolff (D-N.Y.) has directed his International Relations foreign policy planning subcommittee to look into the allegation and has asked for a report from the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Turkish opium traditionally has been the main source of U.S. heroin.

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