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# Time's Story Of Saigon Gold

New York

South Vietnamese officials tried to ship \$73 million worth of gold bullion — apparently belonging to President Nguyen Van Thieu and Cambodian President Lon Nol — to Switzerland, Time magazine said yesterday.

But the Balair airline, a charter affiliate of Swissair, refused to transport the gold out of Saigon, the weekly newsmagazine said.

According to the magazine, members of the South Vietnamese government asked Balair agents in late March if they would be willing to fly out "some personal belongings" of the Thieu family as well as personal effects of Lon Nol, who is

now in Hawaii.

When it turned out that the belongings were 16 tons of gold Balair refused.

The airline, Time said, was concerned that the gold might be part of South Vietnam's and Cambodia's official reserves.

The Vietnamese persisted until the airline pointed out that the cargo might be inspected when the plane stopped for refueling in Bangkok and Bahrain, Time said.

"At week's end the bullion was apparently still in Saigon, palletized and awaiting a more willing air carrier," Time said.

Reuters