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Cash Burned By Embassy In Saigon

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The U.S. embassy in Saigon burned \$5 million in U.S. currency immediately before the collapse of South Vietnam so it would not fall into Communist hands, a General Accounting Office report revealed today.

The \$5 million was part of an emergency shipment of \$12.5 million which Ambassador Graham Martin requested for severance pay to Vietnamese nationals two days before the government collapsed.

As of the date of the report, May 30, \$2.7 million of this emergency shipment was still unaccounted for.

Navy officials here told the GAO that \$4 million was paid out to U.S. employees, but other officials in Hawaii said \$1.3 million was actually disbursed—leaving \$2.7 million unexplained. Approximately \$3.5 million was shipped out of Vietnam before the fall.

Martin requested the \$12.5 million so that "something of value" could be given to Vietnamese employees of the United States.