Dutch central bank removes gold from New York

Nick Beams
6 September 2026

Two events in the past week have illustrated the growing lack of international confidence in the stability of the US financial and political system.

Last Wednesday the Dutch National Bank (DNB) revealed that between March and August it had moved part of its gold holdings from New York and Ottawa to London because of “increasing geopolitical unrest.”

This was followed by an announcement from the manager of Norway’s sovereign wealth fund that it was proposing an overhaul of its government bond holdings which could result in a cut to its stock of US Treasury bonds by as much as $80 billion as it looked to other kinds of debt which could bring a greater return.

The Dutch central bank said it had moved around 86 tonnes of its total gold holdings of 313 tonnes in the US and Canada and that it was “strengthening its crisis preparedness.”

The language used in the DNB statement was carefully guarded but it did not take too much reading between the lines to pick up the essential meaning. It said that gold held with the Bank of England was regarded as “the world’s most easily tradable gold and will therefore be the most readily available for DNB in a crisis situation. The gold reserves in New York and Ottawa cannot be utilised as quickly in such a situation.”

In its report on the move the *Financial Times* (FT) said it followed calls in Europe for repatriation of gold from the US amid warnings that “an unreliable American government under President Donald Trump may otherwise seize them amid growing transatlantic tensions.”

Last year, the Taxpayers Association of Europe sent letters to the finance ministers and central banks of Germany and Italy urging them to reconsider their gold holdings in New York. The president of the association, Michael Jäger, said “we are very concerned about Trump tampering with the Federal Reserve Bank’s independence.”

France already moved all its gold from the New York Fed between July 2025 and January 2026, with the governor of the French central bank at the time saying it was not politically motivated.

But others are pointing to this issue. Laurent Schwartz, president of the Paris-based National Gold Counter, which is involved in gold trading in France, told Agence France-Presse that central banks had been moving their gold reserves around over the past decade.

“The current political context in the United States might also push certain central banks into favoring other storage locations,” he said.

Apart from giving details about how the transfer was carried out—a mixture of physical movement and selling gold in New York and then buying it in London—the DNB statement made a significant comment, shared by other central banks, about the role of gold in the international monetary system.

“Keeping a large share of the gold reserves in London strengthens the function of gold as an anchor of trust. Gold is seen as the ultimate reserve asset because it is ideally suited to hedge extreme systemic risks.”

Ever since President Nixon removed the gold backing from the US dollar in August 1971 and the international monetary system was based on the dollar as a fiat currency—no longer backed by gold as the ultimate embodiment of value but by confidence in the US financial system—bourgeois economists and some who considered themselves to be Marxists have maintained that Marx’s analysis of the pivotal role of gold had been refuted.

But Marx’s analysis is being confirmed by what might be considered unlikely sources.

In an article in the FT earlier this month under the headline “Gold’s run isn’t done yet,” Bhanu Baweja, chief strategist at UBS Investment Bank, pointed to the rise in the price of gold, particularly after the decision of the US and the European powers to seize the financial assets of the Russian central bank held in Western banks at the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022.

As a result of this action, he wrote: “Reserve and asset managers globally were left confronting a simple question: if $630bn held in Treasuries, Bunds, gilts and other bonds could become inaccessible overnight, what constituted money? Their answer was gold.”

He also noted that a “more structural driver of gold has been the gradual erosion of confidence in US public finances”—a reference to the mounting national US debt now $40 trillion with no plan in sight to halt what is universally acknowledged as its “unsustainable” rise.

The enhanced role of gold and the erosion of confidence in US financial assets are expressed in facts and figures.

In June, the European Central Bank reported on a significant jump in the portion of gold in the reserves held by central banks.

It rose from 20 percent at the end of 2024 to 27 percent at the end of last year. The proportion of US Treasury bonds fell from 25 percent to 22 percent over the same period. The rest of the reserves were made up of dollar-denominated assets, coming in at 42 percent. Gold was now the second highest component of reserves after topping the euro in 2025.

In her foreword to the report, ECB President Christine Lagarde said: “Forces of fragmentation are becoming more pronounced. Geopolitical tensions continue to drive strong central bank demand for gold.”

The decision by the Norwegian sovereign wealth fund is also something of a vote of no confidence in government debt, particularly that of the US. In a letter to the finance ministry, last week, the fund said it was reducing the weight of government debt in its index from 70 percent to 50 percent—a reduction of about $106 billion, with most of it coming from US Treasuries.

Pointing to the issues motivating the decision, the FT commented: “The proposal comes amid mounting concerns over rising government debt levels and a global bond sell-off this year, as the US war with Iran fuels inflation fears.”