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WHITLAM BLAMES GREAT POWERS FOR CONTINUED VIETNAM CONFLICT

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[Text] Canberra, Apr 8 (AFP)--The war in Vietnam would have ended long ago but for the way the great powers had murderously fueled it, Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam said today. He told the House of Representatives the war had gone on "so long and so murderously" because of the support and equipment supplied by the United States to South Vietnam and by the Soviet Union and China to the North.

Mr Whitlam was answering an Opposition member who asked whether the Australian Government had used its friendly relationships with the Soviet Union and China to ask them to stop providing North Vietnamese regular troops in South Vietnam with arms and other support.

Mr Whitlam said he had in fact asked Peking, Moscow and Washington a number of times to "lay off". In a statement to the Parliament later, Mr Whitlam argued strongly against resumed intervention by the United States. He warned against acceptance of the argument that the United States would otherwise be regarded as an untrustworthy

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"What is the purpose of this attempt to blame the U.S. Congress and the American people for the debacle in which the Government of South Vietnam now finds itself," he said. "There can only be one motive--to shame the U.S. back into Indochina". He said the United States had fulfilled any obligations it had assumed to the Saigon government. The U.S. honor and interests now lay in helping rebuild a unified Vietnam.