

the House that this is the first I have heard of it. I would be very happy to confer with my colleague and find out exactly what the facts are.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

I was also informed this morning that the U.S. government had given the Akwesasne band council the military equipment in question for free. Given the threat of violence afflicting the Akwesasne community, is the minister prepared this very afternoon to contact Mr. Baker in the United States to ensure that this transfer of equipment is cancelled today? The equipment is there, on location in Akwesasne, and it is confirmed by the police forces!

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well, regarding these events, that the Prime Minister and I and everyone are against violence, at home or abroad. Also, arms control and arms control between countries is very important and a priority for this government.

I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I will find out the facts. The answer is the same in French; I will find out the facts and then answer the question.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of National Defence. It concerns the recent announcement of the purchase of helicopters and light armoured vehicles. Given the potential for untimely controversy, would it not have been better if the purchase had been made within the context of a clearly articulated defence policy which would have justified that purchase and a tendering process that was seen to be clear, transparent, and accountable?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, first of all the member mentioned two aspects of some recent announcements on purchases. Buying the vehicles in London, Ontario, only made sense since we bought some there last year. You want to run around with one set of spare parts, not two sets of spare parts. It is only common sense to do that and to try and keep things together. In the case of the helicopter purchase,

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we have gone to one helicopter. We will be retiring over time three helicopters. Therefore, again, we are consolidating and making a much more intelligent buy for the Armed Forces in its new mandate.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister does not even know how many helicopters they are going to buy, so it is difficult to trust that kind of judgment.

My second question is for the Minister of National Defence, if the Minister of National Defence is awake.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would put the question directly.

Mr. McCurdy: My supplementary question is this: would the minister not agree that it is a fair question for Canadians to ask how come it was so easy to so quickly spend \$1.8 billion for defence when we cannot afford day care and we have not yet developed a sensible civilian industrial policy?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, since the hon. member's question is about defence policy, not procurement, which happens to be the responsibility of another department, I would like to point out that since 1989 budget cuts at the Department of National Defence have totalled \$6 billion, and that in the last budget the department contributed \$2 billion toward bringing down the deficit. I believe the Department of National Defence is administered in such a way as to allow for the government's requirements in this respect. However, that does not mean we should not have a defence policy in this country, Mr. Speaker.

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[*English*]

CHINA

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Following the Tiananmen Square massacre, the then Secretary of State for External Affairs stated, and I quote directly: "Programs which benefit or lend prestige to the current hard line policies of the Chinese government should be avoided". Yet, the Minister for International Trade in his visit to China last week endorsed or supported China's membership in GATT, clearly a contradiction of that policy.