

the ghetto's 60,000 people were killed and the few thousand that survived were sent to death camps.

Fifty years later the Warsaw ghetto uprising and the heroism of the men, women and children who stood up against the attacking Nazis remains as an unforgettable example of human courage in the face of unspeakable evil. It was only one event in the nightmare of the Holocaust which saw the murder of six million Jews. The Warsaw uprising continues to serve as a powerful reminder of that systematic, terrible slaughter.

In commemorating the Warsaw uprising we must reaffirm our commitment to human rights. This 50th anniversary must not only be a time to remember but must also be a call to action. We must translate "never again" into concrete anti-racist action. We must redouble our efforts to fight racism and anti-Semitism in Canada and wherever it occurs throughout the world.

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• (1415)

PEACEKEEPING

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, on Good Friday in Victoria I was honoured to take part in welcome home ceremonies for the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry returning from peacekeeping duties in Croatia. Local residents are extremely proud of the work our peacekeeping forces do abroad.

Yesterday 135 Canadian soldiers received a hero's welcome in the war-torn city of Srebrenica. Canada's peacekeeping forces in Bosnia have entered the besieged city to evacuate injured Muslims and disarm the government garrison.

Our hearts are with these brave soldiers working amidst a tenuous ceasefire in this bitter conflict. While the ceasefire holds in Srebrenica, the fighting continues unabated elsewhere in Bosnia. Once again Canada's peacekeeping forces are front and centre on the world stage doing their best to protect and save lives.

I know all members of the House will join me in wishing our peacekeepers a safe and secure return to Canada at the end of their tour of duty. We are proud of the work they do on behalf of us all.

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I would like to ask the Prime Minister a question.

Last week, the Minister of Finance published a document announcing for the 10th or 12th time that the government's priority was to reduce the deficit, when we know very well that, for the last nine years, the government has run up deficits of over \$30 billion a year on average.

In presenting the budget in the next few days, does the government intend to cut a \$5.8 billion program to buy helicopters for the cold war with the Soviet Union when the Soviet Union no longer exists? Will the government accept the opposition's opinion and not buy these helicopters?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the minister did release a document that talks about economic policy in a world of change and about the deficit.

We know that under our friends, the deficit started from nearly zero and grew to \$38.5 billion, an increase of 300 per cent. Under this government, it has been cut in half, in terms of the gross national product, and has remained at \$30 billion or \$32 billion, but that is still too high. We have made very substantial progress in reducing the deficit and we did so by reducing the increase in program spending. Over a 15-year period, program spending had risen 13.8 per cent a year on average. This was reduced to 4.1 per cent over eight years and it is now 2.8 per cent. This is a spectacular turnaround.

Hopefully, this will continue with the finance minister's new budget, the deficit will eventually be eliminated and there will be a reasonable and effective approach to maintaining and reducing the national debt. That will not happen tomorrow but we are now going in the right direction.