

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The contract for supply of three Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS) aircraft was signed with M/s Elta, Israel on 5th March 2004. The first and second AWACS aircraft were delivered to the Indian Air Force on 25th May, 2009 and 25th March 2010 respectively as per the revised delivery schedule.

(b) The delivery of the third aircraft is planned for December 2010.

(c) Additional AWACS aircrafts are planned to be procured in the 12th, 13th and 14th Plans.

(d) The Defence Research and Development Organization is developing an indigenous Airborne and Early Warning system for use of the Indian Air Force.

Purchase of ULH for army operations

4348. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government has decided to go in for the purchase of Ultra Light Howitzers (ULH) an important element in the Indian artillery for operations particularly in connection to several areas of northern and eastern commands;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the purchase is now being processed as a single window vendor procurement; and

(c) whether these ULHs will be useful in the anti-naxalite operations?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) A procurement case for acquisition of Ultra Light Howitzers for the Indian Army is underway as per the provisions of Defence Procurement Procedure 2008. Under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS), the Ministry of Defence had also issued a Letter of Request for procurement of Ultra Light Howitzers to the Government of the USA in May 2009.

Acquiring of Swanky AW-101 helicopters

4349. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government will be acquiring 12 (three-engined) Swanky AW-101 helicopters from a unit of Italian Major Finmececnica for ferrying President, Prime Minister and other VIPs;

(b) whether this deal has been cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security despite objections from the Finance Ministry due to security concerns raised by the SPG as well as IAF; and