Thank you, very much.

Following up on the issue of Cuba, Secretary Albright, it is always

a pleasure to have you with us in our Committee. It is well

documented that one of the primary tools used by the Russians to

gather political, military, economic, commercial, and personal information

about U.S. citizens and activities is the Lourdes facility in

Cuba, yet it would appear that the Administration has followed a

policy of neglect, ignoring the impact of the Lourdes threat and allowing

it to escalate.

Last year, I asked you about the upgrades and the expansions

to this facility, and you said that no upgrades had been done. However,

defense publications, newspaper reports, academic studies,

published statements by U.S. and Russian officials all confirmed

the significant investments that the Russians have made to upgrade

and expand this spy station. Earlier this year, when you appeared

before this Committee in February, I asked you if you had

discussed the Lourdes facility with President Putin, and you did

not answer. I provided you with the questions in writing, and I still

have not received an answer.

In March of this year, several Members of Congress sent a letter

to the President with copies to you urging you to put a hold on the

debt rescheduling given to Russia’s operations of Lourdes. The argument

was if the Russian federation has 200 to 300 million dol-

lars a year to pay the Castro regime for the leasing of Lourdes,

then it has the funds to pay its debt to the U.S. No response to

us.

Then, on May 26, Chairman Gilman and Chairman Helms received

a transmittal letter advising them that a rescheduling

agreement had been signed in Moscow on that same day.

I would like to know the reasons why the U.S. rescheduled Russian

debt for the fifth time in spite of the fact that Russia spends

hundreds of millions of dollars on the leasing, upgrading and operation

of the Lourdes facility. Should the U.S. free up funds for Russia

to spy on American citizens? Do you agree that if Russia did

not spend these funds on the Lourdes facility then it would be in

a much better position to address its economic problems domestically

and meet its financial obligations to the U.S.?

On June 16, the State Department finally responded to our Congressional

inquiries, arguing equivalency to justify the rescheduling

agreement and the maintenance of the Russian intelligence facility

at Lourdes. I don’t know when the U.S. became a debtor nation to

Russia. I don’t know why we would say equivalency to justify this

rescheduling agreement. I would like to know what concrete steps

the Administration has taken to address the growing threat that

is posed by the Lourdes facility and that debt rescheduling process

and why isn’t it used as a tool to——