Thank you very much.

I know that, but in terms of their study, from at least

the UNICEF report I read, that dates back a bit. But if you could,

just for clarity?

That would be this February and March?

OK. Just so we have that.

I appreciate it.

The Committee will resume its sitting.

First of all, Secretary Welch, thank you for your patience. We do

appreciate your standing by during this series of votes we have on

the Floor. Chairman Gilman, unfortunately, has a delegation that

he is meeting with from one of the other countries, oh, from New

York State. So, again, I thank you for your patience.

I do have a couple of questions I would just like to pose. Back

on February 18th, I had sent a letter, as Subcommittee Chairman

of International Operations and Human Rights, to Secretary of

State Madeleine Albright, asking a number of very specific questions.

I mean, as I said in my opening comments, I am like many

others very torn by these reports of so many children dying.

While there may be some hyperbole, if there are just some children

dying, and any of this is attributable to our sanctions regime,

and we are not doing all that can be done to mitigate that outcome,

shame on us. So the question that I pose, and I would ask unanimous

consent that the letter be made a part of the record, and the

questions that are asked in that letter be considered by you, Secretary

Welch, as questions that we really would like to get on the

record as quickly as possible.

Just to ask a couple of questions that are of concern,

you mentioned that about, I think it was 10 percent of the oil-forfood

contracts are held up. As you probably know, on February 7th,

the Secretary, or the Director, I should say, Sevan, reiterated his

serious concern, and these are his words, ‘‘serious concern,’’ at the

persistent high level of holds placed on applications for humanitarian

supplies. I think the number you gave us is about 10 percent.

He also pointed out that there is currently a backlog of around

800 humanitarian and oil sector applications awaiting review. Is

that true? Are there that many that have not been approved? To

what do we attribute it? Is there a lack of staffing, an insufficient

number of people? What’s the holdup?

Please, order. This is a hearing. This is not a town

meeting. So I would ask you to refrain from any comments. You

can make them to the press, if you like, outside the door.

Personnel are actually deployed in this effort.

Do you suspect that you will actually increase that,

in order to accommodate this explosion of available cash and the

need?

If you could get back to us as to those plans, because

it would seem to me that the allocation of scarce resources is urgent,

especially given the implications of not doing it and the loss

of life, or at least the mitigation of health on the part of these kids.

The number 5,000, could you shed some light on the

veracity of that number? I tried, in questioning Mr. Conyers, and

he seemed to indicate that it is current and up to date, and, as of

this past February, there were another 5,000 children who have

died. Is this accurate? That is not to say that if it is 2,000, it is

OK. There is no acceptable number, from my point of view as well.

But we really need to have absolute clarity, as much as humanly

possible, as to what the real numbers are.

It terms of medicines, you pointed out that there

were, over the past three years, more than $1 billion worth of

medicines approved. I assume by ‘‘approved’’ you also mean imported?

Because you used the word ‘‘imported’’ before about the 50

million, or are they at some stage of getting into the country?

How does all of that relate to pre-war numbers? I

mean, was there an indigenous pharmaceutical industry at all in

Iraq? I do not know that. I really would like to know.

OK, that would be fine.

Do you know whether or not they were net or total

importers of all of their drug——

Let me just ask, are international humanitarian nongovernmental

organizations presently afforded full and unfettered

access to the areas of Iraq controlled by the government?

Thank you.

I would like to ask Mr. Sanford if he could take the Chair. Regrettably,

I have to leave myself. But I thank you, Secretary Welch,

for your testimony.