Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to my colleagues’

plea to this administration to make ending the genocide in Darfur a top priority.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, joining my colleagues, thanking them for all of the

work that they have done. The Congressional Black Caucus, led by

Mr. DONALD PAYNE, have done everything we could possibly do.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and other concerned Members

of Congress have written letters to the

Bush administration, letters to the United Nations, visited the United Nations on more than one occasion, met

with Kofi Annan. We have done everything we could possibly do. Each of us

individually have written letters. I wrote to the President back in 2004 and implored him to take action.

In July of 2004, I sent letters to the

other members of the United Nations Security Council, urging that the

United Nations take action to end the

slaughter in Sudan. This letter was

signed by 41 Members of Congress, including my good friend from across the

aisle, Congressman SPENCER BACHUS.

Last April, Members of Congress sent

a letter to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice expressing our support

for the appointment of a Special Envoy

for Sudan. Well, I understand 2 years

later, after the administration even admitted and agreed that genocide was

going on and after the Members of Congress have sent letters to the Secretary

of State and to the President, finally

an envoy is being sent to the Sudan. A

little bit late, but we are appreciative for that. We are desperate.

Also, last April the House of Representatives passed H.R. 3127, the

Darfur Peace Accountability Act by an overwhelming vote of 416–3. This bill

would impose sanctions on the Government of Sudan and block the assets and

restrict travel to individuals who are responsible for acts of genocide, war

crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. Unfortunately, the Senate has

yet to take up the bill. I understand that the Senate will be taking up the

bill, but they have stripped out an important part of the bill on divestment,

but we are desperate. Even with that part of it stripped out, we want this

bill passed. My colleague DONALD PAYNE who

helped to author this bill has done everything that he could possibly do to

get the Senate to move this bill. We humbly come before the people of this

country tonight, not only imploring the President of the United States to

use his bully pulpit to make this a priority, to talk with the Chinese, to talk

with whomever needs to be talked with, to get something done, to get

those troops up there to stop this genocide.

Earlier this year, I traveled to Sudan

as part of a bipartisan congressional delegation led by NANCY PELOSI, the

minority leader. We visited the refugee camps. As far as the eye could see,

there were crowds of displaced persons who had been driven from their homes,

living literally on the ground, the little tarps just covering them. It is unconscionable that this should continue.

On April 28, and again on May 16, several of my colleagues were arrested in

front of the Embassy of Sudan, protesting the genocide.

And as I said, yesterday, finally, Bush appointed a Special Envoy for

Sudan, and this is 2 years after the Bush administration determined that

genocide was taking place in Darfur.

Again, it is late, but we are appreciative; but we want to say in no uncertain terms, the President must lead

an all-out diplomatic offensive in support of a robust United Nations peace-keeping

force that will have the authority to protect the people of Darfur.

More than 450,000 people have died since 2003 as a result of the genocide in

Darfur. There are 2.5 million displaced

people in camps in Darfur and another 350,000 in refugee camps in neighboring

Chad. Almost 7,000 people are dying

every month in Darfur. There can be no doubt that what is taking place in

Darfur is genocide and the Government of Sudan is responsible.

Crimes against humanity in Darfur have escalated in recent months. Over

500 women were raped over the summer in one camp alone. There have been renewed attacks and aerial bombardment

and 12 humanitarian workers were killed, two of them in the last 4 weeks.

If the United Nations does not intervene in Darfur now, the death toll

could rise dramatically in the next few months. The world stood by and watched the

genocide that occurred in Rwanda. The world has noted over and over again

the atrocities of the Holocaust. Well, enough said.

Yet we cannot seem to get the international community to move fast enough to stop the

genocide that is taking place in Darfur.

The Bush Administration and the international community cannot continue to ignore

this genocide. The United Nations must put an end to these crimes before millions more men, women and children are allowed to die.