Mr. Speaker, I would like to

express my strong support for the Darfur

Peace and Accountability Act and urge my

colleagues to vote for it. This important bill

takes critical steps towards ending the genocide

in Darfur by authorizing the President to

provide assistance to expand the African

Union Mission in Sudan while also strengthening

sanctions on countries that provide military

assistance to Sudan.

The crisis in Darfur, Sudan began in February

2003 when two rebel groups emerged to

challenge the National Islamic Front government

in Darfur. Since then, over 300,000 people

have died and nearly 2 million have been

displaced from their homes. It is unfortunate

that it took the United States until July of 2004

to recognize that these events in Darfur constituted

genocide and it has taken until April of

2006 for the House of Representatives to consider

this bill. We have seen far too many

times the consequences of ignoring genocide

or failing to get involved quickly.

The fact is that while we take a crucial step

today, more remains to be accomplished to

ensure a lasting peace in the Darfur region of

Sudan. Yesterday, in the New York Times,

Jan Egeland, the U.N. under-secretary-general

for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief,

stated, ‘‘Many believe the problems are

over in Darfur. They are getting worse.’’ The

United States government must continue to

work in conjunction with the United Nations

and other allies to put pressure on the Sudanese

government to allow U.N. peacekeeping

forces into the country.

I have introduced legislation expressing disapproval

of the Arab League’s decision to hold

its 2006 summit in Khartoum, Sudan. The

world community needs to join us as one in

condemning the tragedy in Darfur and pressing

the Sudanese government to end it.

Mr. Speaker, the Darfur Peace and Accountability

Act is a crucial step towards ending

the violence. We need to remember, however,

that we have more to do to end this humanitarian

crisis. With nearly two million people

displaced from their homes and hundreds

of thousands dead, resolving this conflict

should be a priority for Congress and the Administration.

We cannot allow a tragedy of this

magnitude to occur in today’s world.