Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative

PAYNE for his leadership,

and for being that lone voice many,

many years ago, calling to our attention

the atrocities, the genocide, that

has been taking place in Darfur.

We have debated this genocide for

nearly 2 years now. It is time for action.

As we speak, the violence in

Darfur escalates while the hands of the

United Nations, quite frankly, are tied

by Sudanese President al-Bashir.

Mr. Speaker, this is the moment of

truth. The world is watching. Just yesterday,

the President announced at the

United Nations General Assembly that

Andrew Natsios will serve as the President’s

Special Envoy for Sudan. A special

envoy is long overdue.

The situation in Darfur has deteriorated

rapidly over the last few months.

Rapes have increased. There were

about 500 rapes over the summer in one

camp alone. Twelve humanitarian

workers have been killed, including

two in the last 4 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, 26,000 Sudan armed

forces are headed to Darfur for major

offensive. There has been renewed aerial

bombardment. Twelve years ago,

the world stood by when almost 1 million

people were slaughtered in Rwanda.

And for the most part the only

thing our government did was say ‘‘I’m

sorry,’’ and that was after the fact.

Now we have said, ‘‘Not on our

watch. We will not have another Rwanda,’’

so our credibility, quite frankly, is

on the line. We cannot let Darfur become

another Rwanda. Already too

many people, we are hearing upwards

of 400,000 to 450,000 people have died.

Too many women have been raped, too

many villages have been burned, and

too many people have been displaced.

I witnessed this ongoing tragedy on

two occasions. The first time was in

January of 2005 in a bipartisan delegation

under the leadership of Chairman

ED ROYCE. We visited the refugee

camps in Chad and went into Darfur

with two great humanitarian leaders,

Don Cheadle, the brilliant Academy

Award nominee, star of ‘‘Hotel Rwanda,’’

and also Paul Rusase-bi-gee-na

whose courage in Rwanda saved many,

many lives.

During that visit we saw children and

we talked to the children who were

traumatized. Everyone was traumatized.

You could see it in their eyes.

They were dazed. The children painted

pictures when we said what happened.

They painted pictures of airplanes and

helicopters with bombs dropping on the

villages. Then at the bottom of picture,

what was there but men on horseback

with guns and with machetes burning

down the villages and killing the people.

This is what children saw and what

they were communicating with us and

begging and pleading us to stop.

Most recently, under the great leadership

of Minority Leader NANCY

PELOSI, she led a bipartisan delegation,

we once again visited refugee camps in

another region of Darfur and saw the

same suffering. This was a year and a

half later, and it was escalating and

getting worse. We talked to people and

saw once again, genocide is taking

place right during our watch. We have

to be more about action and not just

about talk. We have to use every tool

available to end this genocide. That is

why we are doing everything we can

do.

We are frustrated by the slow action

of this Congress and especially the Senate.

The House passed the bipartisan

Darfur Peace and Accountability Act

in April. Who knows how many lives

would have been saved had that bill

been moved out of the Senate quickly?

Yes, I believe we have to hit Khartoum

where it hurts, and that is in

their pocketbook, and allow States to

divest of their pension funds in companies

with blood on their hands, companies

that have invested and are doing

business in the Sudan. You may remember

that divestment was a successful

tool in ending the apartheid regime

of South Africa.

Today, young people, State legislatures,

colleges, universities, States, Illinois,

New Jersey, Oregon and Maine,

have all passed legislation mandating

divestment of State funds from companies

that conduct business in the

Sudan. The divestment legislation in

California awaits signature of our Governor.

States like Massachusetts,

Rhode Island, North Carolina, Kansas,

Wisconsin, Indiana, Georgia, Maryland,

New York, Iowa and Texas, all of these

States have legislation, they are drafting

it or it is in place, to divest of

State funds from companies that conduct

business in the Sudan. It is a

shame that we can’t get this provision

in the bill or keep it in the bill as it

moves out of the Senate.

Additionally, Students Taking Action

Now: Darfur (STAND) are driving

their respective colleges and universities

to divest from companies doing

business in the Sudan.

And yes, we have introduced the

Darfur Accountability and Divestment

Act which applauds the divestment efforts

and provides preemption language

to protect their divestment activities.

And we also believe in this bill that

we are going to go a little bit further

and say the United States Government

prohibits contracts with any multinational

company doing business in the

Sudan if the nature of the business relationship

is with the national, regional,

and local Government of Sudan,

and many other aspects of really calling

out those companies who continue

to hide behind the shield of their business

operations and investment operations,

but really what they are doing

is contributing to the Sudanese Government

in their efforts to wipe out a

whole group of people.

We are not without options to stop

this genocide and the suffering in

Darfur. If we have the political will, we

can end the suffering. It is a desperate

situation. It is a humanitarian catastrophe.

We must insist upon a real political

settlement, a peace agreement

that goes far beyond the May 6 agreement.

We have to ensure that Darfurians

return to their villages quickly and reclaim

their lives. We have to bring the

perpetrators of this State-sponsored

genocide, and that is what it is, State sponsored

genocide; we have to bring

them to justice. I thank Mr. PAYNE for

his leadership.