Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman for yielding. If I may, I

would like to begin by acknowledging

the work of the gentleman from New

Jersey. He is a former chair of the Congressional

Black Caucus and a senior

member of the Committee on International

Relations. He has indicated he

has traveled to Sudan on a number of

occasions. He has met with former

slaves. He has pressed this Congress; he

has pressed the administration. I have

been bothered for years by slavery

around the world. The gentleman has

indicated that it is not confined to

Sudan, tragically. But I have been, as

he has been, particularly drawn to

slavery in an African nation. He and I

are two of almost 40 Members of this

body who are direct descendents of African

slaves, so it is perhaps natural

that we would be drawn especially to

slavery in any part of Africa.

Because I had been so concerned and

could think of very little to do, I

passed the gentleman in the hall and

indicated to him that perhaps he and I

might do a Special Order, because I felt

so powerless and I felt his leadership

and knew that there were many others

like him; but that this problem simply

had not had the voice that I think it is

beginning to get tonight. Our voices

represent the entire Congressional

Black Caucus, many Members of this

House and the Senate, as I shall indicate

in a moment.

I should also acknowledge the work

of our former colleague here in the

House who is now in the Senate, Sam

BROWNBACK. I have not spoken to Senator

BROWNBACK, but I do know that he

has taken slavery, and especially slavery

in Sudan, as a cause of his own. He

is not of our party, but the gentleman

from New Jersey and I cannot imagine

that slavery would be a partisan issue,

and we are so pleased to see that there

has been bipartisanship on this issue.

This is, after all, April 4.

April 4 is a somber day for America,

because it is the day, of course, that

Martin Luther King, Jr., was gunned

down. So it is a day that lives in infamy,

and it lives in remembrance. I

have just come from a radio program

where I was speaking to young people

who know nothing of that day, but if

there is any way to remember that

day, it is certainly to remember that

slavery still exists in this world, and

discrimination and racism still exist in

this country.

Mr. Speaker, as we look to Africa in

ways that were unheard of, such as the

Africa trade bill, we should also look at

the forgotten submerged people of Africa

who cannot think of trade today,

but can only think of being traded person

to person. We are, after all, more

than 130 years after the 13th amendment

to the Constitution was passed,

and many of us in this country thought

that that was the end of slavery and

the last we would hear of it. The fact is

that in our own homeland in Africa,

there still exists slavery.

I would say to the gentleman from

New Jersey, what heartens me is the

joint resolution that has been passed

by the House and the Senate deploring

government-sponsored slave raids in

southern Sudan. This resolution was

passed by this House, I believe it was in

June, calling upon the Sudan government

to cease the practice of slavery.

It passed in this House by a vote of 416

to 1, and the Senate has passed a similar

bill, or a similar resolution, 97 to 2.

So we have the administration, we

have both houses, and we have both

parties raising their voices this

evening. The gentleman from New Jersey

and I speak for the Members of this

House and the Senate, we feel confident

to say, when we say that slavery

exists in Sudan and slavery will not be

condoned in Sudan by public officials

in this country or by the American

people.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the

slavery is a by-product of the civil war

there that has gone on for 32 of the 42

years that the Sudan has been independent,

and that if we talk to people

there of the government in northern

Sudan, they will say that they do not

have slavery; there may have been

some hostage-taking. Well, Mr. Speaker,

when they, in fact, take women,

children, young boys, work them, engage

in rape, people who were not involved

in combat, you are not taking

hostages, you are taking slaves.

Before I turn back to the gentleman

from New Jersey, I would just like to

indicate one or two features of the resolution

that we passed. In our resolution,

virtually unanimously in this

House, we indicated that there was a

genocidal war in southern Sudan, a

war, in other words, to wipe out the

people or, in a real sense, to convert

them culturally and religiously away

from their own religion. There are

Christians and animists.

In our resolution, we indicate that

the declaration of principles of the

intergovernmental authority for development

mediators is the most viable

negotiating framework to resolve the

problems of Sudan. We talk about the

prolonged campaign and human rights

abuses of the National Islamic Front

government. We indicate what is surely

the case and must be acknowledged,

and that is that the gentleman from

New Jersey and I, and the House and

the Senate, and the Republicans and

the Democrats, do not stand alone,

that the National Islamic Front government

is considered by much of the

world community to be a rogue state

because of its support for international

terrorism and its campaign of terrorism

and slavery against its own people.

Those words need to be said. We do

not need to soft pedal what is happening

in Sudan. We need to wake up

people here and around the world to

what is happening so that we can all

engage in whatever is necessary to

bring it to an end.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman

from New Jersey.

I thank the gentleman

for yielding, Mr. Speaker.

The gentleman has indicated that he

has seen with his own eyes and felt the

terror himself. That is an amazing experience,

especially since there have

been denials by the government, even

some in this country, that there is

slavery in the Sudan. This gentleman

has seen it with his own eyes.

Later on, I would like to indicate

some of the testimony from ex-slaves,

former slaves, in the Sudan so as to

make more vivid why this is such a

pressing issue for decent people around

the world.

The gentleman has indicated that

there are schoolchildren in this country

so moved that they have started

their own abolitionist movement. We

have churches and other Americans

who just feel they cannot stay still.

Actually, we do not know how many

slaves there are. They are African

slaves, we know that. The estimates go

from 20,000 to 100,000. With all the

chaos and civil war in Sudan, no one

has kept a record, although, amazingly,

there are villages where they literally

keep close records of people who

have been stolen.

We know they are Christians and

they are animists. Animism simply is a

kind of native African religion. These

are the two groups that are targeted

here. The Sudan is 70 percent Muslim.

Only about 5 percent are Christian. Apparently

they are seen as some kind of

threat.

What we have in the Sudan is a kind

of cultural war, a desire to wipe out

the culture of these people, the religion

of these people. Nobody should feel as

strongly as Americans, where people

fled precisely because people were trying

to convert them to a religion that

was not their own. If they have a religion,

they have to remain with that religion,

so a civil war breaks out.

When we say to people, you cannot

have your religion or you cannot have

your culture, you have to have some

other culture, as the gentleman has

said, this has been going on for a very

long time, here. In a real sense, the

animus between these two groups precedes

their independence, and is ancient.

Nevertheless, it has become absolutely

intolerable in our world today.

The antislavery movement, as it

were, involves everything from classrooms

and schoolchildren to a Swiss

group that makes it its business to go

around essentially buying back slaves.

They have freed, that is to say, bought

back, upward of 20,000 slaves.

At the same time, I have to report

that the antislavery movement that

buys back slaves has become controversial,

at least in some official circles.

When we hear that people are buying

back slaves, the first instinct is to

say, thank goodness. UNICEF and some

others have indicated some compunctions,

however, about buying back

slaves, because they think that it motivates

the slave raiders to capture

more African slaves and drives up the

prices.

We can imagine, though, how the

schoolchildren and groups who are buying

back slaves respond to that. Nobody

else is doing anything about it. If

you were a slave, I guess you would figure

if anybody comes along that can

get me out of this and free me, then

please let them do so.

Until we find a governmental solution,

we are leaving these slaves either

to rot in slavery or to some self-help

escape, or, of course, to whatever help

private individuals can bring to them.

The argument on the other side, from

those who have been buying slaves, is

that there has been no increase in the

slave trade as a result of buying back

slaves. In fact, they say that during period

of intense liberation, when slaves

had been brought back in large numbers,

the raids have decreased.

I am not certain, and there are no official

objective observers that can tell

us one way or the other. I do know that

the slaves are between a rock and a

hard place. Nobody has come up with a

solution. We can understand why people

would step forward and say, we

have to do whatever we can do.

Please remember slavery in this

country. Please remember John Brown.

Please remember the abolitionists, who

were considered extremists because

when slavery was the official policy of

the United States and nobody would do

anything about it, people were driven

to do whatever they could.

At least what is happening with

churches here, with the schoolchildren,

with the Swiss movement that is buying

back slaves, is peaceful and is liberating

people. It puts a price on people’s

heads, but they, of course, are free.

The gentleman has also spoken about

another movement. There is the liberation

movement and there is the divestment

movement. I agree with him, that

at the very least the divestment movement

is called for. I do believe that

with what has happened in New Jersey

to divest in Talisman Energy, which is

Canada’s oldest independent oil company,

what has happened there is likely

to catch fire everywhere else.

In neighboring New York, the first

elected black official State-wide, the

Comptroller, Carl McCall, is leading

his State towards the same kind of disinvestment

that New Jersey has begun.

I must say to the gentleman from New

Jersey, I cannot help but believe that

it is the gentleman’s work that has led

his State to be the first to come forward

and say to Talisman, not in this

country. I think the gentleman deserves

much of the credit for what has

happened in New Jersey.

I want to tell the gentleman that he

has inspired me to look into the pension

funds of the District of Columbia,

and to ask my counsel and my mayor

to look to see if we are invested in Talisman

Energy. I hope that, at least out

of what we are doing this evening, and

out of what the gentleman has encouraged

to happen already in New Jersey,

we can encourage Americans and others

around the world to engage in a divestment

movement.

I do not know if there are other companies.

Talisman Energy has, of course,

caught the attention of the country,

and they deserve the disinvestment

they are receiving.

I would say to the gentleman, I do

have more to say, but in the spirit of

going back and forth in the colloquy in

which we are engaged, I yield back to

the gentleman at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank

the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr.

PAYNE) for yielding. Once again, I

thank him for his consistent leadership

on this issue, for his work not only in

the Congress but throughout the Nation.

This evening, what he is doing, I

think, his 10,000 men to join him, his

10,000 women, I think has indeed some

possibility. I certainly want to join.

The gentleman knows that the Khartoum

government had long denied that

there was slavery at all in the Sudan.

It is interesting that just last year,

when the evidence began to be overwhelming

because journalists from

around the world had documented endlessly

the slavery because the slaves

themselves were offering irrefutable

testimony, then Khartoum said that,

yes, there is slavery but only independent

Arab tribes operating without

Khartoum’s approval are engaged in

slavery.

I mean, that is like the United States

Government, I will say to the gentleman

from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE),

telling us in 1920 that these people who

are going around lynching blacks are

operating without their approval. All

they had to do was arrest someone. I

think the message would have gone

throughout the south. There would

have been thousands of black people

who would have been saved from lynching.

The fact is that this is a militaristic

government. If it wanted to stop the

slavery, it knows how to do so. It does

not want to do so. It condones it. It is

involved up to the teeth in this cultural

war. It is a civil war, and their

way of dealing with it is to strip these

people of their religion and of their

culture. That is uncivilized. That cannot

be condoned anywhere on the planet

under any circumstances today.

I would say to the gentleman from

New Jersey that I would like to close

and give him the opportunity to close

this special order by simply referring

to some of the testimony so that it will

be clear that we are speaking here for

slaves and ex-slaves who cannot speak

for themselves, who do not have access

to the podium that we come before tonight.

I was particularly struck by words

from the Calgary Herald in Africa, December

26, and I would like to quote because

this was an article that involved

an interview of a former slave

Natalinia Yoll. Here the article said,

‘‘She could hear the galloping horses in

the distance. She had lost her shoes in

her rush to escape the Arab marauders.

As she headed for the deep undergrowth,

she knew she would eventually

be safe and avoid being taken as a

slave.

‘‘But she was still running, and

screaming, trying to find out if her

mother was close by. Looking back

would cost her precious seconds.

‘‘Running, running, running. Then, as

though someone had made an opening,

she found solace in the deep, thick

bushes. Alone, scared, tired, but safe—

for now.’’

Running, Mr. Speaker, like an animal.

This was a human being. Somehow

this reporter makes me feel what

it must have been like.

He goes on to say, ‘‘This is where she

would remain for days, weeks, until it

was safe to return to her village. This

is where other members of her village

would join her.’’

The woman is now married. She married

an African in Nairobi, Kenya.

These are her own words: ‘‘Will I ever

be able to sleep without disruption?

The memories are vivid, I can still

smell the horses chasing me. How can I

possibly forget?’’

She indicates that the marauders

take young boys. They want young

boys, because they want young boys

who have no memory of their culture

so they can completely convert them,

get them to speak another language,

Arabic, as it turns out, get them to forget

that they ever had their own religion.

Then they take girls and women,

because girls and women are always

helpless in every society, or at least

more helpless than men. Then they sell

them, apparently, to Arab merchants

and put them to work on farms.

This woman, Natalinia Yoll, spoke of

being placed in a circular compound,

fenced off with thorns. She talks of vile

health conditions. She spoke of working

with livestock.

Now I am quoting her, ‘‘Escape is the

most important issue on their minds.’’

‘‘Every day they plan, strategize. Getting

out of this hell hole is the only

thing that occupies their thoughts. But

so many don’t make it.’’

Natalinia Yoll’s father and two

brothers did not make it.

I am particularly moved by the

Dinka youth who apparently are

among the targeted prey, because these

children are captured so young that

their marauders turned them against

their own people. They are enslaved so

young, they do not have any idea where

they came from, where their birth family

might be, so they simply speak the

oppressor’s language. Did not we learn

to speak the oppressor’s language? We

have forgotten the language of our

forbearers. We know, we feel what that

is about.

I do want to say something about

after freedom. One would think, well,

when people are free, that is it. These

people, when they are free, when they

are bought back apparently are terribly

damaged, humiliated, broken.

They are often walked back to their

villages in 110-degree heat. They are

surely grateful to be freed. But they

walk hundreds of miles back from the

north to their home region that they

have been bought for $50 a head. They

are stripped of their religion.

They go back, not at all certain that

they will remain free. The marauders

can come again. They can be sold back

again. That is why people are buying

these slaves.

Mr. Speaker, when you face this kind

of desperation, at least in the United

States, if you could get North, away

from slavery, apparently, if you get

South, back to where you came from,

the marauders can come and get this

again. This is intolerable. This is hell.

What to do? I do want to say something

about that. Our country is trying.

Obviously, we cannot go there.

This is not a situation where we can

simply storm the country and do something

about it. This is not that kind of

situation. It is not what the American

people want, and that is not what we

want.

I do applaud Secretary Albright for

what she is trying to do. There is some

notion that one way to, perhaps, bring

Sudan to its senses, make it into a civilized

nation, would be to reward the

country for progress towards any peace

that it moves toward. If you see them

ending human rights abuses by easing

off the economic sanctions imposed in

1997, I have to say one would have to

see very strong evidence in order for

any of us to believe that that is what

should happen, but you have to begin

to find a way.

Ms. Albright has suggested that this

country would pick up the costs of the

next round of regional peace talks in

Sudan, and the administration did appoint

a peace envoy to Sudan, but, of

course, that did not get very far, because

the adamants against moving towards

peace could not be stronger.

I do want to end, finally, with what I

have to say with some evidence of what

it is like to be a slave in Sudan. Here

I am quoting from a slave, we were

roped together, 16 people to a rope, and

marched to the land of the Arabs.

There some of us were sold to a farmer,

Ali Mohammed, who made us servants

to his wives, Fatima and Zenib. I

worked dawn to night but was never

given even a coin. My food was table

scraps. Zenib beat me with a stick if I

moved too slowly or broke a jug. But

Fatima was kind and took pity. Once

she gave me a sugar piece.

Another detail that particularly

strikes home, as far as I am concerned,

they said I must be a Muslim, that I

must pray on Fridays, and that also I

must be cut like an Arab lady. This exslave

is talking about female circumcision.

Reverend William Chan, a Dinka

Roman Catholic priest, remains there

and somehow has survived in Southern

Sudan. Mr. Speaker, I would say with

gratitude to the gentleman from New

Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that I would like to

end with words from this priest. Reverend

William Chan, we pray for our

brothers and sisters who are slaves. We

pray that the ears of the world will one

day open to the cries from Sudan. We

rejoice in the knowledge that God, our

father, hears us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman

from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).