Mr. Speaker, I thank

our distinguished ranking member for

yielding me this time and for his leadership

on this very important issue.

In the very short time allotted to me,

I want to commend my colleagues for

being so vocal on this issue at this

time and, frankly, for a very long time.

I have said before when we had another

resolution, an earlier resolution, on the

floor that there is no Member of Congress

that I hold in higher esteem than

the gentleman from Virginia (Mr.

WOLF) for his work on human rights

throughout the world. And he has been

a leader on this issue, visiting over the

years, warning America, warning the

world of the impending disaster that

was there in one form or another over

time.

And the gentleman from New Jersey

(Mr. PAYNE) has taken the lead in the

Committee on International Relations

on this important issue, and it has not

been because Members of Congress, especially

the Congressional Black Caucus

in the Congress, have not blown the

whistle, have not sounded the alarm,

have not called the public’s attention

to what is happening there.

And the gentleman from California

(Mr. LANTOS), of course, as the cochair

of the Human Rights Caucus, has been

singing this song for a very long time.

Why do people not listen?

When the tragedy occurred in Rwanda,

everyone was embarrassed, sad, and

contrite and said that it was not going

to happen again. Never again could we

ignore all of God’s children being destroyed

by each other and sit back and

watch it happen to the tune of hundreds

of thousands of people.

We have now been told that 30,000

people will die in the Sudan, and if we

do not act, then hundreds of thousands

more will die. How can we tolerate

this? How can we call ourselves persons

who care about every person living on

the face of the Earth and not care

about each and every one of these children

and their parents and their families

in the Sudan?

The issue today is one that we have

discussed before. Is it ethnic cleansing

or is it genocide? And if it is genocide,

then it should provoke a reaction from

all of the countries of the world who

consider themselves civilized and respectful

of human rights and, quite

frankly, those of us and I know the motivation

of the gentleman from Virginia

(Mr. WOLF) and some of our other

colleagues on both sides of the aisle in

this regard springs from our belief that

all of these people are God’s children,

worthy of respect.

The Bible tells us that to minister to

the needs of God’s creation is an act of

worship; to ignore God’s creation,

which are these children, is to dishonor

the God who made them. Right now,

the world is dishonoring God. We are

not committing acts of worship; we are

committing acts of negligence.

It is genocide, and the perpetrators of

this genocide sit with impunity in

Khartoum and say they are engaged in

all of this as a matter of self-defense. Is

it self-defense to rape women five, six

times over again so that they cannot

even go home to their husbands in a society

which finds that unforgiveable on

the part of the woman? Is it self-defense

to have children starve because

food cannot get through?

Seeing the pictures of those children

challenges the conscience of the world,

and yet we are having a debate on semantics

in the world. But not in this

House. In this House we know it, we

call it for what it is.

As the gentlewoman from California

(Ms. LEE) said, a calculated, focused,

intended elimination of these people;

and that very clearly spells out what

the definition of genocide is and how

what is happening in the Sudan meets

that standard and therefore should invoke

certain actions by the rest of the

world.

We all believe very strongly that

something has to be done. But in light

of what we said after Rwanda, we are

considered hypocritical or inconsistent

or just with very poor memory if we do

not act upon this now. We must all answer

for the genocide that is happening

in the Sudan.

So I commend my colleagues for

their tremendous leadership. The gentleman

from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE),

the gentleman from California (Mr.

LANTOS), the Black Caucus, the gentleman

from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), and

others have worked so hard on this for

such a long time. The gentleman from

Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) was just there

last weekend and brings back personal

stories of what he saw. So I thank

them. Any one of us who wants something

to happen there is deeply in their

debt, as are the people of the Sudan.

We must make a difference on this. I

thank them for taking these steps to

do so.