Mr. President, I rise

today in support of the amendment offered

by the Senator from New Jersey,

Senator MENENDEZ. Senator MENENDEZ

is carrying on a great tradition. His

predecessor, Senator Jon Corzine, now

Governor of New Jersey, showed a special

interest in the genocide which is

occurring in Darfur in Africa. I cannot

say how many times Senator Corzine

came to the Senate to raise this issue.

I am glad Senator MENENDEZ has the

same intensity and the same commitment

Governor Corzine showed in the

Senate. He has evidenced it by this

amendment which adds an additional

$60 million for peacekeeping forces.

I have spoken in the Senate many

times about the Darfur crisis. I say

that with some embarrassment. It is

unfortunate that I still have to return

to the Senate time after time, month

after month, year after year. While we

debate, people die. What is happening

in Darfur is a shameful situation for

any country in the world, shameful for

those who live in peace and in powerful

countries for not doing more.

First, let me salute this administration.

Though I disagree with the Bush

administration on so many things, I

have been respectful of the fact from

the beginning, under Secretary of

State Colin Powell and now Secretary

of State Condoleezza Rice, they have

not pulled any punches. They have said

from the outset what is occurring in

Darfur is nothing short of genocide.

That is a stark departure from what

occurred under the Clinton administration,

an administration which I admired

and worked with, but during the

Rwanda genocide they were reluctant

to use the word. So many times our

Secretary of State and others within

the administration were pinned down:

Was Rwanda a genocide? And even

while people were losing their lives in

that African nation, they refused to

use the word.

The reason is because it carries with

it so much moral import, so much responsibility.

Once deciding a genocide

is occurring in some part of the world,

what, then, must we do? Under the

Genocide Convention, we are to step

forward. The civilized family of nations

is to step forward to stop the genocide

in place and to protect the innocent

people.

For several years, though we have declared

it genocide, we have not done

nearly as much as we should. We have

relied on a small and somewhat impotent

group of African Union soldiers

who may be trying to do their best but

who are completely outmanned by the

jingaweit and other violent actors in

that nation who take advantage every

day of the poor people of Darfur.

Last week, I went back to my alma

mater, Georgetown University, here in

Washington, DC, and I spoke to a group

of students. It was a great night. I have

not been back at campus in that capacity.

It was great to speak to them. As

the students came up to ask questions,

a group of students came forward and

said, We are a student group on this

campus genuinely interested in the

genocide in Darfur. We are planning a

rally in Washington—this last Sunday—

and we want to know what you

are going to do about it, Senator.

It was a legitimate question, one

which I answered by saying I had done

some things, but I need to do more. I

offered an amendment to the bill now

pending to add $50 million to help move

in a U.N. peacekeeping force that will

augment the African Union force and

give some power to this effort to protect

these poor innocent people.

This weekend, on the National Mall

in Washington, at the Federal Plaza in

Chicago, and in 16 other cities across

our country, tens of thousands of people

gathered to protest the ongoing

genocide in Darfur. As the Washington

Post noted, the gathering of people on

The Mall was one of the most diverse

in history. The crowd was composed of

people from all walks of life: Jews,

Christians, Muslims, liberal, conservatives,

teenagers, and members of the

‘‘greatest generation.’’ They gathered

under many different signs but many

contained the same message: Save

Darfur. That is simple. That is powerful.

That is our moral responsibility, to

save Darfur.

Once again, we have fallen short. We

promised that once we declared genocide,

we would act. We said after the

genocides of recent memory, it would

never again happen in our time. Sadly,

it has. And things are getting worse instead

of better. Violence is continuing.

The Sudanese Government is blocking

the preparations for the U.N. mission

and peace talks have stalled.

Last week, there was an announcement

in the paper which troubled me.

The World Food Program, one of the

most important programs in the world

to feed needy people, announced it was

forced to cut food rations in Darfur in

half. More than 6 million people across

Sudan require food aid, more than any

other country on Earth. The World

Food Program estimates it needs approximately

$750 million to feed them

and it does not have the money. The

United States has provided $188 million;

the European Union, almost nothing.

Libya is the only member of the

Arab league to step up.

This has to change. We can and

should do more and so should the rest

of the world. It is bad enough to stand

by without taking appropriate action

to stop the violence of genocide. But

how can we have on our conscience

that these poor people, these children,

these families, dispossessed and living

in fear, will now slowly starve to death

on our watch?

Several amendments have been filed

to this emergency supplemental bill

that addressed Darfur. I am proud to

cosponsor them. On this amendment by

Senator MENENDEZ of New Jersey, I ask

unanimous consent to join as a cosponsor.

His amendment increases

funding for international

peacekeeping efforts by $60 million.

Another amendment that has been

filed authorizes the Department of Defense

to assist NATO in peacekeeping

efforts in Darfur. The third sets aside

funds for a special envoy to be named

to play the role that former Senator

John Danforth of Missouri played so effectively.

Let me say parenthetically,

he is a great man. I am honored to call

him a friend. He accepted this assignment

when he could have returned to

the peace and solitude of his retired

life in St. Louis, but leaving the United

Nations he went on to Darfur. That

speaks volumes about this man’s commitment

to the suffering of the world

that he did it.

Now we have an amendment before

the Senate asking that another envoy

be sent by the United States, a person

of the caliber of John Danforth, who

can do his best to try to bring some

peace to that region.

The situation in Darfur represents a

massive humanitarian catastrophe, one

that is ongoing, one that is happening

on our watch. As we stand to make

these speeches in the comfort and security

of the Senate, people are literally

dying, being raped, and starving to

death in Darfur.

Over the past 3 months alone, resurging

violence in Darfur has forced

200,000 people from their homes. Onethird

of them are cut off from any humanitarian

aid. In addition, Human

Rights Watch has reported the Sudanese

Government launched a new offensive

in southern Darfur last week. The

government troops reportedly used helicopter

gun ships against a defenseless

village in south Darfur where thousands

of displaced Darfurians sought

refuge. Can you imagine the horror of

that scene as helicopter gun ships

sprayed these poor helpless people?

The African Union mission in Darfur

has 7,000 peacekeepers; 7,000 men in

uniform to guard an area the size of

Texas. But a Texas without roads, a

Texas without bridges, a Texas without

communication. They cannot end this

genocide by themselves.

Unfortunately, while violence in

Darfur escalates, the news on the prospects

of peace, talks between the Government

of Sudan and the rebel groups,

is very discouraging. The talks have

dragged on for 2 bloody years. They

were set to conclude on Sunday, but in

the absence of an agreement, they have

been extended another 48 hours. The

prospects for an accord seem dim.

Khartoum so far has also refused to

allow a U.N. assessment team into

Darfur to prepare for a mission there.

The Sudanese Government launched

a war on its own people for 3 straight

years. They cannot be allowed to dictate

terms to the United Nations. Hundreds

of thousands of lives hang in the

balance in Darfur. We should appoint

that special envoy, someone of the

stature, the dedication, and wisdom of

John Danforth, to try to advance the

peace process. The United States must

engage the other members of the

United Nations Security Council to put

real pressure on the Government of

Sudan.

One of the troubling aspects is that

many believe that the major countries

of the world are pulling their punches

and not holding Sudan accountable because

Sudan has oil deposits. Once

again, our foreign policy is being affected,

if not dictated, by energy reserves

in Africa, as it is in so many

other parts of the world.

What a grim reminder of how important

it is for the United States to move

to energy independence so we can stand

up for the values we need without sacrificing

all-important energy for our

own economy and that other countries

can step forward and make the right

decision in terms of the morality and

values of the world rather than gauging

the impact it will have on their oil

imports.

We have to work with our European

allies to persuade China and Russia to

set aside their objections to U.N. action.

We should pass the amendments before

us this week on the supplemental

appropriations bill, and the Darfur

Peace and Accountability Act should

be signed into law. We should continue

to support the African Union mission

in Darfur, while leading efforts to ensure

that NATO and the United Nations

take up the peacekeeping mission

in Darfur.

Three years of genocide—3 years

after our declaration that a genocide

was occurring right here on our

watch—3 years is too long.

I echo the thousands of people who

gathered across America on Sunday—

the students from Georgetown University,

the students from other universities

across this country, and many

other caring people who came forward.

I urge the Senate to join them to save

Darfur.