Mr. President, since returning

to session, much of our discussion

has once again been dominated by

Iraq. Given the tragedy of the administration’s

Iraq policy and the need to

change course, this is understandable.

Yet Iraq’s dominance has meant that

many other critical foreign policy

issues have been ignored or

marginalized. From Latin America to

Russia, this administration has failed

to develop or implement any kind of

coherent strategy.

Similarly, the crisis in Darfur demands

more attention. For 4 years, the

world has watched this tragedy. That is

right—for 4 long years. Sadly, during

this time the world has mostly stood

by while yet another genocide unfolded

before its eyes. Many of us on both

sides of the aisle and in the international

community have repeatedly

called for greater U.S. and global action.

President Bush has rightly called the

situation in Darfur genocide. New British

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has

also said that,

Yet, despite these statements,

ultimately we have not done enough.

Today, we are at a critical juncture

in Sudan. The genocide in Darfur has

increasingly become a complex conflict

between many factions. Refugees have

spilled into neighboring countries and

humanitarian workers are increasingly

at risk. And just the other day, a rebel

group brutally killed 10 African Union

peacekeepers in a surprise raid. Sadly,

the cost in lives, destruction, and

human misery has been immeasurable.

In late July the U.N. Security Council

voted to implement a significantly

increased United Nations-African

Union peacekeeping force. This peacekeeping

force is desperately needed,

and the United States should work

with the U.N. and the global community

to make sure it is implemented as

soon as possible. We in the Senate

should also ensure that adequate funds

are available to help pay for this critical

mission. But the peacekeepers are

only one important step. Sudan also

needs a long-term political agreement

among its many factions.

Upon taking office in January of this

year, U.N. Secretary General Ban Kimoon

said that ending the violence in

Darfur was going to be one of his top

priorities. I spoke to him in July about

our shared concern and commend him

for advancing the peacekeeping and

diplomatic efforts. I believe his tireless

work has made an important difference.

In early September, his efforts

resulted in the announcement of formal

peace talks to begin later this

month between the various factions

and the Sudanese Government.

These negotiations will be a critical

step and deserve our strongest support.

As Secretary Ban said during his recent

trip,

Finally, we must hold Sudanese

President Bashir to his commitment to

allow peacekeepers and participate in

the peace talks.

Early statements by the Government

of Sudan said that it would ‘‘contribute

positively to secure the environment

for the negotiations’’ and ‘‘facilitate

the timely deployment’’ of the 26,000

member peacekeeping force. But we

have heard these commitments before

and then watched as President Bashir

has continued fostering violence.

I, therefore, think it is critical that

we maintain pressure on the Sudanese

Government to honor its commitments.

The administration should continue

its diplomatic efforts, and at the

same time the Congress should advance

bipartisan legislation that I and others

have introduced to increase economic

pressure on the regime.

I commend Chairman DODD and the

Banking Committee for holding a hearing

yesterday that focused on how best

to apply such pressure, and I look forward

to working with my colleagues to

prepare legislation that would impose

sanctions on, bar Federal contracting

with, and authorize divestment from

organizations that support the regime.

It is critical that the Sudanese Government

understand that a lack of cooperation

with the peacekeepers or the

upcoming peace negotiations will increase

the possibility of such legislation

being enacted.

Sadly, we have every reason to be

skeptical of the regime’s intentions.

For example, after agreeing to the

peace talks, the Government of Sudan

brazenly appointed former Interior

Minister Ahmad Harun one of two Sudanese

officials wanted by the International

Criminal Court for war

crimes—to lead a committee to investigate

human rights abuses. As Interior

Minister, Mr. Harun helped fund, recruit,

and arm the jingaweit militia

which was directly involved in perpetuating

the genocide in Darfur. Mr.

Harun’s place is on trial in The Hague,

not investigating violence he helped

perpetuate.

Equally troubling are continued attacks

on international aid workers as

well as recent indications that Sudan

has started placing restrictions on

early efforts to deploy U.N. forces.

Mr. President, the stakes are too

high and the humanitarian crisis has

dragged on too long to allow any further

backsliding by the Sudanese Government.

We must see the immediate

deployment of the peacekeeping force

and a concerted global effort at supporting

a long-term political settlement.