Mr. President, I commend

Senator FEINGOLD and Senator

BROWNBACK and our colleagues for raising

this issue not just on the floor of

the Senate but also across our Nation,

because it is an issue of enormous importance

and consequence, as it should

be for all Americans and for people all

over the world.

It has been 10 years since the Rwanda

genocide. A decade ago, 8,000 Rwandans

were being killed every day. Yet the

international community was silent.

We did not stop the deaths of 800,000

Tutsis and politically moderate Hutu,

in spite of our commitment that genocide

must never again darken the annals

of human history.

Sadly, we may now be repeating the

same mistake in Sudan.

Over the past few weeks, reports of

severe ethnic violence have come from

Darfur, a region of western Sudan. We

have heard accounts of thousands or

even tens of thousands of people murdered,

of widespread rape, and of people’s

homes burned to the ground.

The Sudanese government has refused

to allow full access to western

Sudan. International monitors and humanitarian

workers have been prevented

from reaching the area. We need

immediate access to gather more information

on what is happening and to

provide urgent humanitarian relief to

the one million people the United Nations

reports have been displaced internally

in Sudan or across the border to

Chad.

Many of us hoped that the humanitarian

ceasefire and agreement earlier

this month between the Sudanese government

and rebel forces in western

Sudan would end the many months of

violence against entire communities. It

has not.

The burning of homes and crops of

desperately poor villagers has left in

its ashes a humanitarian disaster.

Without immediate relief, experts predict

deaths in the hundreds of thousands.

The cruelty of the Government

of Sudan and its paramilitary allies

against other ethnic groups raises the

very real specter of genocide.

The United States and the international

community need to act now,

to stop this brutality, to save lives. If

we fail to act—and to act now—the

consequences will be dire.

United Nations Secretary General

Kofi Annan was eloquent in his statement

at the commemoration of the

10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide.

He said that he would not permit

Darfur to become the first genocide of

the 21st century.

There will be discussion in Washington

and around the world about

whether the ethnic violence in Darfur

is, in fact, genocide, but we cannot

allow the debate over definitions obstruct

our ability to act as soon as possible.

It is a matter of the highest moral

responsibility for each of us individually,

for Congress, for the United

States, and for the global community

to do all we can to stop the violence

against innocents in Darfur. We must

act, because thousands of people’s lives

will be lost if we do not.

I yield the floor.