Mr. President, I am

pleased to join my colleagues Senators

MENENDEZ and BROWNBACK this week in

introducing a resolution that recognizes

the unique diplomatic and economic

leverage that China possesses,

and that offers that country a rare opportunity

to be a force for peace in the

troubled Darfur region of Sudan.

By now, we are all aware of the devastation

being wrought upon the innocent

people of Darfur. Over the past 4

years, hundreds of thousands of people

have been killed and more than 2.5 million

displaced as a result of the ongoing

and escalating violence caused by

the Sudanese Government, associated

Janjaweed militia attacks, and even

the numerous rebel factions. Congress

declared the Sudanese Government’s

atrocities to be genocide nearly 3 years

ago, and my colleagues and I have been

actively demanding that the United

States do everything in its power to

bolster the hard-working but inadequate

African Union peacekeeping

mission, support the efforts of courageous

humanitarian workers, hold

those responsible accountable for their

actions, and persuade all parties to

commit to a legitimate political resolution

that can end the conflict and ensure

people can safely and voluntarily

return to their homes.

Although I am frustrated that the

United States’ efforts to achieve these

key objectives have been inadequate, I

am even more upset by the Sudanese

Government’s persistent obstruction of

all efforts to address Darfur’s deep security,

humanitarian, and political crises.

The United States and other Western

governments have made significant

political and material investments in

Sudan in an attempt to bring peace to

that conflict-torn country, but as long

as Khartoum continues to thwart its

international obligations and pursue

its violent campaign, these investments

will not bring Sudan closer to

peace.

All parties agree that the tipping

point in Sudan will come when the government

there sees the costs of continuing

to break existing promises and

obstruct new agreements as greater

than the benefits it can achieve by

doing so.

The country perhaps best positioned

to affect the calculus of this cost-benefit

analysis is China. Over the last

decade, Beijing’s energy firms have invested

between $3 billion and $10 billion

in the Sudanese energy sector, and

China now exports seventy percent of

Sudan’s oil. China recently cancelled

over $100 million in Sudanese debt and

is building roads, bridges, an oil refinery,

a hydroelectric dam, government

offices and a new $20 million presidential

palace. With these debt savings

and oil revenues, Sudan has doubled its

defense budget in recent years, spending

60 percent to 80 percent of its oil

revenue on weapons—arms mostly

made in China. I was very disturbed to

see that the chief of Sudan’s armed

forces was so warmly welcomed in Beijing

last week and promised increased

military exchanges and cooperation.

Eleven States, half a dozen cities,

and more than 30 academic institutions

across the United States have decided

to divest from companies that do business

with the Sudanese Government.

Many of these companies are Chinese,

which sends a signal to both Beijing

and Khartoum that Americans—and

others around the world—are willing to

put their money where their mouths

are when it comes to defending the people

of Darfur.

Africa can benefit from Chinese investment,

but China’s increasingly important

role on the continent also carries

responsibilities. As the 2008 summer

Olympics in Beijing approach,

China is keen to be perceived as a key

player on the world stage, but that

means it needs to play by the rules. According

to a recent Amnesty International

report, China is, and I quote

‘‘allowing ongoing flows of arms to parties

to Sudan that are diverted for the

conflict in Darfur and used there and

across the border in Chad to commit

grave violations of international law.’’

This is, I note, also in violation of the

U.N. arms embargo.

Recently, China has begun to play a

more constructive role in Sudan, by offering

to contribute an engineering

unit to the U.N.-led peacekeeping force

that awaits admission into Darfur and

by appointing a special representative

to Africa who will focus specifically on

the Darfur issue. These are notable,

and welcomed developments, but they

are not sufficient. We need to see a substantial

policy shift in China’s relationship

with Khartoum that is reflected

in both their public and their

private efforts. China must send an unequivocal

message that the relentless

violence is unacceptable—and it must

do so by working collaboratively and

constructively with the rest of the

international community to ensure a

consistent message.

The resolution introduced today

urges China to be more constructive,

consistent, and collaborative in its policy

towards Sudan. It is our hope that

through political messages like this

resolution, diplomatic communication

through formal and informal channels,

and economic signals sent by the divestment

campaign, China will be persuaded

to take advantage of the unique

opportunity it possesses to change the

political calculus of the government in

Khartoum so that the equation results

in peace for the people of Darfur.