Mr. President, we

are at a crossroads in the 3-year-old

conflict raging in Sudan’s Darfur region.

Last week’s Security Council

Resolution 1706, authorizing a United

Nations peacekeeping force for Darfur,

represents the culmination of persistent

advocacy for a robust international

intervention and offers the resources

and mandate necessary to

bring an end to violence which has already

taken more than 200,000 lives and

forced an estimated 2.5 million

Darfurians from their homes.

Unfortunately, the Government of

Sudan has rejected the U.N.’s plan and

is actively undermining peace efforts

while exacerbating the humanitarian

situation. The Sudanese Government’s

behavior increasingly violates both

international law and the terms of the

Peace Agreement it signed in May.

If the Sudanese Government remains

on its current trajectory, disaster—perhaps

on the scale of the 1994 Rwandan

genocide—is imminent. The current

7,000-member African Union Mission in

Sudan, which has been struggling valiantly

to protect innocent civilians for

2 years, is set to withdraw at the end of

this month. If it is not replaced by a

U.N. force at that time or given an extended

and expanded mandate, a power

vacuum will result that many agree

would lead to a resurgence in violence

from all sides.

Already, the future of the peace process

is at risk and increasing insecurity

are leading humanitarian aid organizations

to retreat from the areas where

their services are needed most. More

than a dozen aid workers have been

murdered since the Darfur Peace

Agreement was signed in May.

It is time for the United States and

the international community to use all

means of influence at their disposal to

ensure that U.N. Resolution 1706 is implemented.

In contrast to the small African

Union contingent, which is severely

limited in both what it is able

and allowed to do, the recently-authorized

United Nations force would include

up to 22,500 U.N. troops and police

officers and an immediate injection

of air, engineering, and communication

support for the African Union

force. The resolution, passed unanimously

by the Security Council on August

31, also gives the U.N. peacekeepers

power to take all necessary

measures to protect humanitarian aid

workers and civilian populations.

In an affront to international law

and the international community, Sudan’s

envoys refused to attend last

week’s United Nations meetings and

the Government has rejected the introduction

of a U.N. peacekeeping force,

likening it to ‘‘western colonization.’’

Most recently, the Government has

issued an ultimatum to the African

Union, demanding that it refrain from

incorporating U.N. reinforcements or

withdraw its peacekeepers from the

country. The Sudanese Government insists

that it will defeat rebel groups in

Darfur on its own and has announced

intentions to move more than 10,000

troops to the region. In effect, this

amounts to sending the same soldiers

who displaced Darfur’s refugees to protect

them.

Over the past week, there has been a

military buildup in Darfur, with witnesses

reporting an influx of Sudanese

military equipment and troops, which

is in direct violation of May’s Darfur

Peace Agreement. In fact, while the

Security Council was debating how to

end the violence in Darfur, the Sudanese

military was indiscriminately

bombing rebel-held villages. Firsthand

sources report flight crews rolling

bombs off plane ramps, a tactic often

practiced by Government forces in

their 21-year civil war to devastate

whole areas of southern Sudan, with

nightmarish consequences for civilians.

Meanwhile, the situation on the

ground is deteriorating rapidly. The

more than 2 million refugees in Darfur

and neighboring Chad—two thirds of

them children—are particularly susceptible

to malaria, diarrhea, and other

health problems and live in fear of

forced recruitment by rebel fighters or

bomb attacks by the military. This

current escalation in instability seriously

impedes the mobility of humanitarian

organizations, preventing them

from reaching civilians in Sudan’s

most dangerous areas. The World Food

Program reports that its existing food

rations—upon which some 6 million Sudanese

rely—will run out in January,

adding another dimension of desperation.

In unanimously passing Resolution

1706, the international community has

delivered a clear message to the Government

in Khartoum that it needs to

abide by international law and its own

commitments. Last-minute changes

the recent resolution included a reaffirmation

of the sovereignty and ‘‘territorial

integrity of Sudan’’ and the

first paragraph of the resolution invites

the Sudanese Government to consent

to the deployment of a U.N. force,

but such consent is not required by

international law or the text of the resolution.

Additionally, the U.N. Resolution

threatens sanctions for any individual

or group that violates human

rights or the Darfur Peace Agreement.

At this critical juncture, the Government

of Sudan must fulfill its obligation

to relieve the suffering of its citizens

by working with the United Nations

to agree upon a robust, coordinated

force to end the violence in

Darfur. It is essential that the international

community displays steadfast

solidarity in insisting upon the implementation

of United Nations Resolution

1706 and provides the troops and

resources necessary to follow through

on its commitment. The implications

of allowing another genocide to take

place in Africa could lead to a complete

collapse in the U.N.’s authority

and the deterioration of international

law.

In conclusion, I am deeply troubled

by recent developments regarding

Sudan. The international community

has asserted its determination to bring

an end to the violence in Darfur. Now

we need to act upon these intentions

and pressure the Government of Sudan

to cooperate in efforts to improve prospects

for peace throughout Sudan and

the greater east Africa region.