Mr. President, I rise

today to comment on the situation in

Sudan, a county characterized by brutal

fighting and tremendous suffering,

a country in which an estimated two

million people have died in just the

past decade from war-related causes,

and where millions more have been displaced.

In July, I held a hearing on U.S. Policy

in Sudan in my capacity as chairman

of the African Affairs Subcommittee

of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee. At that time, I

praised the administration for devoting

high-level attention to the plight of

the Sudanese people. As I noted then,

the President and the Secretary of

State have spoken out about Sudan.

The President appointed Senator John

Danforth to be his Special Envoy for

Peace in Sudan. USAID Administrator

Andrew Natsios was named Special Humanitarian

Coordinator for Sudan. As

a result of Senator Danforth’s efforts,

the International Eminent Persons

Group has investigated means for preventing

abductions and slavery and has

reported on its findings. And in July,

negotiations between the Government

of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation

Army, or SPLA, in Machakos,

Kenya produced a broad framework for

ending the civil war and providing the

people of the south with the means to

exercise their right to self-determination.

All of this deserves praise.

But currently, the negotiations are

troubled. The Government of Sudan

pulled its negotiators out of Machakos

in response to the SPLA’s capturing

the strategic garrison town of Torit on

September 1. Many observers, including

key American officials, believe

that the process is not permanently derailed

but merely disrupted. Still, this

disruption calls the world’s attention

to a rather telling point. There is no

ceasefire on the ground in Sudan, and

not only do military engagements continue,

so too do attacks on civilians

and the manipulation of humanitarian

assistance. The situation of the Sudanese

people has not improved despite

the developments at the negotiating

table.

I continue to support the administration’s

efforts to work with Inter-governmental

Authority on Development,

IGAD, to facilitate the peace process.

But given this disconnect between reality

on the ground and rhetoric in negotiations,

given the troubled recent

history of United States-Sudanese relations,

given the scale and scope of the

abuses committed against civilians

regularly in that troubled country, this

effort requires something of a leap of

faith. I do not criticize the administration

for taking the leap, I believe that

it was a correct and courageous decision

to work with the Government in

Khartoum and with the SPLA to try to

find a path to peace in Sudan. But I do

criticize the administration for not

taking the confidence-building measures,

including those identified by Senator

Danforth, seriously enough, leaving

us with little in the way of concrete

reassurances that our leap was a

wise one.

Specifically, I am referring to issue

of the civilian bombing monitoring

team. In the July hearing, I asked Assistant

Secretary of State for African

Affairs Walter Kansteiner about the

bombing of civilian targets. Senator

Danforth succeeded in getting both the

Government of Sudan and the Sudanese

People’s Liberation Army to agree

to allow a monitoring team to verify

their stated commitment not to intentionally

attack civilian targets. That

happened in spring. But at the time of

the hearing, we still had no monitors

on the ground. Meanwhile, reports of

attacks on civilians persist. What are

we waiting for, I asked. When will the

team be functioning on the ground?

I was told that this effort was taking

shape, and that the team would be

functioning by the end of August. But

today, the team is still not in place,

still not functioning. We cannot even

move to the very important work of

trying to link documented incidents of

attacks on civilians to clear consequences,

because we remain, apparently,

incapable of deploying a qualified

and appropriately equipped team

of people with experience in Sudan and

in human rights monitoring.

I spend a great deal of time trying to

call the administration’s attention to

very serious issues in sub-Saharan Africa

that are deserving of more American

time and interest. I do not have to

do that when it comes to Sudan. Bringing

peace to Sudan appears to me to be

this administration’s most significant

policy initiative in the region, and I

commend the administration for its efforts.

That said, this element of the effort,

following up on the commitments

obtained by Senator Danforth relating

to the bombing of civilian targets, this

element of the effort is quite plainly

falling short.

If the administration needs additional

resources, personnel, or

logistical capacity to make this happen

efficiently and effectively, I know

that many in Congress stand ready to

help. Many of my colleagues have long

history of working to address the crisis

in Sudan, notably my partner in on the

African Affairs Subcommittee, Senator

FRIST, and I admire their commitment

and their work. In calling attention to

this issue, and in criticizing the administration

for its failure to move forward

on the civilian bombing monitoring

issue, I do not seek to inject

partisanship into the Sudan policy debate.

But I do want to make it clear

that this is not a small thing and not

a secondary priority. The administration’s

capacity to help bring peace to

Sudan is strongest when the diverse

community of Sudan advocates and the

entire Congress is united in support for

that effort. We need to sustain our

faith in this endeavor with concrete

steps even as our country continues to

facilitate big-picture negotiations. And

so I encourage the administration to

make deploying a qualified and well-organized

monitoring team at the earliest

possible date a real priority.