Mr. President, I am grateful

for the opportunity to join with my

colleagues on the vitally important

topic of Darfur and the entire humanitarian

crisis facing that part of the

world.

When we look at a current map of Africa,

we are looking, for the most part,

at national boundary lines that were

formed by the arbitrary dictates of

Western European nations during their

primacy as colonial power brokers in

the 19th century. Those lines were, essentially,

simple longitude or latitude

lines that had no relevancy, at all, to

the social, cultural, or tribal structures

that had existed on those lands

for centuries. Suddenly, the simple,

clean-cut decisions of 19th century Europeans

have become, in the late 20th

and early 21st centuries, far more complex

than any diplomats in London,

Paris, Berlin, or even Washington,

could have imagined in those relatively

distant times.

Darfur is serious. Clearly, it is not

the only place on this planet with unspeakable

atrocities and unbelievable

conditions. People who once farmed

wheat in western Afghanistan are now

facing desperate consequences due to

the confluence of floods and drought.

There are countless people—women,

children, and the infirm—in camps like

Dadaab in eastern Kenya who are not

only trying to cope with the political

and military chaos streaming out of

Somalia but also the natural calamity

of floods bringing food shortages, waterborne

disease, and other human

heartbreaks to our attention. We cannot

ignore these other tragedies.

Darfur is not the only place in need of

assistance.

But there remains Darfur. It is

etched in our conscious because of the

pictures we see on television, the stories

we read in the paper, and more importantly,

what we know to be true.

The facts are before us.

The crisis in Darfur is an outgrowth

of a decades-long struggle within

Sudan extending back nearly to 1956

when Sudan gained independence from

Britain and Egypt, resulting in an estimated

2 million deaths due to war and

famine in the last two decades alone.

Millions more have been displaced. In

February of 2003, the conflict spilled

into Darfur with tragic consequences

when local rebel militias determined to

challenge the Khartoum Government

on grounds related to discrimination of

ethnic groups in the region. The central

government’s response was to unleash

a harsh policy against the people

of Darfur, including use of armed militias

against civilians. The U.S. Congress

and the Bush administration pronounced

these actions in 2004 as genocide.

In 2005, condition in Darfur only got

worse. Attacks by the Khartoum Government-

backed jingaweit against civilian

populations continued unabated.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan announced

that abduction of national

staff of humanitarian relief NGOs had

reached alarming proportions. In June

of 2005, the International Criminal

Court formally began an investigation

into charges of atrocities in Darfur.

And in recent months, reports indicate

that atrocities in Darfur are peaking

again.

Slowly, the African Union began exercising

limited authority in Darfur.

Further attempts by the United Nations

to introduce peacekeeping forces

or a similar presence met with continuing

resistance from the Khartoum

Government. Just last week, the Peace

and Security Council of the African

Union adopted a proposal concerning a

hybrid force for peacekeeping in

Darfur. The African Union will extend

its mission for another 6 months beginning

January 1, 2007, in order to provide

additional time for clarification

and implementation of how a hybrid

force will be composed and deployed.

Progress may be seen in these actions,

but it moves very slowly.

To date, since the Darfur crisis began

in 2003, an estimated 450,000 people

have been killed and more than 2 million

displaced. In addition, some 220,000

Sudanese have been forced into refugee

camps in neighboring Chad, and an additional

number are in refugee camps

in Kenya. Even though the Bush administration

has declared that acts of

genocide have occurred in Darfur, such

declaration has not resulted in any

major shift in U.S. policy. A shift

should occur. We must intensify pressure

on the Khartoum Government regarding

its policies toward Darfur, and

we must firmly pursue the Addis protocols

that were achieved last week.

As the current ranking member of

the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee

on Agriculture, Rural Development,

and Related Agencies, and

during the tenure I hope to continue in

the next Congress, I know that humanitarian

food assistance is a very large

piece of the solution to the crisis in

Darfur. Under the jurisdiction of the

Agriculture Subcommittee is an array

of programs of importance to food insecurity—

what in this country we once

called hunger—such as Public Law 480

and reimbursements to the Bill Emerson

Humanitarian Trust.

In fact, a little more than 1 month

ago, my appropriations staff was sent

on a mission to Sudan which would

have brought them to within a few kilometers

of the border of South Darfur.

Unfortunately, the El Bashir government

in Khartoum refused to issue

them the appropriate visas, but they

were able to participate with the World

Food Program on an air drop of food

over Southern Sudan that, at least,

gave them a firsthand experience of the

hardships in that country. They also

met with refugees from Darfur in the

U.N. camp at Kakuma in northwestern

Kenya, where the original ‘‘Lost Children’’

of Sudan found shelter in the

early 1990s. While at Kakuma, my staff

was presented with the following written

request by Darfur refugees:

I have watched, and I will continue

to watch with keen interest the developments

in this part of the world and

take to heart the charge that these

things shall not occur ‘‘on our watch.’’

To the extent that I can continue to direct

food aid programs in the coming

Congress, this part of the world, and all

the other parts in dire need, will have

my full attention, and I will seek the

support of fellow Senators when the

time comes to make emergency assistance

available.