Mr. President, today I

wish to talk about the ongoing genocide

in Darfur, and this administration’s

inexcusable failure to do all it

can to stop the violence there. We all

understand the monumental challenge

we face in ending the violence in

Darfur, but this administration’s behavior

and recent statements on this

issue suggest that it simply does not

know when to stop talking and when to

start acting. And all the while innocent

people continue to needlessly die

under our watch.

Last fall, the President’s Special

Envoy for Darfur, Andrew Natsios, announced

that if the Sudanese Government

did not accept a U.N.-African

Union peacekeeping force by January

1, the administration would implement

punitive measures as part of its Plan B.

Well here we are today. Over 100 days

have passed since January 1. And what

do we have to show for it? No U.N.-African

Union peacekeeping force on the

ground in Sudan. And no Plan B.

Meanwhile the death toll has risen.

Over the course of the conflict, 200,000

people have been killed; 2.5 million displaced.

Families and villages have been

decimated; women and girls have been

raped.

Fighting has infected Sudan’s neighbors,

leaving scores dead along the

Sudan-Chad border. One U.N. official

recently described the scene of dead

bodies in the area as ‘‘shocking and

apocalyptic.’’

So much death and destruction, 21⁄2

years after this administration stated

that genocide was indeed occurring in

Darfur. More than 100 days after Mr.

Natsios’s deadline, the killings continue.

Earlier this month, Mr. Natsios testified

before the Foreign Relations Committee

on Darfur and Plan B. His testimony

only deepened my concerns

about the administration’s Darfur paralysis.

When asked repeatedly by Senator

MENENDEZ to answer yes or no as to

whether genocide was occurring in

Darfur, he did not answer yes. Instead

his response was that the violence has

abated in Darfur and that the rebel

groups were also engaging in killings.

His answer was incredibly disturbing to

me and to other members of the committee.

Now I understand Mr. Natsios’s desire

to convey the complexity of the

situation and the complicity of various

parties on the ground, but the fact is

that the primary party responsible for

the killings is the Sudanese Government

and its Janjaweed proxies. For

Mr. Natsios to be unable to state that

genocide is occurring in clear terms

seems to me a classic example of missing

the forest for the trees. It also

raises a question of credibility. After

all, how can this administration stop a

genocide when its special envoy won’t

even fully acknowledge it?

Mr. Natsios also stated that although

the President is supposedly angry

about the situation in Darfur and has

recently proposed certain sanctions, he

has acceded to a request by U.N. Secretary-

General Ban Ki-Moon to delay

any implementation of Plan B for another

two to four weeks to give the

Secretary-General time to convince

the Sudanese Government to accept a

peacekeeping force.

Now 2 to 4 weeks may seem like

nothing in the context of protracted

and complex diplomatic negotiations,

but this is no treaty that is being negotiated.

There are lives at stake every

day here and we just cannot afford to

take a ‘‘wait and see’’ approach.

Recent reports suggest that the Sudanese

Government has agreed to a hybrid

force but based on its previous

track record, I will believe it when I

see some additional boots on the

ground. In the meantime, a pause on

the administration’s part is simply unacceptable.

And so I believe that even as the modalities

of a peacekeeping force, that

may or may not materialize, are

worked out, the administration must

begin implementing certain elements

of Plan B immediately. Not 4 weeks

from now. Not 2 weeks from now. Immediately.

Select punitive measures as described

by Mr. Natsios at the hearing

include imposing personal sanctions on

certain members of the rebel groups

and the Sudanese Government; curbing

the Sudanese Government’s access to

oil revenues; and increasing penalties

on companies operating in Sudan.

There is nothing revolutionary about

these measures. They were leaked to

the public and have been under discussion

for some weeks. The question in

my mind is not so much about whether

we should implement them but why

haven’t we already implemented them.

As chairman of the Banking Committee

and a senior member of the Foreign

Relations Committee, I am absolutely

willing to work with the administration

to put these measures into

force and look forward to some clear

answers from the administration on

this.

Now let me be clear about what I

mean in saying we should go ahead and

implement elements of Plan B. I fully

appreciate the sensitivities of our diplomatic

efforts related to Darfur. I

fully agree with the importance of

working this issue through the U.N. in

a multilateral manner. But if there are

certain steps that the United States

can take on its own account and indeed

was supposed to take over 100 days ago

to pressure the Sudanese Government,

then what are we waiting for?

The time has come to delink certain

elements of Plan B from our broader

multilateral strategy to pressure Khartoum.

The time has come to act where

and when we can. This administration

has shown no compulsion in acting unilaterally

in the past. It did so by invading

Iraq with disastrous consequence.

Why does it continue to keep one foot

on the side lines 4 years into this genocide

when it not only has the ability

but also the moral responsibility to

act?

Moreover, we must not stop at implementing

long overdue sanctions whose

credibility has been called into question

because they have yet to be implemented.

We must also consider a more

robust role for NATO forces, including

their deployment to Sudan if the Sudanese

Government continues to obstruct

a hybrid peacekeeping force.

Even if the Sudanese Government

consents to the U.N.-AU force, the

United Nations may fail to muster the

requisite troops within an acceptable

period of time. In such a scenario, we

should consider the deployment of an

interim NATO force with U.S. participation.

At a minimum, NATO forces,

which already provide logistical support

to the African Union mission,

should enforce a no-fly zone in Darfur

pursuant to U.N. Resolution 1591 to

prevent military flights over Darfur.

Naturally, special attention will have

to be paid in any operation to the security

of refugee camps and aid workers

but to those who say that military action

will make things worse, I have

only one thing to say: we are already

at rock bottom.

The authorization of force is one of

the most critical decisions a member of

Congress has to make, especially if it

entails sending our brave men and

women into harm’s way on the ground.

U.S. participation however in any such

action, even in a limited capacity, is

critical to showing the world that

America is not just about fighting the

war against terrorism but also is willing

to fight against injustice and mass

murder. That we are prepared to fight

for the principles of respect for human

dignity and life, and not just talk

about them.

In advocating certain measures outside

the framework of the United Nations,

I do not intend to dismiss the

critical role that the U.N. and other

countries can play. The fact is that the

U.S. has limited leverage over Sudan

and we need all the help we can get. We

must work within the U.N. system, and

also press other key countries that

deal with Sudan such as India and

China to do their part. China in particular

has a crucial role to play in

changing Khartoum’s behavior.

But even as we assess the role and responsibilities

of others, we must never

forget our own. We must lead by example.

Over the past few years, I have

voted for legislation sanctioning the

Government of Sudan. I have delivered

floor statements and attended hearings

on Darfur, where witness after witness

has testified to the ongoing atrocities.

I have sent letters to the Chinese, the

Russians, the Arabs and others urging

them to use their clout with Sudan.

Yet after all such actions and deliberations

by members of this body and

after all the punitive authorities granted

to this administration, to see it

temporizing and regressing to a point

where we are debating whether genocide

is even occurring is utterly unacceptable.

The time for action is now, not in a

few weeks. We are at rock bottom and

the administration needs to deliver on

its threats and translate its rhetoric

into action. We must do everything in

our power to end the genocide in

Darfur immediately.