Senator Feingold, thank you for chairing this hearing on ‘‘Implementing U.S. Policy

in Sudan.’’ As the Committee’s leading expert on Africa, you have been a strong

voice for the Sudanese people who have suffered too long from a long and violent

conflict and well-documented human rights abuses carried out by all sides. Mr.

Chairman, I commend you and Senator Frist for focusing our attention on this important

issue.

There is a true humanitarian crisis in Sudan today. The number of people in need

of emergency food aid—3 million—is staggering. It is a fact that of the 2 million

people killed during the long-running civil war, a large number died from hunger.

Perhaps most troubling of all is that much needed humanitarian assistance has

been used as a weapon of war. Denying access to humanitarian assistance is among

the worst of all human rights abuses. Civilians who have gathered around food distribution

centers have even been attacked and killed.

It is a disgrace that slavery continues to be a problem in Sudan. Human Rights

Watch and other respected organizations have reported on how the Khartoum government

provides automatic weapons and support for fighters who attack southern

villages and capture men, women and children from rebel-controlled areas. They are

forced to work for free in homes and in fields, punished when they refuse, and

abused both physically and sexually. According to a March 2002 Human Rights

Watch report, ‘‘the government of Sudan is responsible not only of knowingly arming,

transporting and assisting the slave-raiding militia, it also is responsible for not

enforcing its own laws against kidnaping, assault, and forced labor.’’

Mr. Chairman, I hope that we can break the impasse that has prevented us from

moving forward with legislation to address some of these abuses. U.S. leadership on

this issue is crucial and I sincerely hope that we can play a productive role in bringing

to an end the longest running ongoing civil war in Africa.