

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2006

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens and Senator Inouye:

Thank you for your continued work in support of our men and women in uniform and for once again assembling a bipartisan Defense Appropriations bill. We are writing to urge your support in conference for an amendment, agreed to during the debate on the Senate floor, which would provide \$20 million to support the efforts of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS).

We believe it is essential that these funds be included as part of the final Defense Appropriations bill in order to help address the escalating crisis in Darfur. During a recent bipartisan meeting between Senators and African ambassadors, the ambassadors emphasized that additional resources from the U.S. to the AMIS would be a critical component of reducing the violence in this troubled region. According to information we have received, funds available for this purpose will be exhausted by year's end – assuming we do nothing more than maintain the current level of operations. Timing is critical; even if we merely maintain the current pace of operations, a level that many believe to be inadequate, we cannot be certain Congress will be in a position to act before these funds are exhausted, if we fail to do so now.

While there is growing support to replace AMIS with a follow-on force authorized by the United Nations, months of diplomacy may be required to make it a reality and substantial logistical obstacles remain, making it imperative that AMIS be properly resourced. Finally, the Arab League, in conjunction with the Khartoum government, has recently discussed funding AMIS. Allowing the Arab League to fill the funding vacuum would be extremely problematic, diminishing the U.S. influence over AMIS while increasing the ability of the Sudanese to act with impunity in Darfur.

We believe that the situation in Darfur, declared a “genocide” by President Bush, is so dire that we cannot wait for consideration of the State-Foreign Operations bill – legislation that is not likely to come to the Senate floor until mid-November at the earliest. In the meantime, AMIS is likely to be the only international force in Darfur for the near future. We believe it is critical that the U.S. act immediately and decisively to infuse additional resources to help reverse a deteriorating security situation that places hundreds of thousands of civilians at risk.

We would also note, with appreciation, that the Defense Subcommittee has a history of leadership on this issue. During the floor debate of the FY 2005 Defense Appropriations bill, Senator DeWine, with the consent of the Chairman and Ranking Member, successfully offered an amendment to add emergency funds for the situation in Darfur. A modified version of this amendment was ultimately retained in conference.


We respectfully request that you continue your leadership on this issue. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that this amendment, or a modified version which retains the essential elements of the amendment, is accepted during the conference committee.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID



BARACK OBAMA



RICHARD DURBIN



HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON



TOM HARKIN