

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 17, 2006

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
S-112, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman
State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As you know, on May 5, 2006, a potentially path-breaking peace agreement was signed between the Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Army, one of the primary insurgent groups in Darfur, offering a chance for peace after three years of violence and genocide. The United States played a pivotal role in securing this agreement, and we applaud the efforts of the Bush Administration to convince these parties to come to this agreement.

The violence in Darfur has left hundreds of thousands dead and millions displaced. As Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick has said, however, this "opportunity for peace" is just that; it will require a sustained and indeed significantly stepped up engagement by the United States, the United Nations, the European Union, the Arab League, and the African Union to make this opportunity a reality.

As you begin the conference process for H.R. 4939, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Hurricane Recovery, 2006, we urge you to maintain the peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance for the Darfur region of Sudan that was approved by both houses of Congress.

It is critically important that the initial stages of this peace agreement be implemented quickly and that the international community coordinates appropriately to ensure this occurs. The African Union is the only force on the ground, but it has already been stretched thin by its current monitoring mission. Additional assistance to support the African Union during any transition to a United Nations mission is vital; the urgency is increased by the opportunity for peace now before us. We urge your consistent support for this transition from an A.U. monitoring mission to a much broader United Nations undertaking and for a more pro-active and robust U.N. peacekeeping mission.

The President has also called for an additional \$225 million in emergency food aid for Darfur. The World Food Programme was recently forced to cut rations in half in Darfur. The need for increased assistance is immediate and compelling.

We recognize that there are powerful budgetary pressures at work. We ourselves also recognize competing international and domestic priorities. However, for three years, the world has failed to stop genocide in Darfur. Now, the people of Darfur have a glimmer of hope: we cannot fail them in this hour of need.

Sincerely,

Sam Brownback

Dick Durbin

Norm Coleman

Byron D. Morgan

Jim Cooper

Paul G. Sarbanes

Robert Menendez

Russell O. Feingold

Ken Salazar

Bill Nelson

Maria Cantwell

George V. Voinovich

John Johnson

Thommy Carper

Wayne Allard

Elizabeth Dole

Debbie Stabenow

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Allyson Janney

Joe Biden

Arturo Escobar

Paul V. Lehman

Phil Hartman