

May 25, 2006

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President,

Almost two years ago, your administration rightfully declared that the mass atrocities occurring in Darfur were genocide. There have been signs of progress since then, including, most recently, the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). But the peace agreement is fragile and its implementation will require increased and sustained U.S. engagement. Thus, I strongly urge you to appoint a Special Envoy to the Sudan region.

A U.S. envoy could harmonize U.S. policy and coordinate U.S. government efforts. In addition, this envoy could exert regular and sustained diplomatic pressure on the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement to adhere to the commitments made in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and monitor ongoing negotiations between the government of Sudan and rebels in the East. A U.S. envoy could also increase pressure on the other Darfurian rebel groups to sign the DPA. The regional context of these conflicts is critical: a special envoy could engage the trans-border issues. Finally, this envoy could coordinate closely with the other donor nations on humanitarian and development assistance.

Many credit the appointment of former Senator John Danforth to serve as a Presidential Special Envoy in 2001 as a major factor in helping to forge the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended the 21-year North-South civil war. To his credit, Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick has demonstrated that progress can be made in Sudan through the sustained attention of a senior representative of the U.S. government. But Secretary Zoellick has wide-ranging responsibilities across the globe, and despite his best efforts, he cannot provide the full-time attention to Sudan that is now required.

During consideration of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, the Senate passed an amendment authorizing the appointment of an international special envoy to Sudan. Upon final passage, I hope you will seize the opportunity to implement the law and appoint a representative of the stature and ability of a John Danforth who can bring to bear the full attention and leadership of the U.S. Government. The immediate appointment and deployment of a Special Envoy would show the government of Sudan—and the world—that the U.S. is truly committed to peace throughout Sudan and ensuring the end of the violence and instability in the region. The full-time, high-level attention that comes with a Presidential Envoy is critical for success.

Sincerely,

Harry Reid  
Democratic Leader