

NOTE: Congressman Bachus' involvement with economic sanctions against Sudan dates back to 2001, when he attached an amendment to the Sudan Peace Act that would have barred companies doing business with the government of Sudan from raising money in the U.S. capital markets. The amendment was part of legislation that passed the House, but was not accepted by the Senate. Bachus also cosponsored and voted for the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, which was signed into law in October 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and urge its immediate passage. We are voting on language very similar to legislation that passed the House 418-1 at the end of July, which supports the decision of state and local legislators and fund managers to divest from companies doing business in Sudan. However, the bill before us today does not require the government to create or be the source of a "black list" of such companies. For that reason, the Senate version is much more acceptable to the Administration.

Some have said that today's legislation is too little, too late. This certainly may not be the case for more than a million innocent men, women, and children who have somehow survived the genocide and slaughter. We can't rewrite history or save lives already lost in Darfur. However, we can and must resolve to do better going forward. This legislation has the potential to give hundreds of thousands of peaceful and unarmed men, women, and children in Darfur an increased chance of surviving the genocide.

Economic and financial considerations have been used to both block and water down our Sudan capital markets legislation in the past. Economic and financial considerations are important, but in a loving nation can never be used as justification for turning a blind eye to genocide. Closing our financial markets to those who participate directly or indirectly in the slaughter of innocent human beings is well within our ability and ought to be a bedrock principle. America is a loving nation, and allowing our financial markets to be utilized by an evil regime which conducts religious and racial genocide is inconsistent with our values and principles.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will help put strong pressure on a government that has consistently engaged in genocidal actions, both directly and as an enabler of paramilitary factions that are harassing and killing people in the Darfur region and elsewhere in Sudan.

It is vital to keep the pressure on the Khartoum government, both because of the “bait-and-switch” game it has been playing with the rest of the world for years, pretending to make strides to end the genocide and then going back on its word when the world’s outrage is temporarily spent. The latest outrage involves refusing to allow the deployment of non-African United Nations peacekeeping troops, due in two weeks, which it previously had agreed to accept.

The objective of this legislation is one that I wholeheartedly embrace, and that I have sought to achieve in legislative proposals of my own in previous Congresses. Passage will be a strong expression of Congress’s outrage over the continued genocide in Darfur. I urge its immediate passage.

I want to thank the staff that worked on this important effort. From Chairman Frank’s staff, Jim Segel, Scott Morris, Daniel McGlinchey and Nancy Alexander; from Representative Barbara Lee’s staff, Chrisos Isentas; from Representative Donald Payne’s staff, Noelle Lusane; from Representative Ileana Ros – Lehtinen’s staff, Gene Gurevida and Yleen Poblette; from Representative Frank Wolf’s staff, Molly Miller; from Representative Christopher Smith’s staff, Sherry Rickert; and Joe Pinder, Kevin Edgar, and Anthony Cimino from my own staff; and with that I reserve the balance of my time.