

in Indiana and across the country as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

From September 15 through October 15, all Americans will take time to reflect upon and celebrate the many contributions that Americans of Hispanic and Latino descent have made to our Nation. Millions of Hispanic Americans have worked tirelessly to provide for their families, strengthen their communities, and enrich our national culture.

I also wish to recognize the approaching 196th anniversary of Mexican Independence. I am hopeful that, as we commemorate this important milestone, we can also celebrate the remarkable friendship between our two nations as neighbors and partners for peace and justice in the world.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT GERMAINE L. DEBRO

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of Nebraska Army National Guard Sergeant Germaine Debro of Omaha, NE. Sergeant Debro died when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle near Balad, Iraq on September 4. He was 33 years old.

The son of a retired U.S. Air Force technical sergeant, Sergeant Debro and his family moved frequently around the country. Sergeant Debro attended Omaha Benson High School for 1 year and then moved to Arkansas where he graduated from high school in 1991.

In October 1994, Sergeant Debro enlisted in the U.S. Army. Following his service in the Army, Sergeant Debro enlisted in the Nebraska Army National Guard in October 1997. He was assigned to Detachment 1, Troop B, 1-167th Cavalry Squadron based in Wahoo, NE. Sergeant Debro remained in Wahoo until being reassigned to the Fremont, Nebraska-based Troop B, 1-167th Cavalry Squadron in January 2001. While serving with the 1-167th Cavalry Squadron, Sergeant Debro was mobilized for several overseas deployment including service in Kuwait in 2001 and in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 2002-2003. Sergeant Debro will be remembered as a loyal soldier who had a strong sense of duty, honor and love of country. Thousands of brave Americans like Sergeant Debro are currently serving in Iraq.

Sergeant Debro is survived by his parents, Alvin and Priscilla Debro; and brothers, Alvin Jr., who served in the U.S. Army, and Maurice, all of Omaha. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time. America is proud of Sergeant Debro's heroic service and mourns his loss.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring SGT Germaine L. Debro.

DARFUR

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, we are at a crossroads in the 3-year-old

conflict raging in Sudan's Darfur region. Last week's Security Council Resolution 1706, authorizing a United Nations peacekeeping force for Darfur, represents the culmination of persistent advocacy for a robust international intervention and offers the resources and mandate necessary to bring an end to violence which has already taken more than 200,000 lives and forced an estimated 2.5 million Darfurians from their homes.

Unfortunately, the Government of Sudan has rejected the U.N.'s plan and is actively undermining peace efforts while exacerbating the humanitarian situation. The Sudanese Government's behavior increasingly violates both international law and the terms of the Peace Agreement it signed in May.

If the Sudanese Government remains on its current trajectory, disaster—perhaps on the scale of the 1994 Rwandan genocide—is imminent. The current 7,000-member African Union Mission in Sudan, which has been struggling valiantly to protect innocent civilians for 2 years, is set to withdraw at the end of this month. If it is not replaced by a U.N. force at that time or given an extended and expanded mandate, a power vacuum will result that many agree would lead to a resurgence in violence from all sides.

Already, the future of the peace process is at risk and increasing insecurity are leading humanitarian aid organizations to retreat from the areas where their services are needed most. More than a dozen aid workers have been murdered since the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed in May.

It is time for the United States and the international community to use all means of influence at their disposal to ensure that U.N. Resolution 1706 is implemented. In contrast to the small African Union contingent, which is severely limited in both what it is able and allowed to do, the recently-authorized United Nations force would include up to 22,500 U.N. troops and police officers and an immediate injection of air, engineering, and communication support for the African Union force. The resolution, passed unanimously by the Security Council on August 31, also gives the U.N. peacekeepers power to take all necessary measures to protect humanitarian aid workers and civilian populations.

In an affront to international law and the international community, Sudan's envoys refused to attend last week's United Nations meetings and the Government has rejected the introduction of a U.N. peacekeeping force, likening it to "western colonization." Most recently, the Government has issued an ultimatum to the African Union, demanding that it refrain from incorporating U.N. reinforcements or withdraw its peacekeepers from the country. The Sudanese Government insists that it will defeat rebel groups in Darfur on its own and has announced intentions to move more than 10,000 troops to the region. In effect, this

amounts to sending the same soldiers who displaced Darfur's refugees to protect them.

Over the past week, there has been a military buildup in Darfur, with witnesses reporting an influx of Sudanese military equipment and troops, which is in direct violation of May's Darfur Peace Agreement. In fact, while the Security Council was debating how to end the violence in Darfur, the Sudanese military was indiscriminately bombing rebel-held villages. Firsthand sources report flight crews rolling bombs off plane ramps, a tactic often practiced by Government forces in their 21-year civil war to devastate whole areas of southern Sudan, with nightmarish consequences for civilians.

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground is deteriorating rapidly. The more than 2 million refugees in Darfur and neighboring Chad—two thirds of them children—are particularly susceptible to malaria, diarrhea, and other health problems and live in fear of forced recruitment by rebel fighters or bomb attacks by the military. This current escalation in instability seriously impedes the mobility of humanitarian organizations, preventing them from reaching civilians in Sudan's most dangerous areas. The World Food Program reports that its existing food rations—upon which some 6 million Sudanese rely—will run out in January, adding another dimension of desperation.

In unanimously passing Resolution 1706, the international community has delivered a clear message to the Government in Khartoum that it needs to abide by international law and its own commitments. Last-minute changes the recent resolution included a reaffirmation of the sovereignty and "territorial integrity of Sudan" and the first paragraph of the resolution invites the Sudanese Government to consent to the deployment of a U.N. force, but such consent is not required by international law or the text of the resolution. Additionally, the U.N. Resolution threatens sanctions for any individual or group that violates human rights or the Darfur Peace Agreement.

At this critical juncture, the Government of Sudan must fulfill its obligation to relieve the suffering of its citizens by working with the United Nations to agree upon a robust, coordinated force to end the violence in Darfur. It is essential that the international community displays steadfast solidarity in insisting upon the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1706 and provides the troops and resources necessary to follow through on its commitment. The implications of allowing another genocide to take place in Africa could lead to a complete collapse in the U.N.'s authority and the deterioration of international law.

In conclusion, I am deeply troubled by recent developments regarding Sudan. The international community has asserted its determination to bring