I agree

with the gentleman from New York,

and our political philosophies may be

different. I think it’s a powerful and

passionate speech. What frustrates me,

I think, the most, and the fact that we

are even having this debate in this way

is because the President has not led on

this particular issue. He should have

come before Congress. I think that’s

clear.

I don’t think anyone really objects to

the fact that he should have come here

anytime when we put our troops in

harm’s way, absolutely. I think he’s

done not a great job talking about

what our national security interests

are in Libya and what role we’re playing

in Libya. Bad marks all the way

around.

But the Kucinich resolution is dangerous.

I do believe we have national

security interests at stake here. Even

though the President has gone about it

in all the wrong way, they’re our national

security interests. And to stand

up today and say we’re frustrated with

the President, we’re going to stomp our

feet and we’re going to bring them

home, leaving our allies holding the

bag, is unconscionable—unconscionable.

Here’s what happens if the Kucinich

resolution passes: the naval blockade

becomes at risk, Qadhafi gets stronger,

our ability to refuel aircraft—NATO

aircraft who are doing strikes, not the

United States who are doing strikes

mind you, our British, our Italian and

our French allies who are doing combat

strikes—goes away.

The fact that we cannot get in and do

particular efforts on making it very

difficult for them to see through radar

and actually target planes happens by

the United States, that goes away. Who

would do that to friends and allies in

the middle of a fight?

And here’s our national security interests.

They have thousands and thousands

of pounds of chemical weapons.

This isn’t a guess. We’re not reading

some analytical sheet. Many of you

have seen it. I have personally seen it.

We know it’s there. It’s declared. What

happens to those chemical weapons in

a place where al Qaeda in the Magreb is

growing stronger, not weaker? There’s

only one country in the world that has

the unique capability to keep an eye on

it and take care of it when the opportunity

arises. That’s the United States

of America. That is in our national interest.

There are thousands and thousands

and thousands of shoulder-fired,

anti-aircraft weapons that keep me

awake at night.

We have the unique capability in the

United States to make sure that those

weapons systems don’t fall into the

hands of those who would do us harm—

the terrorists who proliferate in northern

Africa right now. Those are in our

national security interests.

So, yes, let’s have the debate. I think

the Speaker’s approach is absolutely

appropriate. It’s sad that we had to

come to that point where we had to inform

this administration, ‘‘Sir, you

have not made your case. You need to

come and make your case.’’ And I

argue when he does that, when he

makes his case, I think the American

people will be with him. But he has to

make the case, and he needs Congress’

consult and advice on this particular

issue. And I argue he needs our approval

to continue to move forward.

I hope that we don’t get really small

in our politics and we’re so angry at

this President for not making his case

on something as sensitive as this that

we would ruin our national interests as

we move forward. They are important

allies, our French and our British. Now

we’ve been frustrated at them, and I’m

sure they’re frustrated at us. But

they’ve spilled their blood and their

treasure in places like Iraq and Afghanistan,

and they currently help us

fight terrorism where we find it in the

world.

Do you poke your friend in the eye

because you’re mad? No. This is an important

issue that has to be bigger

than our political parochial beliefs. It

has to be bigger than our congressional

districts. This is about America, our

future, our allies, and, yes, our national

security.

Who better to make sure that those

shoulder-fired weapons don’t go someplace

than us? Who better to make sure

that those chemical weapons don’t fall

in the hands of terrorists who seek to

kill innocent men, women and children?

Qadhafi has been proven to be a

state sponsor of terror. The Pan Am

bombing, he killed hundreds. He killed

U.S. soldiers in Germany in the

eighties, our U.S. soldiers, through an

act of terrorism. We know he still has

terrorism hit squads. We know it. We

can’t prove that he’s engaged them yet,

but we know they exist. Why would we

walk away from that threat when we

know he’s under siege and feeling desperate?

This is the time we should stand with

our allies, Madam Speaker. This is the

time that we should say, yes, our national

security interests are at heart.

And, yes, Mr. President, come down

and meet your constitutional obligation

and show this Congress why we’re

there, what role we’re playing and

what it means to our national security.

I would urge a strong rejection of

cutting and running in the Kucinich

amendment and a strong support of the

Speaker of the House’s right approach

to bring the President to Congress, as

he needs to be.