I yield

myself such time as I may consume.

I do thank both Speaker BOEHNER

and Representative KUCINICH for bringing

these resolutions and bringing this

issue to the floor because I completely

agree that this is an issue that Congress

should debate, discuss, and

should ultimately express its opinion

on. We have not done that. We are now

past 90 days that this mission has been

going on in Libya, and I feel we should

have brought this up much sooner.

Now, I would prefer a much cleaner

resolution that simply came out and

made a resolution of approval of the

President’s mission and of the mission

that we and NATO have undertaken in

Libya and gave Members the chance to

vote it up or down. In that sense, Mr.

KUCINICH’s resolution is much more

straightforward. It’s a resolution of

disapproval, but, again, it gives us the

opportunity to at least debate the issue

and express the will of Congress.

I do, however, oppose Mr. BOEHNER’s

resolution. I also oppose Mr. KUCINICH’s

resolution because I don’t think we

should pull away from this mission,

should pull out of what NATO is doing

and the very important work that is

going on in Libya.

Mr. BOEHNER’s resolution doesn’t do

any of that, but it does rather boldly

state that the President has not made

a case for the mission in Libya, and I

very strongly disagree with that assessment.

Now I will agree—and Mr. MCKEON

and I share the frustration—that prior

to the launching of this mission, there

was an inadequate amount of communication

between the President and

this Congress, indeed, between the

President and the American people, explaining

the reasons for getting into

that mission; but since that time the

President has made it very clear why

we went into Libya.

We had a unique situation. I do not

believe the American military should

intervene in every conflict in every

country. In fact, I don’t believe it

should intervene in almost any of

them. It takes a unique set of circumstances

to call for that intervention;

and in Libya we had, I believe,

that unique set of circumstances.

Number one, we had broad international

support. The U.N., NATO, the

Arab League all looked at that situation

and said intervention was necessary.

Number two, we had a clear humanitarian

crisis. There was no doubt at the

time that we intervened that if we had

not, Muammar Qadhafi would have

slaughtered his own people and reasserted

control over Libya. He made it

clear that is what he was going to do.

It was clear that the people rising up

for the legitimate opportunity to be

heard in their government did not have

the power and the force to stop him.

We did.

If we had not acted, there is no question

that Muammar Qadhafi would be

back in charge of Libya, and we would

bear at least some piece of the responsibility—

at least that is the way the

rest of the world would have looked at

it. We in the United States had the

power and the force to stop a humanitarian

catastrophe and chose not to

act.

And that’s one of the most critical

elements in deciding whether or not to

intervene: Can we intervene in a successful

way? Yes, there are many countries

throughout the world that face

crises right now, in Syria, in Sudan, in

the Congo, a whole bunch of places.

But most of those places—in fact in all

of those—there is no clear military

mission that we could accomplish and

achieve. In Libya, there was. If we intervened,

we could stop Qadhafi from

regaining control of his entire country.

At the time we understood there was

no guarantee that that would mean

that he would be driven from power immediately,

but we could at least stop

him from doing that. It was a humanitarian

crisis that our actions could prevent.

I think it made sense, and I think

the President has clearly articulated

that.

So for the Congress to pass a resolution

saying they have no earthly idea

what the President is doing in Libya

simply means that they haven’t been

paying attention for the last couple of

months. It has been made clear.

Now, I think it is appropriate that we

ask the President to regularly keep in

touch with us, let us know where the

mission is going. I supported the resolution

that said no ground troops in

Libya. I think that is a step too far. I

don’t think that is something that

would clearly be able to be accomplished

militarily, so I do think that’s

appropriate.

But the part of this resolution that I

must oppose is the part that says the

President has made no national security

case for why we should be involved

in Libya. I believe that he has, and I

don’t think we should support a resolution

saying otherwise. To have simply

allowed Libya to fall apart and not

helped a people that we could clearly

help, that were legitimately calling for

greater freedom and greater opportunity,

I think, would have been a mistake.

So I will oppose the Boehner resolution,

and I will also oppose the

Kucinich resolution because I don’t believe

we should pull out of the mission.

But again, I thank all of those involved

for bringing this debate to the House

floor so that we can have that debate

so that we in Congress can assert our

authority and express our opinion on

this very, very important issue.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance

of my time.

The

President has said from the outset that

our role in this mission will be limited;

limited but critical. We are not committing

troops, we are not committing

the full force of the U.S. military, but

what we are contributing, as Mr.

MORAN said, is absolutely critical to

the success of the mission. We are supporting

our NATO allies in making

sure that this mission is carried out in

a very limited and very critical way.

I just want to emphasize again that

Muammar Qadhafi is not someone who

is in the best national security interests

of the United States of America.

He has a long, long history of weapons

of mass destruction, of supporting terrorist

groups, of committing terrorist

acts against United States citizens,

and of in general being an unstable and

destabilizing figure. When the people of

Libya decided to rise up to throw him

out, it was a very appropriate thing for

them to do.

Now we all wish that Mr. Qadhafi

would have gone quietly and simply—

that certainly would have been the

easier way to go—but he didn’t. And to

protect those people who have legitimate

aspirations for a better government,

we needed to intervene militarily

to assist.

Now I think in this instance the best

thing about this is we were not alone.

The Arab League, the United Nations,

NATO, took the lead. There is a great

deal of instability throughout the Middle

East and that is unquestionably in

the national security interests of the

United States of America to do whatever

we can to try and reduce that instability

and make sure that we have

friends, allies and also governments

that legitimately represent the aspirations

of their people. That is one of the

greatest problems we’ve had. We have

supported governments in the past in

the Middle East who didn’t have the

support of their people. We need not

just the support of governments, we

need the support of the people in that

region. This is a critical opportunity to

gain that support. I believe that’s

clearly in the national security interest

of the American people.

So, I do not agree with the gentleman

from Ohio’s resolution in saying

that the President has not articulated

a case. He has. We in the House

should vote whether we approve it or

not, but I don’t think it is correct to

say that the case has not been made.

Let’s have a vote in this body, as we

will, on the Kucinich resolution, of

whether or not to support what is

going on there or not, but we should

not simply be asking the President for

something he has already provided.

I yield back the balance of my time.