Mr.

Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

The bottom line with this resolution—

and I think the gentleman made

a lot of very fair points. I certainly

think that the White House could have

handled it better in terms of communicating

with Congress. But what this

resolution would do that he has presented

would be to end our mission in

Libya. So all of the debates and arguments

that you heard from the previous

discussion apply to this just as

well.

It has some limited options in terms

of what the President could continue

to do in support of NATO, but it very

specifically disallows any effort at air

support, any effort at suppressing opposition

fire. It does allow for aerial refueling.

It allows for rescue missions,

but what the military has made clear

is they will not do that without all of

the other assets that are necessary to

suppress enemy fire. We are not going

to send up our aerial refueling apparatus

or aerial refueling planes if we

know we can’t protect them from being

shot down.

So the effect of this resolution is to,

again, end the mission in Libya, and

people have different opinions about

where they should come down on that.

I don’t believe that we should end the

mission in Libya. I do believe that Congress’

voice should be heard on this

issue, and that is why I supported the

resolution that would have authorized

that. So I don’t think that we should

stop what we’re doing in Libya, and

getting back to the previous debate,

there have been some comments that

have been made that I want to be sure

and correct.

I think we have a much better idea of

who the forces in Libya fighting

against Muammar Qadhafi are than has

been said, and we know this because

they control roughly half the country

right now. What our mission was able

to do, it stopped Muammar Qadhafi

from being able to crush the folks who

are rising up against him and retake

the territory that they have. So in

Benghazi and in most of I think it’s

eastern Libya, it is controlled by these

opposition forces, and by all accounts,

they are running a very sensible government.

It is not an Islamic state. It

does not have al Qaeda influence. It has

a bunch of people who are simply trying

to exercise free expression that

they have been denied for nearly 40

years by Muammar Qadhafi. We have a

very good idea who these people are.

They are precisely the type of people

that the United States of America

should be supporting.

And as I mentioned before, in our

great struggle against al Qaeda, one of

the centerpieces of it is ideological.

The ideology that bin Laden and many

others advance is very anti-Western,

and their biggest argument is that the

West has consistently supported governments

that have repressed the Muslim

people, that we have not been good

for them, and there are at least one or

two instances when that argument actually

has some facts to back it up.

And now we are presented with the

chance to support a legitimate group of

people who want basically what we

have—democracy. They want the ability

to vote for their representatives.

They want a voice in their government,

and we are going to pull the rug out

from under them.

And keep in mind, this is a very limited

mission. It is NATO-led, but we

are offering critical support to make it

possible, and if we vote for the Rooney

resolution, we will pull all of that away

and right at the moment—in fact,

there was a newspaper story this morning

about how Qadhafi is talking about

leaving Tripoli because the pressure is

getting too great on him. We have had

continual members of the Libyan Government

abandoning Qadhafi. He is

ready to fall, and those voices of Libyan

people who want the very freedoms

that we all say we want for them are

ready to rise, and we are going to reverse

that by pulling out this minimal

level of support that we are offering.

That is the effect of the Rooney resolution,

and therefore I oppose it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

There are

a number of arguments about this issue

and arguments in favor of ending the

mission in Libya. I think the Speaker

articulated one, which is basically we

support the idea of the removal of Qadhafi

and they support the idea of supporting

the people in Libya who are

asking for a representative government.

They just don’t like our President’s

process. But that argument

doesn’t really make sense because if, in

fact, their big complaint is that Congress

hasn’t had the opportunity to authorize

this, then the Speaker of the

House has had, by his own admission, a

hundred days to offer that voice, to

come up and say, No, we support the

mission but here’s how we want to

limit it. They have not done that.

I agree very strongly with Mr. BERMAN’s

statements. You can’t have it

both ways. You can’t say we would like

to remove Qadhafi, we would like to

support the Libyan people, but we’re

going to offer up resolutions that are

going to stop that from happening.

Now, we can argue back and forth

about that process, but clearly the

Speaker of the House had an option in

front of him to deal with that process

issue, and this isn’t it.

As has been pointed out, this will

stop what we are doing in Libya. If you

support that—let me just say I support

Mr. KUCINICH in the sense that he is

very honest. He doesn’t like what is

going on there. He wants it stopped.

That’s a legitimate position. But to

stand up and say, Yes, we have to support

the Libyan people; yes, Qadhafi

should go, we’re just going to cut the

legs out from under the effort that

would actually do that because of a

complicated process argument is not a

legitimate point.

I also want to point out people are legitimately

concerned about the U.S.

being too militant in our approach, and

I agree with that. We cannot be the policeman

for the world. We should not

always carry the load. But in this case

it is a very, very limited mission that

we have. For once, NATO is actually

carrying the bulk of the mission.

While I agree with Mr. FRANK’s comments

from earlier that NATO needs to

step up and do more, we finally have an

instance when they are stepping up and

doing more, and we want to pull the

rug out from under them for the tiny

little piece of help that we are giving

that makes this mission possible. This

is a limited role, and we must recognize

that.

The Speaker also emphasized that we

would like to have all the answers

going in. We’d like to know what the

mission to get rid of Qadhafi is exactly.

Well, you don’t always have all the answers,

and this has evolved. Initially,

our mission was clear: Stop Qadhafi

from crushing the forces who are trying

to rise up and have a voice in their

own government. And we did that.

Incidentally, we do have some answers

about who these rebels are. Do

you want to know who they are? Look

at Benghazi. What’s going on in

Benghazi, the place that is controlled

by the people in opposition to Muammar

Qadhafi? It is not the Muslim

Brotherhood. It is not al Qaeda. It is

the people of Libya wanting a representative

government who are running

that place. So let’s stop acting

conveniently like we don’t know who

these people are. We do have a very

good idea who they are, and they are

deserving of our support.

We have a clear, limited vision. If we

vote for Rooney, we pull the rug out

from under that mission. We put Qadhafi

in a position to stay in power,

and we undermine a group of people

who are asking for a legitimate voice

in their government. And keep in mind,

again, this is a very limited use of U.S.

power in a very positive way. Whatever

the process arguments are that

brought us to this point, don’t let them

have the United States look like we

don’t support people standing up for

the very values that we continually

espouse throughout the world.

I urge defeat of this resolution and

support for what we are doing in Libya.

With that, I yield back the balance of

my time.

Mr.

Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

I rise in support of this resolution.

This is Congress exercising its authority

as appropriate. And I agree with

the people who say that Congress

should do this, and I just wish we

would understand that Congress has a

certain responsibility in that regard.

Yes, the President should have asked

us, but it’s been over 3 months and this

House has chosen not to act until now.

I think it’s appropriate that we are. I

think we should authorize this mission

in Libya, and I strongly support that

mission.

Now, like most Americans, when this

issue first came up, when the people in

Libya started rising up against their

oppressive dictator, I was very reluctant

about the idea of U.S. military involvement,

as I think we always should

be. I think in the past we have been too

over-anxious to use the U.S. military

in places where it was not a good fit.

We need to think carefully about this.

And in every instance we need to strike

a balance.

On the one hand, what is the positive

impact that our involvement could

have and, on the other hand, what are

the risks of that involvement? I think

there was a unique set of circumstances

in Libya that made this

make sense.

First of all, our involvement could

have a very positive impact. We had

international support. The U.N., NATO,

the Arab League, everybody in the

world wanted Qadhafi to be stopped

from slaughtering the civilians who

were rightfully standing up and asking

for the basic rights that we take for

granted in this country. In addition to

that, our military budget is roughly

equivalent to the entire rest of the

world’s combined. That gives us a

unique set of capabilities. That unique

set of capabilities was critical to stopping

Qadhafi from crushing again the

legitimate democratic aspirations of

the Libyan people. If we had not acted,

they would be crushed, many more civilians

would be dead, and Qadhafi

would be back in power. We cannot

walk away from that responsibility and

say that, well, yes, we don’t like Qadhafi,

we wish the people there would

do well, but we simply don’t want to

support the action that is necessary to

give them that opportunity. So in this

case, I think the mission did make

sense for that reason. The United

States was in the position to make a

difference and stand up for people who

were asking for legitimate rights.

But then the broader question is,

well, what does that have to do with

the United States? That may be true,

but it’s true in a lot of countries. The

reason this is so important is because

of the broader movement that is going

on, the so-called Arab Spring, people in

Muslim countries rising up and demanding

representative rights. That

has an incredible impact on us. The

greatest threat that we face as a country

right now is from al Qaeda and

their ideology. That ideology arose in

part because of a whole bunch of repressive

governments across the Muslim

world that weren’t providing for

their people, a number of repressive

governments, by the way, which the

United States has in the past supported.

We had an opportunity to do

the opposite, to stand up for Muslim

people. Let me tell you, in the history

of this country, I don’t think we’ve

ever gotten as much positive press on

the Muslim TV stations and Muslim

media as we got for standing up to Qadhafi.

This has been enormously helpful

to us in that broader ideological effort.

We had national security interests

here for standing up.

Now as a House, I don’t want us to

stand up and say that we’re going to

back down from that commitment that

we made. Make no mistake about it, if

we defeat this resolution and pass the

Rooney resolution, we will stop the

mission in Libya and empower Muammar

Qadhafi, something that I know

nobody wants to do.

I reserve the balance of my time.