Mr. Speaker, if this resolution

passes, and we weaken NATO’s

mission, Qadhafi may very well prevail.

His forces will then kill, rape, and

torture all those Libyans who opposed

him, as he has already tried to do. Qadhafi

has reportedly kidnapped thousands

of people, including young students

to serve as human shields and

march at the vanguard of his forces. If

any of his own soldiers refuse to gun

down unarmed innocent civilians,

they’re shot immediately.

Once he’s done with his own people,

he’ll turn his attention to those NATO

and Middle Eastern nations that attacked

him and seek revenge. Remember,

this is a man who is already responsible

for the deaths of 189 innocent

passengers on Pan Am 103.

Let’s face it. This is not about whether

the Obama administration has been

thorough enough in explaining the

Libya rationale to Congress. Members

understand why the President intervened.

We can read. We can think; we

can decide.

The real question is, will we politicize

this effort in the same way that

the Republican Congress politicized

President Clinton’s successful intervention

in a NATO-led mission in Bosnia

15 years ago? The limited action

we’re taking to support the NATO mission

in Libya does not rise to a level of

conflict meant to be governed by the

War Powers resolution. Presidents of

both parties have initiated similar actions

in Grenada, Panama, Somali,

Bosnia, Haiti, Kosova.

What this really is about, the transcendent

purpose of this mission is to

seize an opportunity to show the world,

particularly the young majority of the

Arab and Muslim world who are thirsting

for economic and political freedoms,

that we are on their side. We

have the opportunity to show the Arab

world and every nation on Earth who

we are as a people. It shouldn’t matter

who’s in the White House. We should be

united in the cause of democracy. We

should debate; but when the debate is

over, politics should take a back seat

to policy.

The legacy of America is that we will

fight tyranny and defend innocent people

as best and as forcefully as we can,

in good economic times and bad.

This debate should come to an end.

We know exactly what’s at stake. If

Qadhafi is allowed to violently suppress

the uprising in Libya, it will

mean many more years of despotic

rule. Isolated by his repulsive acts of

repression and buoyed by oil wealth,

he’d have nothing to lose by aiding violent

subversive groups in neighboring

countries, including those with vulnerable

fledgling democracies like Tunisia

and Egypt. That would not only be a

defeat for democracy in the region; it

would be a death blow for NATO, the

most important military alliance the

world has yet achieved.

Imagine if, just 2 weeks

after Secretary Gates excoriated some

of our NATO allies for skimping on

their commitments to the global security

infrastructure that is a key to our

economic system and the open societies

that safeguard our prosperity and

our way of life, imagine if now we

turned our backs on NATO. What a

global embarrassment.

Now is the time to stand together

against a murderous dictator to give

democracy an opportunity in a part of

the world that has not experienced it, a

part of the world which is vital to

America’s security.

That’s why I urge my colleagues to

reject this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we were

asked to come into Libya by Libyans,

by the Arab League, by the Gulf Cooperation

Council, by the European

Union, and by the United Nations Security

Council. Today we are standing

where we should be standing, with

those who believe in freedom, in human

rights, and in the rule of law.

But also today, as we debate this

issue, Muammar Qadhafi’s forces continue

their merciless assault against

civilians and combatants alike, not

just in Misratah but in the western

mountains and cities throughout central

Libya. The Libyan Transitional

National Council, which needs our support,

is extraordinarily short of weaponry,

money, and training. But they

are the boots on the ground, fighting

and dying to dislodge Qadhafi, who is a

bad guy, who did oversee the killing of

189 innocent passengers on PanAm 103.

We need to be on the other side, not

giving comfort to Qadhafi so that he

can thank us for the resolution and

this vote as he thanked Speaker BOEHNER

for his resolution last week. We

need to make clear we don’t support

him. We do support people who are

fighting for the same values that define

our country; 38 of those people were

killed just this week. To cut off operational

funding for the NATO operation

is to side with Qadhafi against

the forces who are fighting for those

values which define us.

And, you know, the idea that this

hasn’t been explained sufficiently by

the President is a bogus one. We have

minds of our own. We know the facts.

We can make a judgment. The right

judgment is to side with the President

and to continue this support to the

Libyans until America shows all the

people of the Arab world that it’s true

to its own values and principles.