Mr. Speaker, I

yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I do not support a complete

U.S. withdrawal from NATO’s Operation

Unified Protector. I believe

that it is necessary for U.S. Armed

Forces to remain engaged in a limited

capacity. However, I cannot support an

authorization which constitutes our

current level of engagement for an entire

year. This is what is proposed in

H.J. Res. 69, offered by my friend from

Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), and I therefore

must rise in opposition to his resolution.

This resolution not only authorizes

U.S. military engagement in Libya far

beyond even the 90-day NATO extension,

but it justifies U.S. military engagement

in Libya as undertaken to

enforce a United Nations Security

Council resolution and at the request

of the Transitional National Council,

the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the

Arab League. So we must ask: Where is

the United States Congress in this

equation?

If an authorization resolution had

been put forward in February, I might

have been able to support it. I understand

the mission. But in the intervening

period, conditions have changed

significantly on the ground in Libya,

within NATO, with our NATO partners,

and here in the U.S. Decisive action

with congressional authorization at

the outset might have solved this problem

quickly, but now we have drifted

into an apparently open-ended commitment

with goals that remain only

vaguely defined. And that is at the

heart of the problem, Mr. Speaker.

The President asserted, ‘‘These

strikes will be limited in their nature,

duration, and scope.’’ Well, it is now

day 97—97—of our involvement of U.S.

Armed Forces in hostilities regarding

Libya; yet Qadhafi still clings to power

and the opposition appears to be no

closer to a decisive victory. Command

for the military operation has been

transferred to NATO; yet the constrained

role the President has said is

being played by U.S. forces in Libya

still includes nearly one-quarter of the

total sorties flown in Libya; suppression

of the enemy air defense through

missile strikes; strikes by unmanned

Predators on Qadhafi targets; nearly 70

percent of the mission’s intelligence,

surveillance, and reconnaissance; and

over 75 percent of all aerial refueling.

Yet the President has yet to explain

just what American interests are at

stake and just what outcomes he is

hoping to achieve.

The resolution offered by our Speaker,

Speaker BOEHNER, and adopted by

this Chamber on June 3 posed specific

questions that required straight answers.

Instead, we received a letter and

accompanying documents from the

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for

Legislative Affairs and the Assistant

Secretary of Defense for Legislative

Affairs, which stated that U.S. actions

in Libya were ‘‘taken in response to direct

appeals from the Libyan people

and acting with a mandate from the

United Nations.’’

The administration proceeded to justify

its current policy by asserting that

U.S. military operations in Libya do

not constitute hostilities. This argument

is so incredulous that even the

attorneys in the Office of the Legal

Counsel do not agree. Therefore, I am

not optimistic that the reporting provisions

in the resolution we are considering

today, which calls for ‘‘a full and

updated explanation of the President’s

legal and constitutional rationale for

conducting military operations in

Libya,’’ will be fulfilled in a fulsome

manner, respectful of congressional

prerogatives.

Again, I must underscore that I do

not support a complete withdrawal

from our commitments concerning

Libya. That would be dangerous. That

would be ill-advised. A complete withdrawal

of all U.S. military assets from

the Libya operations would undermine

our intelligence efforts and our foreign

policy goals, and would all but assure a

victory for Qadhafi. It can lead to

greater instability, which could affect

NATO operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

at a critical stage of transition.

There are also proliferation concerns

at stake, particularly as an increasing

number of weapons have moved into

the region and reportedly fallen into

the hands of extremist organizations,

including al Qaeda in the Islamic

Maghreb. The Qadhafi regime is an unpredictable

regime that has chemical

weapons, including mustard and possibly

sarin gas.

While a complete withdrawal is unacceptable,

the resolution before us is

also unacceptable. The resolution effectively

ratifies all that the President

has done, and it would grant him the

blessings of Congress to continue on

his present course. The resolution before

us would enable mission creep,

rather than setting clear parameters

for U.S. engagement. I must therefore

oppose this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.