Mr.

Speaker, I rise today in opposition to

House Joint Resolution 68, which authorizes

the President to continue

military operations in Libya.

I appreciate all the policy arguments

that I’ve heard here today. But the

question for me is, is it illegal or not?

If it’s a question of law, then all of the

arguments about making this group

mad or not being a good ally, et cetera,

those are very persuasive; but those

are not legal arguments. Those don’t

change whether the actions in Libya

are constitutional or legal. Those are

policy arguments.

The President continues to be in violation

of the War Powers resolution,

which requires congressional approval

for military action within 60 days of

the initial use of our Armed Forces.

That deadline expired long ago.

The President continues to involve

the U.S. military in this illegal conflict

and has continually ignored requests

to gain congressional approval.

What’s so hard, Mr. President, about

coming to the House and consulting

with the Congress? What’s so hard

about that? Other Presidents who may

have had their doubts about the constitutionality

of the War Powers resolution

have still gone through the process

to respect the people that are represented

by this body.

Reportedly, the President ignored advice

from his top lawyers at the Pentagon

and the Justice Department who

said that he no longer had the legal authority

to continue military action

without congressional authorization.

Furthermore, this is not a legal argument—

but I think it’s relevant—we’re

broke. The price tag of the military action

in Libya has already cost the U.S.

Government over $750 million. This resolution

would authorize the President

to continue military action in Libya

for up to a year. That could result in

billions of dollars of funding by the

American taxpayer that we just can’t

afford.

We cannot spend precious taxpayer

funds to support this military action

while the President flouts the law and

Constitution.