Mr. Speaker, I rise in support

of H.J. Res. 68, regarding continuing operations

in Libya. As a member of the House

Armed Services and Intelligence Committees,

I believe it is vitally important for Congress to

exercise strong oversight of the conduct of

military operations across the globe. It is for

this reason that I have supported measures

requiring Congress to authorize the use of limited

military force in Libya to protect civilians

and support the ongoing NATO mission

against Muammar Qaddafi, while prohibiting

U.S. ground combat forces.

The President, with the full backing of our

allies, the Arab League, and the UN, engaged

our military forces in Libya to prevent a humanitarian

disaster that raised the specter of

tragic episodes like Rwanda and Srebrenica.

While I am always reluctant to involve our military

in any conflict, I support the President’s

decision to protect the people of Libya and uphold

U.S. principles of political freedom and

basic human rights, when we have the ability

to do so. I do not, however, support any effort

to involve U.S. ground combat forces in this

operation, and this authorization specifically

prohibits ground combat forces.

Earlier this month, Congress received a letter

from Qaddafi praising its criticism of President

Obama over the NATO mission. The

world watches America, and what we say has

a dramatic effect on not just our own nation,

but the safety and security of our allies and

peoples around the world. That is why I will

also vote today against H.R. 2278, which is a

thinly veiled attempt to discredit the President

and would only heighten the appearance of divisions

between the United States and our allies.

Abdicating the mission in Libya in this

way emboldens Qaddafi, harms our standing

in a dangerous region, and will make it more

difficult in the future to rely on and partner with

our allies.

I hope my colleagues will reject this measure

and send a clear message of support for

our allies and for the principles of democracy

and human rights that make America great.