Mr. Speaker, engaging our

armed forces is not a vote I take lightly. Like

many, I was reluctant to enter our nation into

another conflict. But the situation in Libya is

different.

This is a nation where the people were giving

their lives to fight for a legitimate voice in

their government. For these actions, their murderous

dictator vowed to hunt them down like

‘‘rats and cockroaches.’’ Chilling words as

Muammar el-Qaddafi is no stranger to taking

the lives of the innocent. He has more American

blood on his hands than any terrorist

other than Osama bin Laden.

The international community sought our help

in Libya. The Arab League supports the NATO

mission and this is historic, as it is the first

time the organization has supported an international

intervention in an Arab country. The

United States’ role can make a difference in

Libya. To say otherwise is to question the very

values our own nation was founded upon. I

believe that our limited mission in Libya is

needed and I stand with President Obama.

Let’s remember two things. The movement

to overthrow longtime Libyan dictator Colonel

Qaddafi began with the Libyan people. The

United States should stand with the people of

Libya and their fight for freedom and human

rights.

We must also remember that under Colonel

Qaddafi, Libya was involved in aircraft hijackings,

extraterritorial assassinations, bombings

at European airports, and the 1986 bombing

of a Berlin nightclub popular with American

Armed Forces. Libya had a central role in orchestrating

and financing the in-air bombing of

Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in

1988, which killed 270 people, including 190

Americans. Libya was also central in the

bombing of French UTA flight 772 in 1989,

which killed 177 people from 18 nations, 7 of

whom were American citizens.

The violence of Colonel Qaddafi is known to

many nations around the world. In the early

1970s, Libya sent military troops and financed

extremist Palestinian activities in Lebanon.

Libya gave safe haven to Black September,

the Palestinian terrorists that seized Israeli

athletes as hostages at the 1972 Olympics in

Munich. Later in the decade, Libya sent armed

forces into Chad and Uganda. Throughout the

1970s and well into the 1980s, Colonel

Qaddafi either financed or materially supported

revolutionary efforts in Chad, Corsica,

Eritrea, Germany, Iran, Italy, Nicaragua, Northern

Ireland, Japan, Lebanon, Philippines, Sardinia,

Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, and

Tunisia. Ending the reign of Colonel Qaddafi

and his destabilizing influence is in the interest

of the world.

I’ve heard from many of my constituents

concerned that our engagement in Libya will

become our next Iraq or Afghanistan. I share

those concerns and have expressed them to

the White House and was assured that our

operations in Libya would be limited.

I have voted against the use of ground

troops in Libya and my vote today affirms that

position. I do not believe that the United

States can afford to be involved in further prolonged

foreign entanglements and nation

building. H.J. Res. 68 authorizes the limited

support for the NATO mission to one year.

Would I be more comfortable with a shorter

timeframe? Yes, but so likely would Colonel

Qaddafi. Nothing would give him more comfort

than a short deadline for him to cling to so he

can continue to slaughter his own people into

submission.

The situation in Libya is unlike that in Iraq

or Afghanistan. The mission in Libya has

broad international support. I’ve mentioned the

Arab League and NATO, but also the United

Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Libyan

Transitional National Council, and former

Libyan Ambassador Ali Aujali support our mission.

Traditional Libyan allies, such as China,

Russia, and Turkey, have begun talks with the

newly formed Libyan Transitional National

Council. I strongly support the building of international

goodwill and cooperation as integral

to our nation’s as well as global security.

My vote today is for the brave and courageous

people of Libya. My vote today is for

continued rebuilding of our international reputation.

Mahalo nui loa.