Madam Speaker,

I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

I rise in opposition to H. Con. Res. 51,

directing the President to remove

United States Armed Forces from

Libya. The President has failed to

make the legal and constitutional case

that he owes to the Congress and to the

American people before committing

American forces to a voluntary conflict.

But the situation as it stands

today poses an important U.S. national

security consideration, and it requires

this body to oppose this Kucinich resolution.

What are these considerations,

Madam Speaker? These are: the sudden

U.S. withdrawal from Libyan operations

proposed by this resolution

could do irreparable harm to the NATO

alliance, and ultimately undermine

support for NATO efforts in Afghanistan.

Also, the longer Qadhafi is able to

cling to power and continue fighting,

the more that he will destabilize the

larger region. Conflict is already spilling

over into neighboring countries—

Tunisia, for example, which is undergoing

a fragile transition of its own.

Also, there are significant proliferation

concerns at stake, including the need

to secure Libyan chemical munitions

and prevent the flow of heavy and light

weaponry from leaking across the porous

borders of Libya. Also, extremist

organizations that pose a credible

threat to American interests, including

al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, already

are exploiting the opportunity to

arm themselves and organize.

So while I share the frustration of

my colleagues, I am deeply concerned

that an abrupt withdrawal of support

for the NATO mission would have repercussions

that extend far beyond the

borders of Libya. Adoption of this resolution

would send a signal to Qadhafi

that if he can just hang on for 15 days

more, the alliance will crumble and he

can resume his destructive behavior

and his destabilizing activities. In

Egypt, the stability necessary to prevent

extremist elements from seizing

control could be compromised if the

conflict in Libya remains unresolved.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, providing

Qadhafi free rein by forcing the

U.S. to rapidly withdraw from the

NATO operation would pose an even

more virulent threat to such other allies

in the region as Israel. An

emboldened Qadhafi regime would be in

a position to provide both destabilizing

types and amounts of conventional

weapons, as well as unconventional capabilities

through new and existing

smuggling routes to violent extremists

in Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza,

extremists who seek the destruction of

Israel.

A U.S. withdrawal in a manner that

is called for in this resolution, in fact

mandated in this resolution, could

have detrimental consequences for

countries such as Jordan and the

United Arab Emirates, who provide

critical support to the United States

and our NATO allies in Afghanistan.

And, as operations experts from the

Department of Defense warned yesterday,

an abrupt withdrawal from Libya

operations, as this resolution demands,

would severely undermine support by

our European allies for NATO efforts in

Afghanistan.

In fact, it would have a detrimental

effect on NATO’s efforts in Afghanistan

both in terms of weakening our mission

partners and emboldening the

Taliban, al Qaeda, and associated elements.

It would compromise the safety

and security of U.S. forces that at this

very moment are engaged in the battle

against heavily armed enemy forces in

Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, as many of my colleagues

know, my daughter-in-law

Lindsay served in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

I also have two committee staffers,

one in the Army Reserves and one

in the Marine Reserves, who recently

returned from serving a year each in

Afghanistan. They have emphasized

that the potential dangers to our

troops there of a NATO pullout or a decrease

of forces and assets in Afghanistan

due to a need to refocus them on

ongoing operations in Libya is indeed

dangerous for the United States. They

have emphasized that operations in

Libya do not exist in a vacuum.

Recall that the House just this last

week adopted an amendment to the National

Defense Authorization bill to

prevent U.S. military or private security

contractors from establishing or

maintaining a ground presence in

Libya. Speaker BOEHNER has offered a

resolution that we discussed previously

that further underscores that the Congress

does not support putting U.S.

boots on the ground in Libya.

Now, many have argued that Congress

needs to strongly exert its prerogatives

under War Powers. We must

do so, Madam Speaker, but do so in a

prudent and responsible manner that

protects the legitimate national security

interests of the United States.

This resolution, Madam Speaker, does

not do so. So I urge a ‘‘no’’ vote.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance

of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I

yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution

292, sponsored by our distinguished

Speaker. As the resolution

states at the outset, the Armed Forces

of the United States may only be used

to defend and advance the national security

interests of the United States,

not to enforce, to quote the President,

‘‘the writ of the international community,’’

nor because of the United Nations,

nor because of the Arab League.

Yet these are what the President has

repeatedly pointed to in justifying

sending U.S. forces into action in

Libya.

But what he has not done is explain

to the American people and to Congress

how the situation in Libya, if allowed

to spiral out of control, poses a

threat to U.S. national security interests.

It is an increasingly important region,

Mr. Speaker, with implications

stretching into other areas that are

vital to our Nation. Little, if any, details

have been provided in response to

repeated questions regarding U.S.

goals, the costs of the operation, the

scope of the operation, and other issues

of direct relevance to our national security.

It is an open question as to

whether the administration simply

won’t tell us or whether they just don’t

know the answers.

Members on both sides of the aisle

are increasingly frustrated. I share

that frustration. Many question the

importance of Libya to U.S. interests,

and especially the need for military engagement.

Many more are outright

angry about the disregard with which

the President and his administration

have treated Congress on the Libya

military engagement.

But it is not surprising that there is

a desire to simply say ‘‘enough’’ and to

force the President to withdraw precipitously,

regardless of the consequences.

But I believe that we would

only make a difficult situation worse

by taking such drastic action. The negative

impact would be widespread, Mr.

Speaker. The news that the U.S. House

of Representatives had mandated a

withdrawal of U.S. forces would send a

ray of sunshine into the hole in which

Qadhafi is currently hiding. It would

ensure his hold on power. It would be

seen not only in Libya, but throughout

the Middle East and North Africa as

open season to threaten U.S. interests

and destabilize our allies.

Pulling out of the NATO operation

would also undermine our NATO partners,

who, after years of prodding by

us, have finally begun to take more responsibility

for ensuring security and

stability in the region. How could we

then argue that they must maintain

their commitment to our allied efforts

in Afghanistan when we have just

pulled the rug out from under them in

Libya?

We must not let our frustration with

the President’s contempt for Congress

cloud our judgment and result in our

taking action that would harm our

standing, our credibility, and our interests

in the region. But clearly, we must

speak out.

This resolution offered by Speaker

BOEHNER would send an unambiguous

warning to the President that he must

either change course in his dealings

with Congress and the American people

or have the decisions regarding U.S. involvement

in Libya taken out of his

hands.

It states a fundamental truth that I

assume that most in this Chamber

agree with that U.S. forces must only

be used to defend and advance the national

security interests of the United

States. It underscores that the President

has not made a compelling case

for U.S. military involvement based on

U.S. interests, and it prohibits the employment

of U.S. ground forces in

Libya so that mission creep would not

gradually lead us into an ever-expanding

conflict.

It also requires the President to provide

to Congress the information that

we should have had at the outset, including,

Mr. Speaker:

What are the political and military

objectives of the United States and

Libya?

How do we intend to achieve them?

What specific commitment have we

made to our NATO operations, and how

might these impact our commitments

in Afghanistan?

What is the anticipated scope, the

duration, and the anticipated cost of

continued U.S. military involvement in

Libya?

What is the relationship between opposition

forces that are grouped under

the Interim Transitional National

Council and the Muslim Brotherhood,

the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, al

Qaeda, Hezbollah, and other extremist

groups?

How well armed are these and other

extremist groups, and how extensive

are their activities in Libya?

Who controls thousands of shoulder fired

antiaircraft missiles and stocks of

chemical weapons that Qadhafi has acquired?

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this resolution

bluntly states that the President has

neither sought nor received authorization

by the Congress for the continued

involvement of the United States

Armed Forces in Libya. If this clear

warning doesn’t get the attention at

the White House, then more forceful

action may be inevitable. The President

can choose to act with the support

of Congress and with the support of the

American people, but he will not be allowed

to proceed without it.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this

strong and necessary resolution.

With that, I am pleased to yield 1

minute to the distinguished Speaker of

the House of Representatives, the gentleman

from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Madam Speaker,

I yield myself the balance of my

time.

Madam Speaker, the resolution offered

by the Speaker is the responsible

approach. It expresses congressional intent.

It affords one last opportunity to

the President and his administration

to work with us in Congress to advance

U.S. interests in the region. I hope that

the President is listening and that this

resolution will serve as a wake-up call

leading to immediate consultation.

And, frankly, we have not had that as

we would like.

If, in 14 days, as it says in this resolution,

the President has not complied

with the requests included in the resolution,

then this House will consider

the next steps.

I therefore urge a ‘‘yes’’ vote on the

Boehner resolution, a responsible approach

to the President to work with

us and a plea to give us the information

that we requested.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance

of my time.