Mr. President, I rise to

join the Senator from Massachusetts,

who will shortly submit the product of

many hours of bipartisan cooperation

and negotiation, an authorization for

the limited use of military force in

Libya. The resolution, as will be introduced

by my colleague from Massachusetts,

as I mentioned, would authorize

the President to employ the U.S.

Armed Forces to advance U.S. national

security interests in Libya as part of

the international coalition that is enforcing

U.N. Security Council resolutions

in Libya. It would limit this authority

to 1 year, which is more than

enough time to finish the job, and it

makes clear that the Senate agrees

with the President that there is no

need and no desire to commit U.S. conventional

ground forces in Libya.

I will be the first to admit that this

authorization is not perfect and it will

not make everyone happy. It does not

fully make me happy. I would have preferred

that this authorization make

clear that our military mission includes

the President’s stated policy objective

of forcing Qadhafi to leave

power. I would have preferred that it

urge the President to commit more

U.S. strike aircraft to the mission in

Libya so as to help bring this conflict

to a close as soon as possible. And I

would have preferred that it call on the

President to recognize the Transitional

National Council as the legitimate

voice of the Libyan people so as to free

Qadhafi’s frozen assets for the Transitional

National Council to use on behalf

of the Libyan people. I have called

on the administration to do all of these

things for some time, and I do so now

again.

That said, this authorization has

been a bipartisan effort. My Republican

colleagues and I have had to make

compromises, just as have the Senator

from Massachusetts and his Democratic

colleagues. I believe the end result

is an authorization that deserves

the support of my colleagues in the

Senate on both sides of the aisle, and I

am confident they will support it.

I know the administration has made

it clear that it believes it does not need

a congressional authorization such as

this because it is their view that U.S.

military operations in Libya do not

rise to the level of hostility. I believe

this assertion will strike most of my

colleagues and the Americans they represent

as a confusing breach of common

sense, and it seems to be undercut

by the very report the administration

sent to Congress which makes clear

that U.S. Armed Forces have been and

presumably will continue to fly limited

strike missions to suppress enemy air

defenses, to operate armed Predator

drones that are attacking Qadhafi’s

forces in an effort to protect Libyan civilians,

and to provide the overwhelming

support for NATO operations,

from intelligence to aerial refueling.

Indeed, we read in today’s New

York Times that since the April 7 date

that the administration claims to have

ceased hostilities in Libya, U.S. warplanes

have struck at Libyan air defenses

on 60 occasions and fired about

30 missiles from unmanned drones.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent

to have printed in the RECORD at

the conclusion of my remarks the article

from today’s New York Times entitled

‘‘Scores of U.S. Strikes in Libya

Follow Handoff to Libya.’’

I certainly agree that

actions such as these do not amount to

a full-fledged state of war, and I will

certainly grant that I am no legal

scholar, but I find it hard to swallow

that U.S. Armed Forces dropping

bombs and killing enemy personnel in

a foreign country does not amount to a

state of hostilities.

What is worse, this is just the latest

way in which this administration has

mishandled its responsibility with regard

to Congress. The President could

have asked to authorize our intervention

in Libya months ago, and I believe

it could have received a strong, though

certainly not unanimous, show of support.

The administration’s disregard for

the elected representatives of the

American people on this matter has

been troubling and counterproductive.

The unfortunate result of this failure

of leadership is plain to see in the fullscale

revolt against the administration’s

Libya policy that is occurring in

the House of Representatives. As I

speak now, our colleagues in the House

are preparing a measure that would cut

off all funding for U.S. military operations

in Libya, and they plan to vote

on it in the coming days.

I know many were opposed to this

mission from the beginning, and I respect

their convictions. I myself have

disagreed and disagreed strongly at

times with aspects of the administration’s

policy in Libya. But at the end

of the day, I believe the President did

the right thing by intervening to stop a

looming humanitarian disaster in

Libya.

Amid all our arguments over prudence,

legality, and constitutionality

of the administration’s policy in Libya,

we cannot forget the main point: In the

midst of the most groundbreaking geopolitical

event in two decades, as

peaceful protests for democracy were

sweeping the Middle East, with Qadhafi’s

forces ready to strike at the gates

of Benghazi and with Arabs and Muslims

in Libya and across the region

pleading for the U.S. military to stop

the bloodshed, the United States and

our allies took action and prevented

the massacre Qadhafi had promised to

commit in a city of 700,000 people. By

doing so, we began creating conditions

that are increasing the pressure on Qadhafi

to give up power.

Yes, the progress toward this goal

has been slower than many had hoped

and the administration is doing less to

achieve it than I and others would like,

but the bottom line is this: We are succeeding,

Qadhafi is weakening. His

military leaders and closest associates

are abandoning him. NATO is increasing

the tempo of its operations and degrading

Qadhafi’s military capabilities

and command and control. The Transitional

National Council is gaining

international recognition and support

and performing more effectively, and

though their progress is uneven, opposition

forces in Libya are making strategic

gains on the ground.

We are all entitled to our opinions

about Libya policy, but here are the

facts. Qadhafi is going to fall. It is just

a matter of time. So I ask my colleagues,

is this the time for Congress

to turn against this policy? Is this the

time to ride to the rescue of a failing

tyrant when the writing is on the wall

that he will collapse? Is this the time

for Congress to declare to the world, to

Qadhafi and his inner circle, to all of

the Libyans who are sacrificing to

force Qadhafi from power, and to our

NATO allies who are carrying a far

heavier burden in this military operation

than we are—is this the time for

America to tell all of these different

audiences that our heart is not in this,

that we have neither the will nor the

capability to see this mission through,

that we will abandon our closest

friends and allies on a whim? These are

the questions every Member of Congress

needs to think about long and

hard but especially my Republican colleagues.

Many of us remember well the way

some of our friends on the other side of

the aisle savaged President Bush over

the Iraq war and how they sought to do

everything in their power to tie his

hands and pull America out of that

conflict. We were right to condemn

that behavior then, and we would be

wrong to practice it now ourselves simply

because the leader of the opposite

party occupies the White House. Someday—

I hope soon—a Republican will

again occupy the White House, and

that President may need to commit

U.S. armed forces to hostilities. So if

my Republican colleagues are indifferent

to how their actions would affect

this President, I would urge them

to think seriously about how a vote to

cut off funding for this military operation

can come back to haunt a future

President when the shoe is on the other

foot.

The House of Representatives will

have its say on our involvement in

Libya this week. The Senate has been

silent for too long. It is time for the

Senate to speak, and when that time

comes I believe we will find a strong bipartisan

majority in favor of authorizing

our current military operations

in Libya and seeing this mission

through to success. That is the message

Qadhafi needs to hear; it is a message

Qadhafi’s opponents, fighting to

liberate their nation, need to hear; and

it is a message America’s friends and

allies need to hear.

So let’s debate this authorization,

but then let’s vote on it as soon as possible.

I wish to thank my colleague from

Massachusetts for his hard work on

this resolution. I understand he will be

submitting it very soon. I hope the majority

leader of the Senate will schedule

a debate and vote on this resolution

as soon as possible. It is long overdue.

Mr. President, I yield

the floor, and I suggest the absence of

a quorum.