Mr. President, I

thank my friend and colleague from

Arizona. It is my honor to join with

him in submitting this resolution. I

hope in time that we will gather the

support of Members on both sides of

the political aisle and that we will

make a statement, an urgent statement,

that the Members of the U.S.

Senate are ready, across party lines, to

take a stand because we understand we

are at a turning point in history and

we cannot stand back and hope it goes

in the right direction. In fact, today, as

we watch events unfolding in Libya, I

think we have reason to believe it is

going in exactly the wrong direction.

Let me read the first two paragraphs

of this resolution Senator MCCAIN and

I are submitting because I think it sets

what is happening in Libya in a context

and also explains why we think

America has a national interest in how

the conflict in Libya ends.

The first paragraph of the resolution

we are submitting reads:

The second paragraph:

I read those two paragraphs because

they set exactly in context what is

happening in Libya. The fact is that

Libya is occurring in the context of

these extraordinary, peaceful, democratic

uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt

that have been described—and I think

correctly—as the Arab spring.

For too long, we accepted an argument

that there were only two choices

for the United States and most of the

rest of the world in the Arab world.

There was a choice between secular

dictatorships that were cordial to us on

one side and on the other side radical

Islamist regimes that despised us and

were threatening to us. We made our

peace with those secular dictatorships,

but it was inherently uncomfortable

and inconsistent with our basic democratic

values going back to the Declaration

of Independence.

Beginning in Tunisia and spreading

to Egypt and then to Libya and other

countries, the Arab people themselves

rose up and said: No, there is a third

way. And the third way is democracy.

We want political freedom. We want

economic opportunity. We want into

the modern world. We don’t want extremism

of any kind.

Those revolutions, those uprisings resulted

in the end of the rule of two

longstanding rulers, Ben Ali in Tunisia

and Mubarak in Egypt, and they happened

peacefully for a lot of reasons.

Part of it was that those two leaders

did not order their militaries to turn

on their own people, and the militaries,

perhaps, in those two cases would not

have done it in any case. So that is the

Arab spring.

But now, in Libya, because Qadhafi

has taken exactly the opposite position

and turned his guns and his military

power on his own people as they peacefully

demonstrate for change, for universal

human rights, there is a danger

that what is happening in Libya is essentially

a wall being put up which

says: This peaceful democratic revolution

in the Arab world ends here. To

put it another way, the Arab spring

may be going the way of the Prague

spring of 1968 when the people of then-

Czechoslovakia rose up and Soviet

tanks and armaments suppressed their

revolution. We simply cannot let that

happen.

Senator MCCAIN and I were in Tunisia

and Egypt a couple of weeks ago,

and one of the messages we got, particularly

from the young people who

have been at the head of this remarkable

uprising in these two countries,

was: Don’t stand by. Please, America,

don’t stand by and let Qadhafi bludgeon

his own people who are asking for

the same rights and opportunity and

freedoms we have been asking for. If

you do, it will end the movement of

freedom and opportunity across the

Arab world. In some sense, the

Tunisians and Egyptians said to us: It

may set back our own cause, even

though we have been successful thus

far. That is why it has been so frustrating,

really infuriating, to watch as

Qadhafi has moved with increasing brutality

and force against his own people,

pushing his opponents back, threatening

to totally suppress their uprising.

I have been struck as I have watched

that the world community—most of

it—is spending so much time discussing

and debating, and as the world discusses

and debates what to do in Libya,

Libya descends back into Qadhafi’s

darkness. We simply cannot let that

happen.

The Libyan people are not asking us

to come in and fight for them. The Libyan

people don’t want our troops on

the ground. That is not what this resolution

would authorize. The Libyan

people want us to come to their aid in

the sense of enabling them to fight Qadhafi’s

forces and Qadhafi to carry on

as freedom fighters. They want recognition

as the established and legal

authority, sovereignty for their country.

They would like some military assistance.

They would like weapons.

They would like the kind of intelligence

and electronic assistance we

can give, and they would like us in

some way—a no-fly zone or using our

capacity to fire missiles from offshore—

to protect them from what has

turned the tide in their struggle for

freedom against Qadhafi and Libya,

which is the brutal use of Libyan air

power against the Libyan people. If we

don’t do this, I fear this Arab spring

will turn to winter—a winter of darkness

and suppression—again, too quickly,

and the world will regret it.

People have said to Senator MCCAIN

and me: What is the American national

interest in getting involved in Libya?

Let me just give a few reasons I think

we do have an interest.

First, we have a clear national interest—

a humanitarian interest—in not

standing idly by and watching tens of

thousands of people slaughtered by

their own government. As I have said,

if we stand by and do nothing, if this

happens, it will be devastating to

America’s image in the Arab world and

to our moral leadership throughout the

world. Some people have argued: Why

would we want to get involved in yet a

third Arab or Muslim country, thinking

of Iraq and Afghanistan before

that. But this is more like 1990 and 1991

and the first gulf war when the Arab

world itself was calling out to us:

Please help us get Saddam out of Kuwait.

The Arab world, as Senator

MCCAIN said, is pleading with us: Help

stop Qadhafi from slaughtering his own

people, the blood of our brothers and

sisters in Libya.

Second, we have a clear national interest

in preventing Libya from becoming

a failed state that al-Qaida and

other Islamist groups will exploit, and

that is precisely what will happen if

this becomes a bloody and protracted

civil war and then descends into chaos.

Third, if Qadhafi is able to defeat this

uprising, it will send a message, as

Senator MCCAIN has said, to every dictator

in the world that the way to stop

peaceful democratic protest is through

brutal violence.

Fourth, I don’t mean this quote literally,

but remember the old phrase

from earlier times in history: If you go

after the king, make sure you eliminate

him. Don’t leave him wounded. If

Qadhafi survives this, he is going to

cause no end of trouble for the United

States and anyone else in the world

who stood with the freedom fighters.

So let’s not think we can stand idly by

and that we will not pay ourselves the

consequences of Qadhafi surviving.

Finally, there is a relationship between

what is happening in Libya

today and the instability it has caused

throughout that region of the world

and the skyrocketing price of gasoline

at the pump that does concern the

American people every day. In fact,

with all that has been discussed, I

think the best we can do to stabilize

the price of gasoline in America is to

stabilize Libya and to enable the Libyan

opposition to Qadhafi to fight the

fair fight they want to fight.

So that is the intention of this resolution.

It is, as the French would say,

a ‘‘cris de coeur.’’ It is a cry from our

hearts because I fear we have let so

much time go by that it may be impossible

to enable the freedom fighters in

Libya to wage a fair fight.

I hope their cause is not lost because

it is our cause, and the least we can do

is help them fight for that cause

against the man who has suppressed

that cause under his rule.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

Mr. President, I

thank my friend and colleague from

Arizona. I fear that is exactly the message

we would be sending if the United

States and our allies stand back and

let Qadhafi, through the force of his

arms, suppress political dissent from

his own people.

One of the inspiring qualities to the

uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt was

that they were peaceful. Incidentally,

they were not anti-American. They

were pro-Tunisia, pro-Egypt. The people

of Tunisia and Egypt were pleading

for a better life. So the model there

and one of the most powerful examples

of peaceful protests, which is part of

American history, was established. It

changed those two governments, Tunisia

and Egypt.

Now we have another model being

set; that is, when your people rise up

and peacefully protest, you don’t respond,

you don’t negotiate, you don’t

listen to them, you don’t react. You

turn your firepower on them. You kill

them wantonly, and you keep doing

that until that dissent ends. One, in a

world that is increasingly dangerous,

that is a terrible message to send.

Two, in a world in which—well, let’s

just go back a little bit to what were

false choices in the Arab world. But in

the uprisings in Tunisia and in Egypt,

there has been expressed the strongest

possible repudiation of al-Qaida on the

one hand, and Iran on the other—that

is the Government of Iran—both of

which have followed an Islamist extremist

ideology and used violence to

achieve their ends.

So we have the Tunisia-Egypt model

of peaceful protest, democracy, economic

opportunity, and now we have

the other model of Qadhafi, which is violence,

which will beget more violence

and will cost us dearly.

I say to my friend from Arizona, as

we say in our resolution, President

Obama has made clear that he believes

Qadhafi must go. If, after that clear

statement of American policy by our

Commander in Chief, Qadhafi does not

go, and it is seen not just in the Arab

world but throughout the wider world

that the United States was not able to

mobilize action in the world community

to make sure Qadhafi went, but in

fact he stayed, it inevitably has an effect

on the credibility of American

leadership in the world.

None of us want that to happen, including

President Obama. So it is not

too late. The actions we have taken,

significant as they are—sanctions on

Qadhafi and some people close to him,

the threat or the plan to refer others

close to him to the International Court

of Justice—all are important. But, unfortunately,

what is more important

now is what is happening on the ground

in Libya. On the ground in Libya, the

power of the forces of Qadhafi are winning

in a fight that is not fair.

Mr. President, I

just want to conclude by saying this: In

our history in this country we have,

again, been quite fortunate, and it may

be that—as a friend of mine said to me,

it is hard for people to imagine themselves

in a position where they would

need to be rescued from danger, from

death. Senator MCCAIN cited some of

the episodes, dark times in recent history,

where people needed that help

from outside—the Holocaust,

Srebenica, the Balkans, Rwanda. We

acted. This is of that same type.

But when we think about Japan,

there is this parallel to the United

States. There have been natural disasters

in this country—earthquakes, hurricanes.

Katrina is an example. When

the people of the gulf coast region

pleaded with us, the central government,

the National Government, the

Federal Government, for help, we gave

it to them. I will never forget what the

Coast Guard did in rescuing lives on

the gulf coast after Katrina. In some

ways I think we have to perhaps see it

as a manmade disaster, as a natural

disaster. It is a basic rescue. In this

case they are not asking us to fight

their fight. They are asking us to leave

them the weapons, the cover, so that

they can fight their fight. That is the

intention of this resolution—bottom

line—to recognize the opposition to Qadhafi

in Benghazi as the government

and legitimate suffering government of

Libya, and then work with our allies in

the world community, including not

only our NATO allies but in the Arab

League and the Gulf Council to protect

the Libyan people from Qadhafi’s air

force.

I join with Senator MCCAIN in saying

that I hope Senators REID and MCCONNELL

can agree on a way to bring forth

this resolution quickly. Every moment

that passes without us helping the Libyan

opposition to make it a fair fight

is a moment in which darkness descends

over Libya.

Again, Senator MCCAIN said we are

willing to discuss changes to the resolution

because we would like this to be

a resolution that has the broadest possible

bipartisan support in the Senate.