

Congressman Rothman's Statement on Today's House Votes on Libya

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2011

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Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense; and State and Foreign Operations, released the following statement:

As Commander In Chief, the President of the United States must have the ability to defend our national interests, including working with and protecting our allies on an emergency basis, to respond to the rapidly changing dangers in our world. That is why I voted for H.J.Res. 68 in order to authorize the limited use of the United States Armed Forces in support of the NATO mission in Libya for one year. Working with our NATO allies we prevented genocide and continue to address the region's humanitarian, economic and military stability. However, there is still more to be done in these regards.

The world will not soon forget the murderous actions of Muammar Gaddafi, who has struggled to stay in power against the will of the Libyan people. This brutish thug – who has the blood of innocent Americans on his hands – continues to target and slaughter his own citizens who are protesting against his illegitimate and vicious regime.

However, it is also important that the Congress, acknowledging that a sufficient amount of time has passed for the President to seek authorization for the use of force from Congress, now vote on the continued use of our armed forces in the mission in Libya.

Our Founders wisely divided the power of our nation to wage war, making the President our Commander in Chief, but reserving the right to declare war for the Congress. The U.S. Constitution clearly reserves the power to declare war for the Congress alone. That is why, in addition to voting for H.J.Res. 68, I also voted for H.R. 2278 to make clear that no funds should be used for Operation Unified Protector in Libya unless they are first authorized by Congress.

Limited American involvement in the NATO-led Libyan mission is worthwhile, but it is time for the President to get the full authorization from Congress.

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