



June 20, 2011

An Open Letter to House Republicans

We thank you for your leadership as Congress exercises its Constitutional responsibilities on the issue of America's military actions in Libya. We are gravely concerned, however, by news reports that Congress may consider reducing or cutting funding for U.S. involvement in the NATO-led military operations against the oppressive regime of Libyan dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi. Such a decision would be an abdication of our responsibilities as an ally and as the leader of the Western alliance. It would result in the perpetuation in power of a ruthless dictator who has ordered terrorist attacks on the United States in the past, has pursued nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and who can be expected to return to these activities should he survive. To cut off funding for current efforts would, in short, be profoundly contrary to American interests.

We share the concerns of many in Congress about the way in which the Obama administration has conducted and justified this operation. The problem is not that the President has done too much, however, but that he has done too little to achieve the goal of removing Qaddafi from power. The United States should be leading in this effort, not trailing behind our allies. We should be doing more to help the Libyan opposition, which deserves our support. We should not be allowing ourselves to be held hostage to U.N. Security Council resolutions and irresolute allies.

What would be even worse, however, would be for the United States to become one of those irresolute allies. The United States must see this effort in Libya through to its conclusion.

Success is profoundly in our interests and in keeping with our principles as a nation. The success of NATO's operations will influence how other Middle Eastern regimes respond to the demands of their people for more political rights and freedoms. For the United States and NATO to be defeated by Muammar al-Qaddafi would suggest that American leadership and resolution were now gravely in doubt—a conclusion that would undermine American influence and embolden our nation's enemies.

In Speaker Boehner's June 14, 2011, letter to President Obama, he wrote that he believes "in the moral leadership our country can and should exhibit, especially during such a transformational time in the Middle East." We share that belief, and feel that now is the time for Congress to exhibit that moral leadership despite political pressures to do otherwise.

Sincerely,

Elliott Abrams

Gary Bauer

Max Boot

Ellen Bork

Scott Carpenter

Liz Cheney

Seth Cropsey

Thomas Donnelly

Eric Edelman

Jamie Fly

Reuel Marc Gerecht

John Hannah

William Inboden

Bruce Pitcairn Jackson

Ash Jain

Frederick Kagan

Robert Kagan

Lawrence Kaplan

William Kristol

Robert Lieber

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