BOCA RATON, Fla. - It's the first time FAU Middle Eastern studies professor Robert Rabil can talk about Moammar Gadhafi in the past tense.

"His rule was oppressive. He was corrupt ruler. He pursued a very erratic foreign policy," said Rabil.

Yet Gadhafi's stranglehold on many aspects of Libyan society kept warring factions at bay.

Now that the dictator is dead and there's no longer a single goal uniting different groups, Rabil worries that power could fall into the hands of radical Islamists.

Their goals, he says, run counter to a democracy.

"I don't know if someone could be worse than Gadhafi, I know you could have some bad scenarios that could play out in Libya and in other parts of the Middle East where you have the revolution," said Rabil.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was in Libya just a few days ago, attempting to get Libya's National Transitional Council to follow through on a promise to hold elections by the middle of next year.

Boca Raton Rep. Ted Deutch agrees that the U.S. role shouldn't end with Gadhafi's death.

"It's going to be the role of the United States and others to help foster democracy to make sure that the competing factions, having come together to oust Kadhafi, can come together to create democracy," said Deutch.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican, agreed with Deutch that Gadhafi's ouster signaled potential for positive change in Libya.

Rubio also criticized President Obama.

The president sent fighter jets as part of a NATO bombing campaign this summer.

But Rubio says the president should have been more aggressive.

"He did the right things. He just took too long to do it and didn't do enough of it. The consequences of that is that there are thousands of shoulder-fired rockets that are now missing. You've got thirty some-odd militias that have formed," said Rubio.

Professor Rabil expects a bumpy period as political and military forces establish new turf in Libya.