

[The Palm Beach Post](#)

BY U.S. REP. TOM ROONEY

Wednesday, March 29, 2011

*The Post* is correct to call on Congress to debate our military action in Libya ("No-fly zone is not no-risk," editorial). President Obama's speech to the nation Monday night about our mission in Libya this week left many questions unanswered, and he continues to send mixed messages about our ultimate goals in Libya. Congress must hold the administration's feet to the fire and ask the tough questions.

The president has limited authority to use military force without congressional authorization when there is an imminent national security threat, but he made clear that he acted for humanitarian, not national security, reasons. That violates the War Powers Act. The president must have congressional authorization for this mission to continue. A U.N. resolution is no substitute for approval by Congress.

The president says our mission is to protect Libyan civilians, not institute regime change, but has also stated that Moammar Gadhafi must be removed from power. Military leaders say Gadhafi could remain in power when our mission is complete. Either way, what happens next? What is the plan to replace Gadhafi if he falls, and how do we deal with him if he does not?

Since we are working with multiple nations through NATO, who is ultimately in charge and who will command our troops? If military action will last longer than 60 days, even under NATO command, will the President seek congressional authorization, as required by the War Powers Act?

The American people deserve a full and open debate.

*Editor's note: Tom Rooney, R-Tequesta, represents Florida's 16th Congressional District.*