

● This article is more than 15 years old

Libyan bombing 'unconstitutional', Republicans warn Obama

US public opinion split as Republicans claim Obama's use of military force in Libya is 'an affront to our constitution'



📷 US president Barack Obama makes a statement about military action against Libya from Brazil last Saturday. Photograph: Pablo Martinez Monsivais/AP

Ewen MacAskill in Washington

Tue 22 Mar 2011 04.03 EDT

 Prefer the Guardian on Google

Republican members of Congress are claiming the conflict in Libya is unconstitutional because [Barack Obama](#) failed to seek Congressional approval.

President Obama sent a letter defending the [Libya](#) intervention to members of Congress on Monday in an effort to quell a growing rebellion over his failure to consult the Senate and the House of Representatives before embarking on the third major military action of his presidency.

In the letter, Obama attempted to address criticism that he had failed to either brief or discuss his decision in detail with both Democrats and [Republicans](#). Under the US constitution, Congressional approval is required for declarations of war.

Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, a Republican on the House armed services committee, was among members who argued that military action in Libya was unconstitutional. He told the Hill magazine: "The United States does not have a King's army. President Obama's unilateral choice to use [US military](#) force in Libya is an affront to our constitution."

The Libyan conflict appears to have crept up almost unawares on many members of Congress and the US public. Events moved at speed at a time when members of Congress were either in their home states or travelling back from Washington, with the vote at the United Nations on Thursday evening and bombing beginning two days later.

Obama contacted key members of Congress on Friday asking them either to attend a meeting at the White House or participate via phone. Some have

