

The Bosnian Conflict and the US Congress: Reconsidering the US Congress' Role in the Failure of Multilateralism

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The aim of this article is to analyse the cause of America's failure to cooperate with its European allies regarding the international mediation efforts of the Bosnian conflict of 1992-1995. The Europeans attempted to settle this conflict by encouraging negotiation among the warring parties under the authorities of the United Nations. Securing America's support in this framework was critical. The Clinton administration, however, refused to endorse this European approach. Instead, it advocated the so-called 'lift and strike' policy. This caused the breakdown of the transatlantic partnership based on the principles of multilateralism.

Some academics as well as former US officials suggest that the congressional objection to support the European approach was the principal cause of the transatlantic row. This interpretation blames the congressional Republicans for the failure of multilateralism. Therefore, the interpretation defends the Clinton administration and the Democratic Party's credentials as multilateralist. This article evaluates the validity of such an interpretation by analysing the interaction between the Clinton administration and the US Congress on the policy-making processes of the key US actions regarding the Bosnian conflict.