

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 11, 2011 9:35 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: The congress is in session, it turns out . in Israel

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**From:** Toiv, Nora F  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 11, 2011 6:20 PM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J  
**Subject:** The congress is in session, it turns out ... in Israel

## **The congress is in session, it turns out ... in Israel**

**Posted By David Rothkopf - Wednesday, August 10, 2011 - 11:44 AM**

This week's reports that 20 percent of the U.S. Congress will be visiting Israel this month are stunning. Eighty-one members of Congress -- two thirds of them Republicans, 47 of them freshmen -- apparently think it is more important to be visiting Israel than it is to be at home dealing with the worst economic crisis in modern memory. America's economy is in flames and these guys are taking lobbyist-funded trips to what, watch Israelis take to the streets to protest the high-cost of living in that country?

This Jewish, Israel-supporting, foreign policy specialist says, "It's time to come home, ladies and gentlemen." While such visits are important and there is certainly a place for them in the lives of American legislators, now is not the time.

Indeed, I continue to be stupefied that in the midst of market turmoil that is directly associated with political dysfunction in Washington that no one who works in a leadership role in this city has the conscience or the awareness to recognize that this is not an August in which a recess should be taken. These folks should be back at their desks and hard at work. The president ought to take to his podium and demand they return. He ought to say he is going to provide one big new idea a day for helping to get the economy back on its feet until the Congress finally starts to take yes for an answer.

The political objectives behind these Israel trips are clear and they reveal the opportunity costs to the American people associated with campaign season. Every moment spent jumping through a hoop for a potential group of supporters is a moment spent failing to address one of the many urgent issues confronting the United States.

When will these pretenders grow up or make way for serious, committed adults who have the appetite and the spine to grapple with our current challenges? When will American voters demand better, or at least start paying attention?