

## Politicians Holiday During Financial Crisis (8th August, 2011)

Senior UK politicians are under fire for going on vacation during the current global economic crisis. In Britain, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor are all away on holiday. British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the most senior politician left in Britain, said this was not a problem and that his government was still “fully functioning”. Mr Hague said Britain was “not in the firing line” of the world’s financial problems as much as other countries. Opposition chancellor Ed Balls strongly disagreed with Mr Hague and accused the government of failing to provide leadership when it mattered most. He said there was “a gaping hole where British leadership should be” with the UK Government “absent from the global economic debate at this critical time”.

Prime Minister David Cameron is enjoying a \$15,000-a-week holiday in France with his family. He did take some time out to talk to the governor of the Bank of England about the growing economic crisis and the turmoil in the stock markets caused by the downgrading of America’s credit rating. Chancellor George Osborne also made phone calls to other European finance ministers during his vacation in Los Angeles. Opposition politician Angela Eagle urged the government leaders to “get a grip and show some leadership”. She said: “I don’t begrudge anyone a holiday...they have stressful jobs, but I think it is fairly extraordinary that they are all away at exactly the same time.” Her Colleague John Mann said; “They’ve left a junior banker in charge. It shows they haven’t got a clue what to do.”

### Questions

- Why do people enter politics?
- Is it wise for Britain’s three top leaders to go on holiday at the same time?
- Can a government be “fully functioning” without its three most senior leaders?
- How many holidays should politicians have and when?
- A saying goes: “You can tell when a politician lies because his/her lips move.” What do you think of this?