

## **US House Speaker Says He'll Invite PM to Speak**

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John Boehner will extend formal invitation once Congress approves resolution providing for joint session; Netanyahu expected to deliver new diplomatic initiative during US visit next month.

US House Speaker John Boehner will invite Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to address a joint meeting of the US Congress during a visit to Washington next month, Boehner's office announced on Thursday.

Boehner will extend the formal invitation once Congress approves a resolution providing for the joint session, Boehner's office said in a statement.

Netanyahu was widely expected to deliver a new diplomatic initiative during the visit, with sources close to the prime minister floating the idea that a major speech would be given in front of the US Congress. The move would come ahead of a Palestinian initiative scheduled for September, when they will ask the United Nations to recognize its statehood within pre-1967 borders.

Netanyahu said on Monday he has not yet decided when to deliver the speech, or what to say in it.

Speaking in Jerusalem at a biannual luncheon with the ambassadors from EU countries posted in Israel, the prime minister – when asked about the speech and its content – said, “I have not decided what and when. But two questions needed to be answered: First, can we get back to direct negotiations with the Palestinians, and I am doubtful. And second, what can you do if there are no negotiations?”

The “stumbling block” to movement in the diplomatic process was that the Palestinian Authority was working on the assumption that it didn’t need to negotiate, and that it had a “free pass” from the world not to negotiate, Netanyahu said.