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THE BRIEFING ROOM

Friday, January 23rd, 2009 at 12:00 am

President's calls to foreign leaders

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release January 23, 2009

This afternoon, President Obama made phone calls to three foreign leaders and to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Prime Harper of Canada. President Obama thanked Prime Minister Harper for his congratulations on the inauguration. He reiterated his appreciation for Canada's friendship and his commitment to travel to Canada as his first foreign visit as President. He discussed the shared challenges we face in Afghanistan, on climate change and in confronting the worsening global economy.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. President Obama underscored the importance of a strong U.S.-Saudi relationship. He underscored his appreciation for King Abdullah's leadership on the Arab Peace Initiative, the Interfaith Dialogue and for the pledge of assistance to the Palestinian Authority. He asked for Saudi support for efforts to stop weapons smuggling into Gaza and expressed interest in continuing counter-terrorism cooperation.

Prime Minister Brown, United Kingdom. President Obama said he looked forward to continuing and strengthening the special relationship between our two countries. He expressed his desire to work together to confront the global economic crisis and reiterated his hope to attend the G-20 Summit in London. He also discussed the situation in Gaza and the necessity to make Afghanistan a top priority.

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General. President Obama underscored his commitment to a strong US-UN relationship and an effective UN working with us to fight climate change, poverty and terrorism. He also voiced support for the UN's assistance mission in Iraq and his hope that the mission will expand this year and enjoy the continued leadership of the current Special Representative. They also discussed the ways in which the United Nations might undertake additional management reforms to improve efficiency and efficacy of the organization in dealing with international problems.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 23, 2009.

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You are Here: [Home](#) > The Briefing Room

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Your Weekly Address
Slideshows
Press Briefings
Official Statements
Press Releases
Presidential Actions
Nominations & Appointments

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Civil Rights
Defense
Disabilities
Economy
Education
Energy & Environment
Ethics
Family
Fiscal
Foreign Policy
Health Care
Homeland Security
Immigration

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White House Staff
Executive Office of the President

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History
Presidents
First Ladies
Vice President's Residence & Office
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
The Oval Office
Camp David
Air Force One
White House Fellows
White House Internships
White House 101

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The Executive Branch
The Legislative Branch
The Judicial Branch
The Constitution
Federal Agencies & Commissions
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[Poverty](#)
[Rural](#)
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[Women](#)
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