

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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**DATE: January 29, 2009**

**SUBJECT: U.S. President to Visit Canada**

**SOURCE: Toronto Globe & Mail**

U.S. President Barack Obama will visit Canada on Feb. 19, the Prime Minister's Office says.

Stephen Harper and Mr. Obama spoke by phone Friday and set the economy, Afghanistan and the environment as the key issues for discussion during the U.S. leader's visit to Canada, his first foreign trip as President.

The Prime Minister addressed the news on Tuesday. "This is a testament, not just to the size of our trading relationship and the closeness of our alliance, but also the strength of our friendship," he told the House of Commons.

"I look forward to an important and productive working visit."

Separately, the Obama administration confirmed the trip in Washington.

"The president intends to make his first foreign trip as president to Canada," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told reporters. "He will make that trip on Feb. 19."

"Canada is a vitally important ally," he added. "The president looks forward to the opportunity to speak with Prime Minister Harper and visit our neighbour to the north."

Mr. Gibbs later added he believed the economy and trade would top the agenda.

"Without getting into what a bilateral agenda might be for that trip, I think it is safe to say that the health of each economy and the health of the global economy will be a large part of that agenda," he said.

"And and I strongly anticipate, as was the case when the President met -- then president-elect -- met with the leader of Mexico, that trade will will be part of that docket."

A senior Canadian government official said Mr. Obama will not be addressing Parliament during what he described as purely a "working visit."

"We're looking to minimize the amount of time spent on ceremony and maximize the amount of time focused on a robust agenda."