

Beat: Politics

Obama: Hillary Clinton would be very effective; president

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USPA News - U.S. President Barack Obama believes his "buddy" and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would be a "very effective" president if she decides to run for the White House and wins the 2016 election, he said in a television interview that aired on Friday. Obama said he had always admired Clinton, who became his secretary of state after she lost the Democratic nomination in the 2008 presidential race to Obama.

He made the comments in an interview with morning talk show "Live! with Kelly and Michael" that was recorded on Thursday but aired on Friday. "You know, Hillary and I, we're buddies. I think because we ran in the longest primary in history, and our staffs were doing battle politically, the perception was that this was always kind of a marriage of convenience when she came in as secretary of state," the president said when asked about Clinton. Obama added: "I always admired her, as soon as she got here she couldn't have been more effective, more loyal, and since that time we've become really, really good friends, and I think that... I don't know what's she's going to decide to do, but I know that if she were to run for president, I think she would be very effective at that." Obama said he was blessed to have people such as Clinton, Vice President Joe Biden, and Chief of Staff Denis McDonough working for him, calling them "great, hard-working, effective people". "I love them to death," he added. The president made the comments hours after he had an "informal, private lunch" with Clinton at the White House. The meeting had not been put on the White House's public schedule and reporters were not informed until People Magazine tweeted the news before deleting it minutes later, causing Thursday's pool reporter to lodge a complaint with the White House about the "lack of transparency." Clinton, 66, has been an enduring figure on the U.S. political stage since she was introduced to the American public during Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. She became first lady during her husband's presidency from 1993 until 2001, after which she ran for the U.S. Senate and won, making her the only first lady to have ever been elected to public office. During her second term in the U.S. Senate, Clinton announced her candidacy for the 2008 presidential election, winning more primaries and delegates than any other female candidate in American history but eventually losing the Democratic nomination to U.S. Senator Barack Obama, who went on to win the election. Obama later chose Clinton to serve as his secretary of state, which she did until the beginning of Obama's second term as president. Clinton's decision to step down as secretary of state at the beginning of Obama's second term was seen by many as a sign that Clinton would use the time to prepare for an eventual White House run in 2016. Clinton has not confirmed she will seek the Democratic nomination for president for the 2016 election, but told ABC News that she expects to make a decision later this year, possibly after November's congressional elections. A Gallup poll in February showed a clear majority of Americans - about 59 percent - view Clinton favorably. In addition to that, the independent "Ready For Hillary PAC" has amassed nearly 2 million supporters on Facebook and Twitter since it was founded in January 2013 to encourage Clinton to run for president. Prominent figures such as former White House aide Rahm Emanuel, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine, U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill and former San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom are among those who have urged Clinton to run in 2016.

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