

# Clinton Boosts Obama In Rousing Convention Speech

BY DAVID ESPO

AP Special Correspondent

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — President Barack Obama inherited a wreck of an economy, “put a floor under the crash” and laid the foundation for millions of good new jobs, former President Bill Clinton declared Wednesday night in a rousing Democratic National Convention appeal aimed at millions of hard-pressed Americans yet to decide how to vote.

Conceding that many struggling in a slow-recovery economy don’t yet feel the change, Clinton said in a prime-time speech that circumstances are improving “and if you’ll renew the president’s contract you will feel it.”

To the cheers of thousands of Democrats packed into their convention hall, he said of Obama, “I want to nominate a man who is cool on the outside but who burns for America on the inside.”

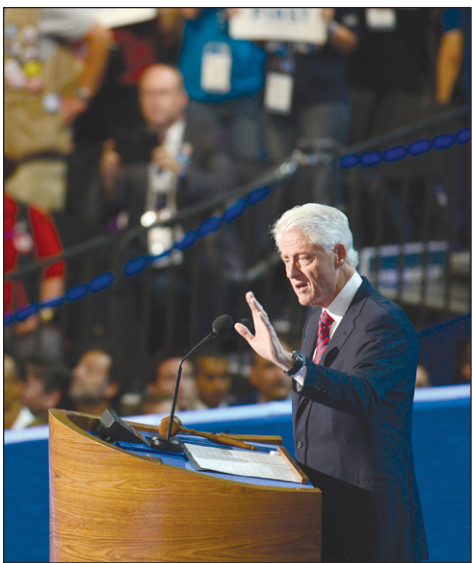
The speech was vintage Clinton, overlong for sure, insults delivered with a folksy grin, references to his own time in office and his wife Hillary, all designed to improve Obama’s chances for re-election in an era of painfully slow economic growth and 8.3 percent unemployment.

Clinton spoke as Obama’s high command worked to control the political fallout from an embarrassing retreat on the party platform, just two months from Election Day in a tight race with Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

Under criticism from Romney, the Obama camp abruptly rewrote the day-old document to insert a reference to God and to declare that Jerusalem “is and will remain the capital of Israel.” Some delegates objected loudly, but Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, presiding in the largely-empty hall, ruled them outvoted. White House aides said Obama had personally ordered the changes, but they did not disclose whether he had approved the earlier version.

The convention hall rocked with delegates’ applause and cheers as Clinton — unofficial Democratic ambassador-in-chief to anxious voters in a tough economy — strode onstage to sounds of “Don’t Stop Thinking About Tomorrow,” his 1992 campaign theme song.

He sought to rebut every major criticism Republicans have leveled against the president at their own convention last week in Tampa, and said that in fact, since 1961, far more jobs have been created under Democratic presidents than when Republicans sat in the White House — by a margin of 42 million to 24 million.



ADAM JENNINGS/CHARLOTTE OBSERVER  
**Former President Bill Clinton speaks to the delegation on the second night at the 2012 Democratic National Convention at Time Warner Cable Arena, Wednesday, in Charlotte, N.C.**

Clinton accused Republicans of proposing “the same old policies that got us into trouble in the first place” and led to a near financial meltdown. Those, he said, include efforts to provide “tax cuts for higher-income Americans, more money for defense than the Pentagon wants and ... deep cuts on programs that help the middle class and poor children.”

“As another president once said, ‘There they go again,’” he said, quoting Ronald Reagan, who often uttered the remark as a rebuke to Democrats.

Obama flew into his convention city earlier in the day and arrived in the hall for Clinton’s speech. He arranged to join the former president onstage afterward in a made-for-television joint appearance. “In Tampa the Republican argument against the president’s re-election was pretty simple: ‘We left him a total mess, he hasn’t finished cleaning it up yet, so fire him and put us back in,’” Clinton said.

“I like the argument for President Obama’s re-election a lot better. He inherited a deeply damaged economy, put a floor under the crash, began the long hard road to recovery and laid the foundation for a more modern, more well-balanced economy that will produce millions of good new jobs, vibrant new businesses, and lots of new wealth for the innovators.”

On an unsettled convention day, aides scrapped plans for the president to speak to a huge crowd in a 74,000 seat football sta-

dium, citing the threat of bad weather in a city that has been pelted by heavy downpours in recent days.

“We can’t do anything about the rain. The important thing is the speech,” said Washington Rey, a delegate from Sumter, S.C.

That and the eight-week general election campaign about to begin between Obama and Republican challenger Romney, who spent his second straight day in Vermont preparing for this fall’s debates with Obama.

Clinton shared prime time with Elizabeth Warren, the Democratic candidate for a Republican-held Senate seat in Romney’s Massachusetts. For many years “our middle class has been chipped, squeezed and hammered,” she said.

In a tight race for the White House and with control of the Senate at stake, Democrats signaled unmistakable concern about the growing financial disadvantage they confront. Officials said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who was Obama’s first White House chief of staff, was resigning as national co-chair of the president’s campaign to help raise money for a super PAC that supports the his re-election.

Unlike candidates, outside groups can solicit donations of unlimited size from donors. At the same time, federal law bars coordination with the campaigns.

Inside the hall, a parade of speakers praised Obama and criticized the Republicans, sometimes harshly.

Sandra Fluke, a law student whom congressional Republicans would not let testify at a hearing on contraceptives, said if Republicans win in the fall, women will wake up to “an America in which access to birth control is controlled by people who will never use it, in which politicians redefine rape.”

Clinton’s speech marked the seventh consecutive convention he has spoken to party delegates, and the latest twist in a relationship with Obama that has veered from frosty to friendly. The two men clashed in 2008, when Obama outran Hillary Rodham Clinton’s wife for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Clinton, then a New York senator, now Obama’s Secretary of State, was in East Timor as the party met half a world away. She made a cameo appearance on the huge screens inside the Time Warner Cable Arena, though, turning up in a video that celebrated the 12 Democratic women senators currently in office.

Whatever the past differences between presidents current and past, Obama and his top aides looked to Clinton as the man best able to vouch for him when it comes to the economy, his largest impediment to re-election.

## Reported Theft Of Romney Tax Records Being Investigated

BY STEPHEN BRAUN AND  
 ERIK SCHELZIG

Associated Press

FRANKLIN, Tenn. — The Secret Service said Wednesday it is investigating the reported theft of copies of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney’s federal tax records during a break-in at an accounting office in Franklin. Someone claiming responsibility demanded \$1 million not to make them public.

An anonymous letter sent to Romney’s accounting firm and political offices in Tennessee and published online sought \$1 million in hard-to-trace Internet currency to prevent the disclosure of his tax filings, which have emerged as a key focus during the 2012 presidential race. Romney released his 2010 tax returns and a 2011 estimate in January, but he has refused to disclose his returns from earlier years.

Romney’s accounting firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, said there was no evidence that any Romney tax files were stolen.

“At this time there is no evidence that our systems have been compromised or that there was any unauthorized access to the data in question,” PricewaterhouseCoopers spokesman Chris Atkins said.

In Washington, Secret Service spokesman Edwin Donovan

confirmed the agency was investigating. The Romney campaign declined to comment, referring all questions to the accounting firm.

Franklin police said there were no recent alarms or break-ins reported at the site. “We’ve had nothing from that address in August,” Police Lt. Charles J. Warner said.

There was no sign of forced entry at the five-story building that housed the accounting firm’s local office, not far from the Cool Springs Galleria, a large mall about 20 miles south of Nashville.

The building does not restrict access during business hours and has no guard. Access to the doors and elevators appear to be controlled by keycard. A spokeswoman for the building manager, Spectrum Properties, said the company would not speculate on the burglary claim.

“All of the tenants operate independently and the building is highly secured,” the spokeswoman, Beth Courtney, said.

The data theft was claimed in letters left with political party offices in Franklin and disclosed in several Tennessee-area newspapers. Jean Barwick, the executive director of the Williamson County Republic Party, said employees in the GOP office found a small package on Friday with a hand-written address. The package contained a letter and a computer flash drive, she said.

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## France Giving Aid To Rebel-Held Syrian Cities

PARIS (AP) — A diplomatic source says France has started providing direct aid to five rebel-held Syrian cities in the first such move by a Western power.

France is also stepping up contacts with armed opposition groups as it pushes to secure “liberated zones” in Syria, the official said.

The aid is notably helping restore water supplies, bakeries and schools affected by Syria’s civil war, the source said Wednesday. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the French actions amid Syria’s violence.

He would not name the cities or explain how the aid is being provided, citing security reasons. He said the cities house a total of 700,000 residents and are securely outside control of President Bashar Assad’s regime.

## 100s Of Afghan Soldiers Fired In Attack Probe

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghan authorities have detained or removed hundreds of soldiers in an investigation into rising insider attacks against international service personnel who are their supposed partners in the fight against Taliban insurgents and other militants, officials said Wednesday.

The crackdown is the result of the Afghan Defense Ministry’s effort to re-evaluate soldiers to stem the attacks, which are complicating plans to train Afghan forces so that most foreign troops can withdraw from the country by the end of 2014. President Hamid Karzai’s government hopes Afghan forces can take responsibility for security nationwide by that time.

The U.S. military is taking precautionary measures too and recently stopped training about 1,000 members of the Afghan Local Police, a controversial network of village-defense units that is growing but remains a fraction of the country’s army and police force. Karzai has expressed concern that without careful vetting, the program could end up arming local troublemakers, strongmen or criminals.

So far this year, 45 international service members, most of them Americans, have died at the hands of Afghan soldiers or policemen or insurgents wearing their uniforms. There were at least 12 such attacks in August alone, resulting in 15 deaths.

Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammad Zahir Azimi said that hundreds of Afghan National Army soldiers were removed from the service, but he declined to provide an exact number or specify how many were detained.

## Drs. Diagnosis Colo. Girl With Bubonic Plague

DENVER (AP) — The parents of 7-year-old Sierra Jane Downing thought she had the flu when she felt sick days after camping in south-west Colorado.

It wasn’t until she had a seizure that her father knew something was seriously wrong and rushed her to a hospital in their town of Pagosa Springs.

“I didn’t know what was going on. I just reacted,” Sean Downing said. “I thought she died.”

An emergency room doctor who saw Sierra Jane for the seizure and a 107-degree fever late Aug. 24 wasn’t sure what the cause was either and called other hospitals before the girl was flown to Denver.

There, a pediatric doctor at Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children racing to save Sierra Jane’s life got the first inkling that she had bubonic plague. Dr. Jennifer Snow suspected the disease based on the girl’s symptoms, a history of where she’d been, and an online journal’s article on a teen with similar symptoms.

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