

Beat: Vips

Report: Top White House advisor joins Clinton's emerging campaign

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USPA News - President Barack Obama's counselor, John Podesta, is reportedly leaving the White House next month to take on a senior advisory role in Hillary Clinton's emerging presidential campaign, providing yet another sign that the former secretary of state is preparing a run for the White House. Three people familiar with the matter have told the Wall Street Journal that Podesta, 65, will leave the administration in February to join Clinton's campaign as a senior advisor, the newspaper reported on Tuesday.

A spokesman for Hillary Clinton did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The report comes just over a week after White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said Podesta would soon be leaving the White House, though he declined to provide further details. "He's going to stay on at the beginning of this year to help with the State of the Union," he said, referring to the annual address which is scheduled for January 20. Clinton has yet to confirm whether she will actually run for president in 2016, but she is widely expected to do so. Sean Spicer, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee (RNC), told the Wall Street Journal that Podesta's involvement in Clinton's campaign "pretty much confirms that she will be running as an Obama third term." Podesta previously served as former President Bill Clinton's chief of staff during his second term in office. He was also transition head for President-elect Obama, and has served as an informal advisor to Obama over the years as well as to the Chief of Staff, Denis McDonough. When Podesta was brought on in December 2013, it had already been agreed that he would stay for just one year. "He may deny it, but I've been trying to get him in here for quite some time," Obama said at the time. "He ran my transition office. I asked him when he was running the transition office if he would be willing to join us, and at that time I think he was still feeling that he wanted to develop CAP and other organizations. But John is a great strategist, as good as anybody on domestic policy." Clinton, 67, 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. A Gallup poll in February 2014 showed a clear majority of Americans - about 59 percent - view Clinton favorably.

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