

Beat: Politics

Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell endorses Obama

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USPA News - Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell on Thursday morning endorsed Democrat Barack Obama in his bid for re-election as president, criticizing Republican challenger Mitt Romney on his proposed economic plans and his views on foreign policy. Powell, who has also served as National Security Adviser and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, initially supported Republican candidate John McCain ahead of the 2008 presidential election but later endorsed Obama after McCain appointed Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as his vice presidential candidate.

Thursday's endorsement came just twelve days before the presidential election as the latest polls indicate the race is virtually tied. According to a Gallup poll released this week, Romney holds a slight edge over Obama - 50 percent to 47 percent - in the poll's likely voter estimate. Among registered voters, Obama leads Romney 48 percent to 47 percent. Powell made the endorsement during an interview on CBS News, in which he praised Obama for bringing the United States from the brink of economic collapse, ending the war in Iraq, his plan to end the war in Afghanistan, and his record of fighting terrorism. "I voted for him in 2008 and I plan to stick with him in 2012," he said. The Republican said a lot of problems remain but that there is evidence the country's economy is stabilizing. "Housing is now starting to pick up after four years, it's starting to pick up. Consumer confidence is rising. So I think generally we've come out of the dive and starting to gain altitude," he said. Powell said he respects Romney and had a good conversation with him a few weeks ago, but explained he does not believe in his economic plans. "As I listen to what his proposals are, especially with respect to dealing with our most significant issue - the economy - it's essentially 'let's cut taxes and compensate for that with other things.' But that compensation does not cover all of the cuts intended or the new expenses associated with defense," he said. The former secretary of state also criticized Romney on his foreign policy and believes he did not think them through thoroughly. "The governor who was speaking on Monday night at the debate was saying things that were quite different from what he said earlier," he said. "So I'm not quite sure which Gov. Romney we would be getting with respect to foreign policy." Powell added: "It's hard to fix it. It's a moving target. One day he has a certain strong view about staying in Afghanistan, but then on Monday night he agrees with the withdrawal, same thing in Iraq. On almost every issue that was discussed on Monday night, Gov. Romney agreed with the President, with some nuances. But this is quite a different set of foreign policy views than he had earlier in the campaign."

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