

Bill Clinton apologizes for Bush tax cuts comments

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Former President [Bill Clinton](#) is on his own apology tour.

Appearing on TV on Thursday, Clinton said he “regrets...this stirring up” and is “very sorry” for veering off message on the [Bush tax cuts](#), and the former president denied he is undermining President Barack Obama, insisting he is fully committed to Obama’s reelection.

“I’m very sorry for what happened. I thought something had to be done on the fiscal cliff before the election,” Clinton told CNN’s Wolf Blitzer, referring to [comments he made](#) this week suggesting the Bush tax cuts should be extended - something Obama vehemently opposes. “I support [Obama’s] position [on the Bush tax cuts], and I think on the merits, upper-income people will have to contribute to long-term debt reduction.”

[\(Also on POLITICO: Clinton aides say he screwed up\)](#)

Clinton also denied he is undermining Obama - as some Republicans have claimed - and said he supports the president’s reelection.

“I have spoken up for him whenever I could. I have told people repeatedly I think he has done a good job, a really good job under very trying circumstances and better than some people give him credit for... I am strongly committed to his reelection,” Clinton said. “In 2008, when he ran for president and defeated Hillary in the primaries, I did 40 events for him... in 2012 I have done his major fundraisers.”

The former president also explained his recent eyebrow-raising praise of Mitt Romney’s business career as “sterling,” saying, “My instinct, you know me, I don’t think I should have to say bad things about Gov. Romney personally to disagree with him politically.”

“The fact that I was complimentary of his success as a businessman doesn’t mean that I think he should be elected and President Obama shouldn’t,” he added.

[\(PHOTOS: Bill Clinton's career\)](#)

After Clinton’s interview was aired, top Obama campaign strategist [David Axelrod](#) appeared on CNN and said, “I’m not asking for an apology from Bill Clinton. I have deep admiration for Bill Clinton.”

“Bill Clinton was the president in the early 90s when he said ‘we have to do something about these deficits, and it’s going to mean the wealthy have to pay a little more.’ Not one Republican in Congress supported him,” Axelrod said.

Axelrod also sidestepped a question from Blitzer about conversations between the Obama and Clinton camps after Clinton’s off-message comments this week, as POLITICO reported.

“Here’s what I know,” said the strategist, changing the subject. “Bill Clinton understands what it takes to grow this economy.”

Romney senior adviser Eric Fehrnstrom also appeared on CNN to respond to Clinton’s interview, telling Blitzer that “when the president came out and said that Mitt Romney’s business career was sterling, I think he was speaking from the heart.”

Last week, Clinton [praised](#) Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney’s record as “sterling” - a comment that was followed with an appearance on CNBC in which he claimed the economy was “in recession” and that [delaying changes in the Bush tax cuts](#) was “probably the best thing to do right now.”

The president has said that he would veto any extension of the Bush tax cuts for those making more than \$200,000 annually.