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## **MIKE & OBAMA IN NY LOVEFEST**

By MAGGIE HABERMAN

[Mayor Bloomberg](#) gave a boost to [Barack Obama](#) on [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#)'s home turf yesterday, lavishing a warm introduction on the Democratic front-runner, who was here to deliver a speech on the economy.

Bloomberg made clear to the crowd at Cooper Union that he has yet to get behind a 2008 candidate, but he gave Obama kudos for coming to New York to discuss the nation's faltering economy.

The kind words sparked immediate questions about a possible endorsement - and prompted wide speculation in the blogosphere about a potential ticket, with Bloomberg, an independent, as Obama's running mate.

"I have been very clear in my hope that all the candidates will explain in detail how they will address the great challenges facing our country," Bloomberg said, adding that leaders need "courage" to address tough issues and that it begins with abandoning "tired partisan platitudes or special-interest pandering."

"It is critical that we know where each candidate stands," Bloomberg added, saying it was his pleasure to introduce Obama, "and not just because he picked up the check when we had breakfast together."

Bloomberg, who now has made two joint appearances with Obama in the last six months, hasn't made a similar public appearance with Clinton, with whom he once enjoyed a strong working relationship.

Nor has Bloomberg appeared with Republican. John McCain, his old friend and an early supporter of his 2001 mayoral run.

Aides said Clinton and Bloomberg have discussed meeting soon.

Obama credited Bloomberg with "extraordinary leadership."

"At a time when Washington is divided in old ideological battles, he shows us what can be achieved when we bring people together to seek pragmatic solutions," Obama said.

"Not only has he been a remarkable leader for New York, he has established himself as a major voice in our national debate" on several issues.

Obama joked that he bought Bloomberg breakfast a few months back because "I expect payback with something more expensive . . . I'm no dummy. There's some good steakhouses here in New York."

Also yesterday, a new national poll showed Obama holding a 10-point advantage nationally over Clinton.

Obama had 49 percent to Clinton's 39, according to the Pew Research Center.

Despite the chummy meeting, aides to Obama and Bloomberg waved away questions about a possible VP nod.

But political strategist Dan Gerstein said Bloomberg as a running mate could be an "asset" for Obama in many ways.

"It would reinforce [Obama's] appeal as a new kind of political leader preaching a new kind of politics," he said.

But Bloomberg adviser Mitchell Moss suggested, however, that it's not in the mayor's DNA to be the No. 2, saying, "Some people are born to be bridesmaid, and some people are born to be captain."

Political watchers say Bloomberg's endorsement, which Obama is most heavily courting of all the three candidates, would be powerful, given the mayor's national reputation as an independent - and his personal fortune, which would make him a welcome donor.

Obama sprinted around the city after the Cooper Union address, attending four fund-raisers to pad his campaign coffers.

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