

RELEASE IN PART B6

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 6, 2012 11:30 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: The Obamas

[REDACTED] - will try you in a bit but not b/w 1230-1pm

B6

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**From:** Toiv, Nora F  
**Sent:** Friday, January 06, 2012 10:50 AM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** The Obamas

**WEST WING WORRY about JODI KANTOR's 'The Obamas,' out Tuesday from Little, Brown (368 pages). Neither the President nor First Lady talked to Kantor, a New York Times correspondent, who tells Chicago magazine** contributing editor Carol Felsenthal: 'The story I wanted to write was never going to come from the Obamas' lips. There's so much they can't say. ... I interviewed 33 White House staffers, most of them many times. I wouldn't trade that for a quick interview with the president, because I'm not sure he's at liberty to discuss the real questions I asked in this book. In a way, it goes to Barack Obama's own predicament as president: He's such a gifted storyteller. Yet can he really tell his own story anymore? ... They have never had the Clintons over to dinner in the White House, which to some people speaks to the fact that the Obamas have not been schmoozers at all. In Washington, they are considered quite introverted. ... Michelle Obama is the real politician in the family in the sense she is more effusive, better at connecting instantly with people. A good source of mine once said to me, 'Here's what you have to remember: **She is Bill Clinton, and he is Hillary.**' ...

**'She has gone through different stages during her First Ladyhood ....** She did not throw herself into research about her predecessors. She didn't model her First Ladyhood on anybody else's tenure, and she has really had to figure it out step by step. I think that the big question to ask about her work is how much in substantive terms is it really going to move the needle either in how our country treats military families or the significance about 'Let's Move,' taking on one of the hardest public health problems there is [childhood obesity]. Part of the drama I see is of this woman wrestling with this really traditional role and grappling with the question of what can she do and what can't she do and what is her role ...