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McCain's Pick May Foster Bigger Campaign Role for Clinton

By PATRICK HEALY
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ST. PAUL — Advisers to Senator [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) said on Sunday that Senator [John McCain](#)'s selection of Gov. [Sarah Palin](#) of Alaska as his running mate would lead to a greater role for Mrs. Clinton as she campaigned this fall on behalf of her former rival, Senator [Barack Obama](#).

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Mrs. Clinton's friends said she was galled that Ms. Palin might try to capitalize on a movement that Mrs. Clinton, of New York, built among women in the primaries. And Democrats used strong words on Sunday to rebut the notion: Senator [John Kerry](#) of Massachusetts said that women would not be "seduced" by the Republican ticket, and Guy Cecil, the former political director of Mrs. Clinton's campaign, said it was "insulting" for Republicans to compare Ms. Palin to Mrs. Clinton.

Nevertheless, Clinton advisers said they expected that a bloc of her female supporters would give Mr. McCain a second look because of Ms. Palin, and that Mrs. Clinton was probably Mr. Obama's best weapon in response. But asked if the Palin pick would lead to a new political marriage between Mr. Obama and Mrs. Clinton, a senior Clinton adviser, Ann Lewis, said: "Not a political marriage. She is not on the ticket. Senator Obama chose [Joe Biden](#) as his running mate. Hillary will do what she can to help."

Mrs. Clinton's advisers said they expected that in light of the Palin selection, she would focus her efforts especially on working women — middle- and working-class, married and single — in swing states where she ran strong, like Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Mr. Obama's advisers sharply disputed the argument that Clinton supporters might be drawn to Ms. Palin on the basis of sex, given that Ms. Palin opposes abortion rights and other commonly held positions for Democrats. But Clinton advisers presented a more nuanced view, saying that some of her supporters — they could not specify how many — could be open to the McCain-Palin ticket depending on how Ms. Palin performed and whether she appeared to be a forceful, sincere advocate for the concerns of working women, their families and for policies that would help them.

"With Palin, there is a core group of Hillary supporters who are not available to this ticket or any Republican," Ms. Lewis said. "[Supreme Court](#) appointments is the bottom line. There is a second group who are now giving McCain-Palin a second look, and it depends on how Palin performs. These voters see Hillary as someone who fought and rose to

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challenges with persistence, and who spoke in real ways to their lives.

"We don't know yet how Sarah Palin will perform," Ms. Lewis added, "and if she lets these voters down, gender is no longer an asset, and it could backfire on Republicans."

Mr. Cecil said he believed that the McCain-Palin ticket might initially intrigue some Clinton supporters, but that they would ultimately choose Mr. Obama.

"It is insulting to compare Hillary's lifetime of service and her commitment to progressive causes with that of a novice, right-wing governor," Mr. Cecil said.

Mrs. Clinton was unavailable Sunday for an interview, her aides said.

Mr. Cecil said the Palin pick would most likely increase the number of Mrs. Clinton's appearances on the campaign trail, on television and at fund-raisers on behalf of the Democratic ticket. He added that Mrs. Clinton would probably spend "a good deal of time in battleground states, particularly in the suburbs where the race is often won and lost."

Obama advisers said they had not settled on the number of days that Mrs. Clinton would campaign for the ticket. She has at least one event next week, they said, adding that all indications from the Clinton camp — with which, before the Democrats' convention last week, post-primary relations were still bumpy — were helpful and positive.

"She has been extraordinarily generous and cooperative," Mr. Obama's chief strategist, David Axelrod, said of Mrs. Clinton. "Gender politics aside, everything that Hillary has fought for is on the ballot. Palin may add some gender diversity to their ticket, but she doesn't add any philosophical diversity. Hillary is a huge asset for us, and we want her out there, though we would have wanted her out there regardless of Palin."

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