

Lynch: 'I Do Regret...Having a Conversation' With Bill Clinton at the Airport

By Susan Jones (/author/susan-jones) | December 19, 2016 | 6:50 AM EST



(CNSNews.com) - Attorney General Loretta Lynch says she was about to leave her plane last June and get into the car that would take her to an event in Phoenix when "it was communicated to me" that former President Bill Clinton -- husband of the presidential candidate who was under FBI investigation at the time -- "wanted to say hello."

"Well, I do regret sitting down and having a conversation with him, because it did give people concern," Lynch told CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday.

"And our conversation went on a lot longer, certainly, than I had anticipated, because it was just going to be hello, how are you, and everyone was going to go on about their evening, as far as we were concerned."

"He's a talker," host Jake Tapper said.

"He is a talker, yes, yes," Lynch agreed. "He is a talker."



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"I really do believe, Jake, that things happen. And, as I said, I wish I had seen around that corner and not had that discussion with the former president, as innocuous as it was, because it did give people concern. It did make people, is it going to affect the investigation that's going on?"

"And that's not something that was an unreasonable question for anyone to ask. And my view is -- and always has been -- that when you are in public life or even in private life, and you make a mistake, you own it. And you talk about it right away. You let people know what you're going to do to deal with the impact of that mistake.

"And my concern was, what impact was that going to have on people's views of the Department of Justice and the work that we were doing?"

Lynch said the appearance of impropriety "was a problem for me. It was painful for me. And so I felt it was important to clarify it as quickly and as clearly and as cleanly as possible."

As a result of her meeting with Bill Clinton, Lynch announced that she would accept the recommendations of career FBI agents assigned to investigate Clinton's use of a private email server to conduct government business.

A week later, FBI Director James Comey announced that he would recommend that no charges be filed against Hillary Clinton.

On Sunday, Lynch told CNN she believes Comey "was trying to be as transparent as possible in a matter that was of great attention and that was generating a lot of attention."

She also said she doesn't think her meeting with Bill Clinton, and her subsequent removal from the decision-making process, "would have changed his view of what he had to say or not say to Congress."

On another topic, Tapper asked Lynch about her "legacy" as attorney general.

"You can never pick your legacy," Lynch said. "But I would hope that the legacy of my term here as attorney general would be the time that the Department of Justice reached out to all Americans and made sure that, no matter where they were from...what they looked like, where they lived, that the Department of Justice reached out to them to hear their voices and connect them to the deepest, deepest, elements of justice, of equality of freedom in this country."

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