



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 27, 2016

Hillary Clinton Does “Full Flip-Flop” on TPP

A Clinton insider just said Hillary would reverse her position and come out in support of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) if she's elected president.

The comments were made by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, described by *Politico* as a “longtime best friend to the Clintons.”

As with the multitude of similar trade pacts the United States has formed, the ultimate aim of the TPP is the creation of a regional super government — thus federal lawmakers who dare seek to assert some sort of oversight have been stonewalled.



In the case of the TPP, the zone would be called the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP). Members of the proposed “free trade” bloc include all the current TPP participants: Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Vietnam, Brunei, Australia, New Zealand, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Canada, and the United States. The regional trading partnership is intended to establish “a comprehensive free trade agreement across the region.”

“I worry that if we don’t do TPP, at some point China’s going to break the rules — but Hillary understands this,” McAuliffe said in an interview after his speech on the main stage at the Democratic National Convention, as reported by *Politico*. “Once the election’s over, and we sit down on trade, people understand a couple things we want to fix on it but going forward we got to build a global economy,” McAuliffe added.

After the *Politico* story was published, a spokesman for McAuliffe immediately contacted reporters and offered a “clarification” of the governor’s comments.

“While Governor McAuliffe is a supporter of the TPP, he has no expectation Secretary Clinton would change her position on the legislation and she has never told him anything to that effect,” the spokesman explained.

With all due respect to the anonymous spokesman, there is a lot of reason to expect that Hillary Clinton will change her position on the legislation. The biggest reason being that she has done so before.

After the end of the negotiations on the TPP, Clinton told PBS that she did not like the so-called multilateral trade agreement.

“As of today, I am not in favor of what I have learned about it,” she said during an interview last October with PBS Newshour’s Judy Woodruff. “I don’t believe it’s going to meet the high bar I have set,” Clinton added.

While this is consistent with the “clarification” offered by the McAuliffe spokesman, it is anything but consistent with Clinton’s description of her position on the trade deal made while she was serving as secretary of state in the Obama administration.



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In September, 2010, for example, Clinton told the Council on Foreign Relations:

We want to realize the benefits from greater economic integration. In order to do that, we have to be willing to play. To this end ... we're pursuing a regional agreement with the nations of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and we know that that will help create new jobs and opportunities here at home.

Then, on March 9, 2011 at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, Clinton said:

The United States is also making important progress on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which will bring together nine APEC economies in a cutting-edge, next generation trade deal, one that aims to eliminate all trade tariffs by 2015 while improving supply chain, saving energy, enhancing business practices both through information technology and green technologies.

In July, 2012, Clinton informed the Japanese government that "The United States welcomes Japan's interest in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which we think will connect economies throughout the region, making trade and investment easier, spurring exports, creating jobs."

She made similar promises to the Australians later that year:

This TPP sets the gold standard in trade agreements to open free, transparent, fair trade, the kind of environment that has the rule of law and a level playing field. And when negotiated, this agreement will cover 40 percent of the world's total trade and build in strong protections for workers and the environment.

Supporting such agreements may be fine and good when one is serving at the will of the president, particularly a president who considers enactment of the TPP to be one of his highest priorities.

When one is running to replace that president, however, one must please one's potential voters, many of whom are adamantly, intractably opposed to the TPP. Hence, Clinton's completely antipodean statement made in October, 2015, during her campaign:

I still believe in the goal of a strong and fair trade agreement in the Pacific as part of a broader strategy both at home and abroad, just as I did when I was secretary of state. I appreciate the hard work that President Obama and his team put into this process and recognize the strides they made. But the bar here is very high and, based on what I have seen, I don't believe this agreement has met it.

In light of all the foregoing, Politifact rated Clinton's change of heart on the TPP as a "full flip-flop."

One has the feeling that flip-flopping is something Hillary Clinton considers a part of the presidential candidate's job description, given the enormity of the stakes and her known predilection for doing whatever it takes to amass political power.

It may be up to the next president to push for or spike the TPP, as key Democrats such as Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Harry Reid (D-Nev.) are [encouraging President Obama to wait until after the elections](#) to put the TPP before Congress.

That said, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman told the Council on Foreign Relations that he is bullish on the passage of the TPP before President Obama moves out of the White House.

"I'm spending a lot of my time, when I'm not traveling abroad, up on the Hill talking to members of Congress and the good news is that as they dig into the details and they see what's in it for their constituents, which is their primary driving force behind their decision-making, they're seeing the



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potential, the positive upside and what’s at risk in not getting it done,” Froman told the Council.

In light of all the thousands of potentially [incriminating e-mails being released and yet to be released by WikiLeaks](#), it may be that if she wants to remain the Democratic nominee for president, Hillary Clinton may have to hunker down and avoid praising or pillorying anything that could increase the size of the storm swirling around her campaign. That includes the TPP.



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