

Hillary Clinton opposes Pacific trade deal

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Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton came out yesterday against the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) trade deal agreed this week between the US and 11 other nations.

“Based on what I know so far, I can’t support this agreement,” Clinton said in a statement.

She said trade deals must meet “clear tests” of creating US jobs, raising wages and advancing national security interests.

“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,” she said.

She said she appreciated the hard work that US negotiators put into the process, “but the bar here is very high and, based on what I have seen, I don’t believe this agreement has met it.”

The announcement puts Clinton at odds with US President Barack Obama, who has pushed the deal as a major part of his international agenda and says it will create US jobs and create high international labour and environmental standards.

Clinton however had pushed for the agreement while serving as secretary of state under Obama. Her new position appears to be a shift to appeal to portions of the Democratic Party, including many trade unions, who oppose the agreement.

Labour groups and other opponents frequently point to the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta), a trade deal that went into effect under president Bill Clinton, which they allege cost US jobs.

The White House has said the TPPA guards against that by including tough environmental and labour regulations that will replace some of the problematic provisions in Nafta.

Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US and Vietnam reached agreement on TPPA Monday. The pact will lift most duties on trade and investment, set new business standards and protect intellectual property rights, according to the US Trade Representative.

The exact details of the deal have yet to be released.

Clinton is the front-runner in the field of candidates seeking the Democratic Party’s nomination to run for president. Speculation has swirled about whether Vice-President Joe

Biden, who has strong ties to unions, also will enter the race.

The front-runner in the Republican field, Donald Trump, also has come out in opposition to the TPPA, although Republicans broadly are more supportive of trade deals.

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