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May 23, 2015: Finally, a Krugman Column on the Trade Pact

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Title: Finally, a Krugman Column on the Trade Pact

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5/23/2015—Well, I finally got the op-ed from Paul Krugman on the proposed trade pact (the Trans-Pacific Partnership—TPP) that I have been waiting for. The column appeared Friday. If you read the column really carefully, Krugman is, as he has said in his blog, mildly opposed. But it is a mealy-mouthed opposition. There are reasonable people on both sides, he says. Krugman ends up writing mostly about how the Obama Administration has not been forthright. The President has not made the case etc. It's not really about trade, it's about intellectual property—as if protecting property rights is not an aspect of free trade. Krugman even seems to say that free trade is no longer important—because we have already realized most of the available benefits by generally lowering tariffs. But this is a real sleight of hand. Many of the opponents of the TPP are opposed to free trade. They believe that we would be better off with tariffs and other trade barriers. If they are wrong about that, shouldn't Krugman have said so? Krugman wants the issue to be technical and narrow. But it is not. The Democratic Party is turning against trade. Krugman disagrees with this new thrust. Why does he not say so?