

including brutalities inflicted on the Hmong, and deplored the measures taken by the Lao authorities to prevent any reporting of the situation of the Hmong;

Whereas in October 2003, Amnesty International issued a statement detailing its concern about the use of starvation by the Lao Government as a "weapon of war against civilians" in Laos and the deteriorating situation facing thousands of family members of ethnic minority groups;

Whereas the Department of State reported in its most recent Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Laos that the "Government's human rights record remained poor," and highlighted press reports that one group of Hmong in Xaisomboun Special Zone, mostly women and children, was being systematically hunted down and attacked by government air and ground forces and that it was at the point of starvation;

Whereas international organizations, the Department of State, and Members of Congress have received reports of mistreatment over the past 6 months of Hmong in Laos emerging from remote areas of Laos, including the Xaisomboun Special Zone, the Luang Prabang-Xiang Khouang border area;

Whereas the Lao Government has not allowed independent organizations to monitor the treatment of the Hmong emerging from remote areas of Laos;

Whereas in September 2004, Amnesty International issued a statement condemning recent reports that Lao soldiers murdered 5 Hmong children, raping 4 girls, who were foraging for food close to their camp, and called it a war crime; and

Whereas the Lao People's Democratic Republic has failed to substantially improve the status of human rights for its citizens: Now therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) Condemns the consistent pattern of serious human rights abuses in the Lao People's Democratic Republic;

(2) Urges the Government of Laos to increase international access to vulnerable populations and to respect the basic human rights of all Laotians, including ethnic and religious minorities; and

(3) Hopes that the Lao government intensifies its efforts to make its economy and society more open and transparent in light of the congressional grant of normal trade relations to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Mr. COLEMAN. I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, this is an issue in which I, Senators FEINGOLD, COLEMAN, and many others have taken a deep interest. I believe this resolution is an important statement. It makes very clear, when the Senate passes the miscellaneous tariff bill with Laos NTR, that we still condemn the consistent pattern of serious human rights abuses, and we will continue to press forward for increased access for the Hmong and other ethnic minorities in remote areas of Laos.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues Senator FEINGOLD and Senator COLEMAN for permitting me to have this time and also to commend them for their outstanding leadership regarding the violation of human rights in Laos. I join with them in opposing the granting of permanent trade relations for that country due to the

oppression of Hmong and other violations of human rights in Laos. I strongly support, proudly, and am a cosponsor of their resolution to express the strong opposition of the Senate to those continuing violations.

MISCELLANEOUS TRADE AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2004—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today I voted against invoking cloture and ending debate on the conference report accompanying the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill, H.R. 1047. Normally, this is a non-controversial bill passed by unanimous consent. However, this year's bill is different. While it contains many provisions that I support and have worked with other Senators to someday enact, it also includes a specific provision to repeal the Antidumping Act of 1916. This bill would repeal the 1916 Act in response to an international ruling, which found that this U.S. trade law is WTO-violative even though no court ruling under this U.S. law has resulted in any need for the United States to compensate any of America's trading partners.

I disagree with repeal of the Antidumping Act of 1916, because I believe that this attempt by the WTO to force the United States to abolish this trade law, legitimately enacted at the start of the prior century, is misguided and unfair. Our trade foes have little reason to criticize this trade law; few cases have been brought under its provisions, and even fewer have resulted in judgements against any foreign firm. The WTO's attempt to abolish this law is simply one of a long line of decisions by this international body meant to open U.S. markets to cheap, unfairly traded imports, and to undermine the ability of the United States Congress to exercise its sovereign right to regulate domestic and foreign commerce.

Repealing this U.S. trade law would set a bad precedent and could only encourage other nations to seek similar, ill-informed "justice" at the WTO. That, in turn, will lead to disaster for the U.S. industrial base, where American producers will assuredly suffer the ill-effects of increased, dumped imports, which will drive down the prices of American-made goods and put more and more American manufacturers out of work.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the conference report is adopted and the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.

The conference report was agreed to. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COLEMAN). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FAREWELL

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I rise with some sadness on my last time

to speak on the Senate floor. It is a very bittersweet occasion for me because I have loved every minute of the last 6 years, and I will miss this body greatly. I am sure I will think about it every remaining day in my life hence forward. The past 6 years have been amongst the most thrilling in my life, and it has been a privilege and honor to serve here.

I rise really to thank my colleagues for their kindness to me over the years and to thank my staff and my family and the entire Senate staff and everyone who is part of this institution for the wonderful 6 years I have had here.

I was first elected to the Senate from Illinois in 1998. I was sworn in in 1999, and almost immediately thereafter, the first Presidential impeachment trial in 130 years began. For my first 35 days, I think it was, or 38 days, on the Senate floor, I was immersed in the impeachment trial of former President Clinton. Thereafter, we had times of war, war in Kosovo and Afghanistan and now Iraq. We had the events of 9/11. I have served in times of war and peace, in times of great prosperity, as well as in times of recession. I have seen a whole lot.

What I will remember most probably is the wonderful people who are part of the Senate. When I entered the Senate in 1999, I came in as the youngest Member. I was 38 at the time. I am older now, obviously, and have probably less hair and more gray hair. The oldest Member of the Senate at that time was Strom Thurmond. He was 96 years of age. I will never forget Strom Thurmond telling me, when he was 96, about how he used to work out 45 minutes every day, and I was thinking about whether I might be as active as Strom when I am 96, if I make it that long. Even at that age, I remember Strom giving me advice, telling me about how I could help the coal industry in southern Illinois. It was remarkable to meet someone like that.

There are many who have retired. There are others like Strom who have passed away. There are some giants who are still with us, such as Senator ROBERT BYRD. One of my first memories of meeting Senator BYRD is going in to talk to him after I first got elected and asking him to sign for me a copy of his book on the history of the Roman Republic. Early on in my term in the Senate, I actually read Senator BYRD's whole book on the history of the Roman Republic. I have to say it is a marvelous book, and any Member of the Senate who has not read that book should please go out and get it because it has bountiful lessons for every Member of the Senate. It traces the decline and fall of the Roman Republic. It traces the decline of the Republic to the Roman Senate giving up more and more of its powers to the Executive, finally to the point where the Senate became meaningless and Rome was just governed by Caesars, dictators, and kings. It is an outstanding book.

To meet the man who wrote this book and to realize that book was