

It is teed up. We should move it forward. It should be the next one we approve, with Colombia coming along not long after. But these are tremendously important. These countries look to these agreements as a way forward, as a way of enhancing their partnership with our country, and rejecting other ideologies.

You know we might as well talk about this. I think it is very important. On Sunday we had a very startling event occur in the region. Venezuela held an election in what was a proposal from an increasingly authoritarian leader, Hugo Chavez, to become essentially President for life. It was essentially to give him the authority to rule by decree, to declare a state of emergency and essentially suggest that all of the institutions of the country be suspended and he would be the sole ruler.

It also went further, and it said the country would take a socialist path. Now, this is only the latest excess by a leader who is excessive in many ways, his rhetoric and his action. But this latest excess was rejected by the people of Venezuela.

I congratulate the people of Venezuela for taking this bold step in the direction of not a single authoritarian person in charge of the government but one who would allow a more democratic future for the people of Venezuela. The people of Venezuela courageously went to the streets, courageously demonstrated against tremendous oppression and repression by the Venezuelan authorities, and continued to insist that they have a free vote on Sunday, and they did.

They rejected the overreaching of President Chavez. But this ideology that President Chavez preaches, the failed ideology that was preached by Fidel Castro that has taken Cuba on the path of destruction, disaster, and desolation is now trying to be inflicted on the people of Venezuela, where they are now seeing the same kind of food shortage we have seen in Cuba for almost a half a century beginning to manifest itself in a country that is so oil rich it is ridiculous.

The fact is, we see in the path to bilateral trade agreements with the United States a rejection of these failed ideologies, a rejection of the Chavez way, and a welcoming of a partnership with the United States, one that allows independence and democratic institutions to flourish, while at the same time improving the lives of the people of the region.

I urge my colleagues to look forward also to the Colombian and Panamanian trade agreements. They should be coming. We need to proceed to move those forward. They are tremendously important for these countries. Let's engage in this friendship, but let's take care of first things first and today resoundingly approve the free-trade agreement with Peru that is good for America, good for our Nation, but also good for Peru, and for our relations with the region.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 5 minutes as in morning business.

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to make a very simple statement; that is, about our food security in America.

For all of my life—as a farmer and a rancher and attorney general—I have recognized importance of food security for America. On my desk in my Senate office here in Washington, DC, there is a sign that says: “No Farms, No Food.”

It is important for all of us in this Chamber to recognize the importance of the food security of the United States of America by moving forward with the passage of the 2007 farm bill.

As the Presiding Officer well knows, the Agriculture Committee, under the leadership of Senator HARKIN and Senator CHAMBLISS, worked very hard—worked for weeks and weeks and months and months—to come up with what is a very good farm bill. It is a very good farm bill that invests in the nutritional needs of our country. It is a very good farm bill that helps us unveil the clean energy future of America and helps us grow our way to energy independence. It is a very good farm bill that invests such as no other farm bill ever has in the conservation opportunities we need to protect our land and our water in America. It is a very good farm bill in all respects, and it is paid for. It is a farm bill that is paid for.

We have been on this farm bill now in the Senate for the last several weeks, since before Thanksgiving, and have not been able to move ahead. The majority leader, Senator REID, has propounded a proposal where we would move forward with a set of discrete amendments, giving the Republicans 10 amendments, having the Democrats have 5 amendments and 2 additional amendments would be considered. It seems to me that is a very eminently fair proposal, and I would ask my colleagues, both on the Democratic side and the Republican side, to stand behind that procedural framework so we can get onto the farm bill and get this farm bill across the finish line.

It is my view the people of America deserve no less from this Senate, and I am very hopeful we will be able to come to that agreement very soon.

#### RECESS

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be

yielded back and that the Senate now stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:26 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

#### UNITED STATES-PERU TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT—Continued

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was scheduled for 2:15 occur at 2:30, and the 15 minutes between now and 2:30 be equally divided in the usual fashion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise in opposition of the Peru Trade Promotion Agreement. While the Peru Trade Promotion Agreement includes important labor and environmental provisions, I do not believe that it represents a large enough departure from the failed NAFTA-style free trade model to merit my support.

Instead of fast-tracking new trade agreements through Congress, we need to take a deep breath and assess the impact of our failed trade policies and take the country and our economy in a better direction.

We should focus on fixing the problems created by NAFTA and other trade agreements, extending trade adjustment assistance for displaced workers, reinvigorating our domestic economy, and creating jobs for hard-working Americans.

The inclusion of labor and environmental protections in the Peru deal is an important and positive development, but without an administration willing to enforce these provisions, the promises ring hollow.

The Bush administration has an abysmal record when it comes to enforcing trade regulations, and it is not a stretch of the imagination to assume that their unwillingness to enforce regulations will extend to Peru.

Without strong enforcement of these important labor and environmental provisions, they are nothing more than words on a piece of paper.

Already we are seeing the Peruvian government backtrack on the spirit of the environmental provisions included in the agreement. International environmental groups have documented a number of recent actions taken by Peru's government that provide a serious cause for alarm.

As an example, in September, a law was proposed to remove half a million acres from the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park and devote the area to oil and gas exploration and exploitation. The Superintendent of Peru's natural protected areas determined that excluding the zone from the national park would violate both the Peruvian