

is an excellent choice to lead this organization. I am very pleased that our faithful friend and ally, the Royal Kingdom of Thailand, will have one of their citizens guiding an international organization.

The agreement reached will split the next term between Dr. Supachai and Michael Moore, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. As many of my colleagues know, the process for selecting a new Director General was at a standstill for months. Renato Ruggerio of Italy, the first and very successful Director General, finished his term and stepped down at the end of April. Despite the fact that his departure was known well in advance, no consensus on a successor was formed and the post remained vacant at a critical time—the Seattle round of trade talks being on the immediate horizon. Most of the countries of Europe and Asia have been united in their support of Dr. Supachai while the administration has supported Mr. Moore. The agreement reached by the member nations will permit Mr. Moore to serve a three year term to be followed by a three year term for Dr. Supachai.

For those of you unfamiliar with Dr. Supachai's work, as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, his most pressing responsibility has been developing policy to guide his country through their current economic challenges. This included taking a significant role in shepherding important banking and regulatory reforms through the Thai Parliament that are important to the sound economic foundation of his country. The IMF has reported good news for Thailand on the economic front. After experiencing an economic contraction of 8% in 1997, their economy is expected to grow this year by 2-3% with an expected growth rate of 5% in 2000. Their currency, the baht, has stabilized and the government has rebuilt reserves to higher than pre-crisis levels. This is very good news and a positive sign for an economic recovery for all of Asia.

Dr. Supachai was also one of the architects of the economic policies that led his country to merge as a dynamic economic engine in Asia and experience several years of phenomenal economic growth. As Minister of Commerce he has been active in opening the business sector to foreign participation and improving transparency. He helped create the country's Export-Import Bank and has worked very closely with the countries of Southeast Asia in creating the ASEAN free trade zone. In Thailand, he was a strong voice in forging public acceptance of the Uruguay round of trade talks and guiding ratification of the treaty through the Parliament. Throughout the economic crisis, Dr. Supachai's support for free trade has not wavered. His credentials on the issues important to leadership at the WTO speak volumes.

I believe it is important that an individual representing Asia and a developing economy has an important role in a prominent international organization, as Dr. Supachai will have. There are over 400 million people living in Southeast Asia alone, this region will soon be the second largest market for our exports. This region and all of Asia are growing in importance to our economy and security. A strong voice representing the Asian economies is overdue.

The economic collapse in Asia, Russia and other nations did not simply stifle growth of U.S. exports, it put millions of people out of work in these countries, exacerbated the poverty level and in some cases led to social upheaval. Unfortunately, it caused policy makers in many foreign nations to question the pace of globalization and in some cases question the wisdom of globalization. Many countries believe that they have little to gain through expanding trade and everything to lose and that their stake in trade negotiations is limited. I do not agree. Increasing fair trade has contributed greatly to improving the standard of living of Americans and sustaining the growth of our economy and it holds the same potential for our trading partners.

While this is an unfortunate development, it is not one without a solution. The solution is working with individuals like Dr. Supachai who believe in expanding trade and working to improve the role and the economies of developing nations. Rather than being an after thought, we must begin to work with more nations if more are to believe that they have a role in globalization. For the global trading structure to succeed and prosper, all countries must have faith in the trading system and faith that trade deals are being reached to the benefit of all member nations rather than just the most powerful. Dr. Supachai is uniquely suited to facilitate such change and his increased role in the international stage is a very positive development for the World Trade Organization.

Finally, I believe the people of Thailand could have been treated better by the United States in this process. They are our good friends and faithful allies. We on the other hand were slow in selecting a candidate and did not do a good job in forging a compromise. Despite Dr. Supachai's strong advocacy of the principles of free trade, we actively worked against him. Fortunately, groups such as the US-ASEAN Business Council and companies like Boeing were outspoken on Dr. Supachai's strong record on trade issues. This lack of leadership does not enhance the credibility of the WTO and needlessly strains relationships with our friends. But I am confident that the new leadership, Mr. Moore and Dr. Supachai, can overcome these obstacles and look forward to working with them on these issues.

So once again, I congratulate Dr. Supachai on his appointment. He is very strong on promoting expanded trade and I am confident that a leadership role for a representative of a Southeast Asian nation is a positive development for the World Trade Organization. I would like to commend the people of Thailand for their persistence and not backing down in their support of their candidate. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Moore and wish him the best; he is taking control of the organization at a critically important time. I look forward to working with both of these gentlemen on the issues that are important to advancing free and fair trade around the world.●

THE ARAB AMERICAN CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CENTER, HOUSTON, TEXAS.

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to express my sincere congratulations to the Arab American Cultural and Community Center in Houston, Texas. The Center will be hosting its Fourth Annual Gala "Unity of Friendship" in Houston on October 16, 1999, and it is worthy of recognition.

Mr. President, I commend those who have strived so hard to build this Center and make it a vibrant part of the community in Texas. This is an important effort which has advanced and demonstrated the continuing positive contributions of Arab-Americans. This Center has served as a cultural resource center for all nationalities in Houston, but is a special place where Arab-American culture, art, and language can be preserved and carried on for generations to come. It has assisted the children in the Arab American community by teaching them about their ancestors' impressive history and heritage.

I am pleased to recognize the efforts of those involved in this year's banquet and to note that they are generously donating a portion of the proceeds to help very worthwhile humanitarian projects. They are to be commended for their efforts and foresight, and I am pleased to acknowledge them in the United States Senate.●

CONGRATULATIONS TO WHP-AM

580

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate WHP-AM 580 in Harrisburg, PA as they celebrate their 75th anniversary as a prominent news leader in Central Pennsylvania.

For 75 years, WHP has covered the biggest news stories of the day, including the holocaust, Pearl Harbor, the Korean War, Vietnam, Watergate and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

As the owner of the radio news franchise in the Capitol region, WHMP reaches more than 100,000 people a week. The unique talent at WHP along