

Office Center [VAMROC] in Sioux Falls on receiving the Disabled American Veterans' 1997 Large Employer of the Year Award. This award is a testament to VAMROC's continuing efforts to hire disabled veterans, and I am honored that VAMROC's work was recognized by DAV.

This national award is presented annually by the DAV to a business with more than 200 employees who assertively hire disabled veterans. The center's Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Division provides veterans with valuable work experience and training positions, which opens up new employment opportunities within South Dakota's VA medical centers, and with the private sector. The per capita rate of veterans placed in employment by the VAMROC's Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Division leads the Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Offices in this category.

The VAMROC works in conjunction with the local union representing its employees to ensure that disabled veterans will receive consideration for job openings at VAMROC. Recent veterans employment statistics show that of VAMROC's 704 employees, 219 were veterans for a 31-percent employment rate. Of these 219 veterans, 60 were disabled veterans and 163 were Vietnam era veterans.

Mr. President, I always have felt that veterans in South Dakota are extremely fortunate to have such high quality facilities, doctors, staff, and administrators at our VA hospitals that provide care second to none. VAMROC certainly exemplifies this commitment to our veterans. Our veterans made a commitment to their Nation, trusting that when they needed help, the Nation would honor that commitment. VAMROC's leadership and dedication is an example of how our Nation can best serve the needs of our veterans. Again, I congratulate Director Crawford and his staff at VAMROC on receiving this award of accomplishment, and I thank them for their continued service to South Dakota's veterans.●

RECOGNITION OF CHARLES ROBERT "BOB" LOCK

● Mr. BOND. Mr. President, today I stand before you to recognize a truly unique individual and personal friend on his 70th birthday. Robert "Bob" Lock, born on July 22, 1927, in Marshall, MO, has lived most of his life in Carrollton, MO. Bob has shown the kind of lifelong devotion to his State and country that make it an honor to commend him for his many years of civic contributions.

After joining the Navy and serving his country in World War II, Bob founded Lock Steel Building Co. in 1947, and is still active in the industry today. He has been an active board member of several businesses and philanthropies throughout the years and takes pride

in his lifelong work to help those less fortunate than himself.

Always young in spirit and energy, I commend Bob for his generosity and service with a special birthday wish that my friend continues to enrich his community for years to come.●

ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

● Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate the European Union for its decision yesterday to begin membership talks with six countries, five of them in Central and Eastern Europe.

Mr. President, as anyone who has followed my numerous statements on NATO enlargement knows, I have frequently criticized the European Union for not moving speedily enough toward its own stated goal of enlargement. The EU's announcement that it will begin talks early next year with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia is welcome for several reasons.

First of all, it recognizes that these are the countries that have already made the most progress in meeting the EU's demanding economic and political qualifications. Five other prospective candidates—Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia—now realize that they have more work to do.

Second, the naming of five Central and East European countries for the next round of EU enlargement in itself will add to the emerging European security architecture, along with the other web of ties connected with EU membership.

Third, the naming of Cyprus to the list of prime candidates for EU membership should help to move the parties on that island to a final, equitable solution that eliminates the division of the country, which has persisted for twenty-three years.

I do not underestimate the complexity of accession negotiations as the European Union concurrently moves toward "an ever closer union." Nonetheless, I hope that the talks with the six prime candidates will move speedily so that they can join the European Union before the end of this century.

Again, I congratulate the European Union on the step it has taken.●

SITUATION IN BOSNIA

● Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I rise to comment on the present situation in Bosnia, the small Balkan country which is the scene of a military commitment involving thousands of American military personnel, a significant slice of our military forces, and the logistics and intelligence which support them.

Our military led the way into Bosnia as the NATO alliance took on the role of overseeing the security aspects of the Dayton accords. Our soldiers and other NATO forces have prevented a recurrence of war and they have provided a security umbrella beneath which

Bosnian refugees could have returned to their homes and Bosnia could have resumed normal life—if the leaders of the Bosnian factions had permitted it. Unfortunately, these leaders retain office and retain their access to public money through policies of ethnic division and hostility, not policies of reconciliation. Consequently there has been little progress in achieving the political goals of the Dayton accords.

The restoration of Bosnia's economic infrastructure is similarly hobbled, partly because some of the factional leaders prefer the graft inherent in government monopolies to the prosperity that comes from open competition. Another reason is the weakness of the civil component of the international effort to implement Dayton. The diplomats from European Union and NATO countries who are charged with civil implementation have been doing their best, but they lack the authority, the resources, and the planning ability which characterize their NATO military counterparts. The international response to Bosnia is somewhat like a human body which is strong and vibrant on one side, the military side, and weak and withered on the other, civilian, side. This imbalance threatens the success of our military deployment because the civil tasks are the tasks which will bring lasting peace to Bosnia. The economic infrastructure must be restored. Local sectarian barriers must fall and people and trade must move freely throughout the country and across its borders. The rule of law must replace the rule of local bosses and the police must become impartial instruments of the law. Foreign investment, integration with Europe, and the eventual prosperity which is needed to undergird peace will not occur unless these civil tasks are accomplished. Because these tasks are so essential to a successful outcome in Bosnia, our soldiers there will some day be measuring the value of their Bosnia service medals based on how well the civilian component of the effort did its job.

A precondition for democracy in any country is justice: the ability for any citizen to get justice from his or her institutions, and the ability of those institutions to provide justice when crimes are committed. This precondition is lacking in Bosnia. Furthermore, the very concept of justice is daily mocked by the presence in Bosnia of individuals who have been indicted for war crimes by the Hague Tribunal. Until these individuals are tried by the Tribunal, until the people of Bosnia see that the world takes seriously what happened to them and is committed to doing justice, the Bosnians of all ethnic groups have no reason to hope for a better future. If the crimes that occurred during the Bosnian civil war are not publicly brought to closure, if the criminals can just wait out the world's outrage, then there is no reason for the average Bosnian to have any hope in a democratic future.