

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.

Mr. President, it is because justice for war crimes is so important that I am particularly pleased at recent news reports that NATO is now acting to capture persons in Bosnia who have been indicted for war crimes. The recent raid conducted by British troops to capture a suspected war criminal who was subsequently transported to the Hague should give hope to ordinary Bosnians that justice will be done and armed thugs will not continue to dominate their local affairs. I applaud the bravery of the British troops in this raid and I urge additional raids by the NATO forces in Bosnia to accomplish this essential and unfinished part of our collective duty. ●

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN RUSSIA

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I would like to make a very brief statement about an action taken earlier this day when I was unable to comment—the adoption of the Smith amendment as it had to do with religious liberty in Russia.

I know everyone talked about the importance of religious freedom and independent religious liberty, and how important it is for that value to be established in Russia. And I do not want to repeat those arguments. There is just one point I think that needs to be made here.

The psychologists have a term “xenophobia” which they use to describe those who have a fear of strangers, or a fear of anything foreign. As we look at the long and troubled history of Russia, and then the Soviet Union, we see that one of the driving forces in that culture has been xenophobia—terrible fear under the czars of any kind of Western influence somehow creeping into Russia; terrible fear under the commissars, or Communist dictators from Lenin and Stalin all the way down through Khrushchev and Brezhnev of anything that they considered to be foreign. It was one of the major problems of the Soviet Union and one of the major difficulties that they had in becoming an accepted part of the world family of nations.

We all rejoiced when the Berlin wall came down, when in the spirit of glasnost—or openness—Mr. Gorbachev led the Soviet Union into an atmosphere of much less xenophobia.

The thing that distresses me the most is the piece of legislation that passed the Russian Parliament, and that is now sitting on President Yeltsin's desk, is that it is a clear return to the days of xenophobia—fear of anything from outside.

Yes. Religious liberty is important. Yes. I voted for the Smith amendment to establish the importance of religious liberty. But I voted for the Smith amendment even more firmly because I believe the Russian people must be told in as firm a fashion as possible that if they returned to the days of the darkest period of the czars, if they returned to the days of the darkest period of the

Soviet Union with an unfounded and irresponsible fear of anything that comes from beyond their borders, they will be taking a most serious downward turn in the culture and future of their Republic.

So in that, Mr. President, I cast my vote in favor of the Smith amendment hoping to send that message to the people of Russia.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DEWINE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MFN STATUS WITH CHINA

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, tomorrow we will be voting on Senator HUTCHINSON's amendment with regard to most-favored-nation status with China.

I intend tomorrow to vote for the amendment offered by my friend from Arkansas, Senator HUTCHINSON. I would like to emphasize, however, first and foremost, that this is a sense-of-the-Senate resolution. It is not binding. It does not in any way alter or reverse the President's decision to extend most-favored-nation trading status with China. As we all know, the House of Representatives already has voted against a resolution revoking China's MFN status.

So, Mr. President, this amendment is more a chance to make a statement—frankly, for me, a chance to express my frustration with certain activities taken by the Chinese Government.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I believe that China needs to reassess its actions in a number of areas because I believe Congress—certainly this Senator—is losing patience.

Let me be a bit more specific. I am very concerned first about China's weapons proliferation activities particularly in the Middle East. In the past 2 years, it has been reported in the media that China has supplied Pakistan with key components to develop its own nuclear weapons program as well as ballistic missiles to deliver such weapons. China also has been the source for Iran's growing cruise missile capability, which poses a clear threat to our military personnel and commercial shippers in the Persian Gulf.

Further, I am concerned about Chinese state-owned companies knowingly supplying assault weapons to criminal gangs in California. Representatives of these companies were arrested in a sting operation just last year and are now awaiting trial in California. I am very concerned about repeated human rights violations throughout China as well as religious persecution and religious repression.

I am very concerned about the hideous practices of forced abortions and sterilization in China. I am concerned about the possible reversal of various political liberties such as free speech and assembly in Hong Kong.

These are all very serious issues, and I believe that we need to take action to

try to address each one. My vote tomorrow in favor of this sense-of-the-Senate resolution will be an expression of these concerns. However, I believe there are far more effective ways to demonstrate our commitment to these issues than just the sense of the Senate before us. I suggest if we truly want to address all these issues constructively, we should bring before the Senate legislation that is targeted for its clear solutions.

For example, the Senate recently passed legislation offered by my colleague who just spoke a moment ago, the distinguished Senator from Utah, Mr. BENNETT, which calls on our President to enforce our Nation's non-proliferation laws against China for its efforts to supply Iran with cruise missiles. I was a cosponsor of this legislation, which, by the way, passed the Senate unanimously.

We can do more. We could and we should bring before the Senate the legislation that was introduced by my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SPECTER, legislation which would impose penalties on countries guilty of supporting or tolerating religious persecution, and I am a proud cosponsor of this bill.

We should bring before the Senate the legislation introduced by the Senator from Michigan, Mr. ABRAHAM, which would impose targeted sanctions against China in cases of religious persecution and against Chinese companies for illegal weapons transfers into the United States.

This bill would also increase United States support for human rights and democracy-building initiatives in China, including Radio Free Asia and the National Endowment for Democracy. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation as well.

If we truly want to take strong, constructive action in regard to China, the options are clearly before us. The sense-of-the-Senate resolution before us is not the best way to address all of the issues of concern we have with China, but it is, I believe, helpful to send a signal to the Government of China that the people of the United States are genuinely concerned about the direction China has taken in a number of areas. Again, it is just a signal. But we should use the opportunity to make this signal strong and very clear.

I believe, as I have stated, that we can do much more, more that is constructive and more that I believe can make a real and positive difference for the people of China. I hope in the weeks and months ahead we will take these actions.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JULY 17, 1997

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, now on behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until the hour of