

ment back to them.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks on the Retirement of Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White and an Exchange With Reporters

March 19, 1993

The President. Let me say, as all of you know, I received a letter not long ago from Justice White expressing his intention to resign from the Court at the end of this term and saying that he wanted to give me this much notice so that hopefully I could announce my intention to nominate someone and all the hearings could be concluded in time to really prepare someone to serve at the beginning of the October term of the Court.

I called Justice White just a few moments ago and had a fine conversation with him. I've known him for nearly 20 years, and I thanked him for his service to our country. He's had a truly remarkable life. And I appreciate the fact that he cared enough about the Court as an institution to offer me a significant period of time to deliberate and still to have plenty of time to have a nominee considered by the Senate and then confirmed well in advance of the beginning of the Court's next term.

So I will begin work on this tomorrow in earnest. And I will attempt to be faithful to my Constitutional duties and appoint a truly outstanding American in a timely fashion.

Potential Supreme Court Nominees

Q. [Inaudible]—you once mentioned Governor Cuomo before.

The President. I don't want to get into personalities now. This is Mr. Justice White's day. And as I said, I never will forget sitting in the Supreme Court as a young attorney general and having had him already tell me that the quality of representation by the States was pretty poor. And then I had worked very hard with a lawyer from my State who was making the argument, and he sent me a note, which I still have in my personal files 16 years later, saying that we

were doing better. So that's what I'm going to try to do every day.

Q. Do you have a long list of possible nominees?

The President. No. The list may get longer; it may get shorter. I did not anticipate having the opportunity to make an appointment at this early stage, so we don't have a big bank of potential nominees. I'll go to work on it tomorrow. I don't want to discuss any individuals at this point. I will do my best to pick a truly outstanding person just as soon as I can.

Bosnia

Q. [Inaudible]—is to get people out of Bosnia. Are you going to be able to comply with that request?

The President. President Mitterrand and I talked the other day, and he told me he was going to give some helicopters, which, as you know, he's done. And this morning was the first I have been informed of that. So we're going to discuss that today and make a decision.

Abortion

Q. Is abortion a litmus test for a Supreme Court nominee? Is that the whole issue?

The President. Now, the question as you ask it contains a thousand questions. And I wouldn't say no, and a thousand questions no. Do I believe that there is a constitutional right to privacy? Yes, I do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House upon departure for Atlanta, GA. In his remarks, he referred to President François Mitterrand of France.