

step in that direction, and I feel confident that we are going to be able to get it ratified.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

President Medvedev. Thank you. See you next time.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:37 p.m. at Prague Castle. In his remarks,

the President referred to President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey V. Lavrov of Russia. President Medvedev and two reporters spoke in Russian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of a portion of these remarks.

Remarks at a Lunch With President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic and President Dmitry A. Medvedev of Russia in Prague

April 8, 2010

Thank you very much, everybody. President Klaus, and to the people of the Czech Republic, thank you for your extraordinary hospitality.

To President Medvedev, Dmitry, we have learned to work together, and I'm extraordinarily grateful for your leadership and your clarity. And I think it has served us extraordinarily well during the course of these negotiations.

And to our teams, on both the Russian and the American side, I could not be prouder of the diligence and meticulousness and the degree of effort that all of you poured into crafting what I think is an extraordinarily important document that not only has helped to reset in a very concrete and tangible way U.S.-Russian relations, but I think is going to help lay the foundation for a safer world for generations to come.

We gather today in a magnificent castle, surrounded by history and the relics of thousands of years, a castle that's seen empires rise and fall, that have witnessed great movements in the arts and music and culture, spires that have survived world wars and a cold war and that now grace a capital of a vibrant democracy.

And so I think it's an indication of how we are not just creatures of fate, we can determine our fates; and that when men and wom-

en of good will, regardless of previous differences, regardless of history, regardless of a past, determined that they want to seize a better future, they can do so.

I think the Czech Republic is a testament to that ability to seize the future. I think the direction that President Medvedev has moved the Russian Federation is a testimony to the impulse to seek a new future.

In the United States, we are constantly wanting to remake our economy and our politics and our culture in ways that look forward, even as it's grounded in the deep traditions of our past.

And so today what I'd like to do is to propose a toast not only to the extraordinary work that's been done by the men and the women in this room, but also a toast to the vision of a future in which we are defined not just by our differences, but increasingly defined by our common aims, our common goals, and our common hopes for our children and our grandchildren. And I think this treaty hopefully is one brick on that path towards a brighter future for all mankind.

So thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2 p.m. at Prague Castle. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Accident at the Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia *April 9, 2010*

Supreme Court Associate Justice John Paul Stevens

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to say a few words about the tragedy that took place this week in West Virginia. But before I do, I'd first like to comment on the news that Justice John Paul Stevens will retire from the Supreme Court at the end of its current term.

When President Ford was faced with a Supreme Court vacancy shortly after the Nation was still recovering from the Watergate scandal, he wanted a nominee who was brilliant, non-ideological, pragmatic, and committed above all to justice, integrity, and the rule of law. He found that nominee in John Paul Stevens.

Justice Stevens has courageously served his country from the moment he enlisted the day before Pearl Harbor to his long and distinguished tenure on the Supreme Court. During that tenure, he has stood as an impartial guardian of the law. He's worn the judicial robe with honor and humility. He has applied the Constitution and the laws of the land with fidelity and restraint. He will soon turn 90 this month, but he leaves his position at the top of his game. His leadership will be sorely missed, and I just had an opportunity to speak with him and told him on behalf of a grateful nation that I thanked him for his service.

Now, as Justice Stevens expressed to me in the letter announcing his retirement, it is in the best interests of the Supreme Court to have a successor appointed and confirmed before the next term begins. And so I will move quickly to name a nominee, as I did with Justice Sotomayor.

Once again, I view the process of selecting a Supreme Court nominee as among my most serious responsibilities as President. And while we cannot replace Justice Stevens's experience or wisdom, I will seek someone in the coming weeks with similar qualities: an independent mind, a record of excellence and integrity, a fierce dedication to the rule of law, and a keen understanding of how the law affects the daily

lives of the American people. It will also be someone who, like Justice Stevens, knows that in a democracy, powerful interests must not be allowed to drown out the voices of ordinary citizens. Much like they did with Justice Sotomayor, I hope the Senate will move quickly in the coming weeks to debate and then confirm my nominee so that the new Justice is seated in time for the fall term.

Now, let me say a few words about what has happened in West Virginia.

This has been a unimaginably difficult week for the people who live near Montcoal. Thirty-one workers were inside the Upper Big Branch mine when an explosion ripped through its walls on Monday afternoon. Two were saved, twenty-five were lost, and for the four who remain missing, we are praying for a miracle.

I want to offer my deepest condolences to the friends and the families of the fathers and the husbands and brothers, nephews, and sons who were killed in this accident. I'm also in awe of the courage and selflessness shown by the rescue teams who've risked their lives over and over and over this week for the chance to save another. They've worked around the clock, with little sleep, for the past few days, and this Nation owes them a debt of gratitude.

Now, mining has a long and proud history in West Virginia. And for many families and communities, it's not just a way to make a living, it's a way of life. And the jobs they do in these mines help bring heat and electricity to millions of Americans.

It's a profession that's not without risks and danger, and the workers and their families know that. But their Government and their employers know that they owe it to these families to do everything possible to ensure their safety when they go to work each day.

When I was in the Senate, I supported the efforts of Senator Byrd and Rockefeller to try to improve mine safety, but it's clear that more needs to be done. And that's why I've asked my Secretary of Labor as well as the head of Mine Safety and Health Administration to give me a