

then, maybe more than half of you. That's the last time we had this sort of economic growth and this kind of range of interest in our country toward helping people who had been left out and left behind or were in distress. But we were unable to resolve the civil rights challenge at home without major crises, including riots in our cities, and our efforts to deal with that came a cropper with the costs and the burden of carrying on the war in Vietnam.

In my lifetime, we have never had a chance like this—never. And I would argue to you that the most important question today is not what we've done for the last 7 years in turning the ship of state around and moving America forward, but what are we going to do now that we have the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams for our children? That's the most important thing. I am gratified by all the results that I just recounted to you, but after all, that's what you hired me to do. And that's what our administration signed on to do.

The question is, what are we going to do now? What will you do, as citizens, when I am no longer here and I'm just a citizen like you? As a country, what will be our driving vision?

The thing I worry about most is that when people have been through tough times and they've achieved a lot, the first thing that you want to do is sort of relax. And most everybody here who's lived any number of years can remember at least once in his or her life when you made a mistake by getting distracted or short-sighted because things seemed to be going so well you didn't think you had to think about anything else. That can happen to a country just as it can happen to a person, a family, or a business. So the great challenge for us today is to make up our minds, what are we going to do with this magic moment of promise?

What I want us to do is to put our partisan divisions aside to complete the unfinished business of the last century, including things like the Patients' Bill of Rights, sensible legislation to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children, the hate crimes legislation, all the things that were still on the agenda when Congress went home, but to deal with these big, long-term challenges.

What are they? The aging of America—the number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] The children of America, the largest

and most diverse group ever—in a globalized information society, education is more important than ever, and we must give all of them a world-class education.

We can make America—yes, we've got the lowest crime rate in over 25 years, the lowest murder rate in 30 years—no one believes it's the safest—safe as it ought to be here. We ought to dedicate ourselves to making America the safest big country in the world.

We've proved that we can improve the environment and grow the economy, but we still aren't taking the challenge of global warming seriously. And we still not have said explicitly, "The world has changed; it is no longer necessary to grow rich by despoiling the environment. In fact, you can generate more wealth over a longer period of time by improving the environment." America ought to prove that, instead of continuing to be a problem and having our heads in the sand on the issue of climate change.

We ought to dedicate ourselves not just to running surpluses but to getting America out of debt for the first time since 1835, so that all the young people here will have lower interest rates and a healthier economy throughout their adult lifetime. We ought to dedicate ourselves to bringing opportunity to the people and places who have been left behind. We ought to dedicate ourselves to building a world in which there is a more human face on the global economy and in which we work with our friends and neighbors to deal with the new threats of terrorism, ethnic, racial, and religious warfare, and chemical and biological weapons.

And we ought to recognize that in a world in which we know the most important job is still—is still—the job that Jessica and her husband have taken on of raising these three children, we cannot allow—we cannot allow—our country to be a place where you have to make a decision about to whether succeed at home or to succeed at work. Because if we ever get to the point where a significant number of our people have to make that decision, we are in serious trouble. And too many have to make it every day, anyway, because they can't afford child care, or because of the burdens of the basic cost of raising their children in dignity and good health imposed on their limited ability to earn money, even in this prosperous economy. And that's the thing I want to focus on today, because I think when the American