

work; interest rates were high; and confidence was low.

Al Gore and I were determined to change that by putting into action a new economic strategy, one of fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and expanded trade. Since then, we've turned record budget deficits into record surpluses and produced the longest economic expansion in American history, with more than 22 million new jobs, the lowest Hispanic and African-American unemployment ever, and the highest homeownership on record.

Over the last 2 years, our economy has grown at an exceptional pace, often achieving growth rates as high as 5 percent. Obviously, economic growth at such a brisk level cannot be sustained forever, but the bulk of evidence suggests that our recordbreaking expansion is continuing. In fact, just this week we received a report showing continued growth in private sector jobs. We also learned that unemployment in November was 4.0 percent, among the lowest rates in 30 years.

I'm also pleased to report that the overwhelming majority of private sector experts are predicting solid but measured growth in the coming year, with low unemployment, low inflation, and strong productivity. This is good news for the American economy and for the American people, and this is no time to abandon the path of fiscal discipline that helped get us here.

Our economic success was not a matter of chance; it was a matter of choice—a commitment to commonsense American values, to responsibility and fairness, to putting people first, to not spending what we don't have. We must not take our economic strengths for granted. That's why it is critical that we continue to pay down the debt, to keep inflation and interest rates low. That's why we should keep expanding trade, opening markets abroad, and keep investing in our people—that's the most important thing—closing the skills gap with more training and better education.

Education is an important part of any strategy for economic growth. And in this information age, it is essential. If we want our children to be able to compete in the high-tech, high-wage job market of the 21st cen-

tury, we must ensure that all of them have the skills they need to succeed.

With this in mind, I have met twice this week with congressional leaders of both parties to make sure we pass an education budget that prepares our children for the future. When Congress left town last month, we already had reached an historic bipartisan agreement on education. It would provide much-needed funding to reduce class size, repair crumbling schools, improve teacher quality. It would also expand Head Start, after-school programs, Pell grants, and support students with disabilities.

We know these are the basic building blocks of a 21st century work force. I hope Congress will keep its commitment to America's children and pass a balanced budget that makes education the number one priority.

Once President Lyndon Johnson said, "We must raise our sights to develop more completely our people's talents and to employ these talents fully." If we want to invest in the prosperity of our Nation, we must invest in the education of our children so that their talents may be fully employed. Working together, we can complete this year's unfinished business, keep paying down the debt, keep the prosperity going, and by investing in our children's education, prepare our Nation to meet the challenges of the years to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks on the Unveiling of the Design for the William J. Clinton Presidential Library

December 9, 2000

Thank you very much. I want to begin by saying how glad I am to see all of you here. I want to thank my two Arkansas Cabinet members, Rodney Slater and James Lee Witt, for being here. And thank you, Skip Rutherford, for all the work you've done. And I want to thank the other Arkansans here who have tried to help us get this off the ground, including Mack McLarty and Joe Ford and all the local officials. And I want

to say a special word of appreciation, obviously, to Jim Polshek and all the people in the architectural firm who worked on this; and to Ralph Applebaum, who is not here today, but I will say a few more words about why that's important.

I want to thank Hillary and Chelsea, who have spent a lot of time on this, working with me, trying to imagine what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it. And I want to thank Terry McAuliffe, who is sitting here trying to make sure we can pay for it, as Jim reels off all these things we're going to do. [Laughter]

Since President Roosevelt started a Presidential library—and he had the only Presidential library, actually, where the President worked in the library while he was President, because he built it in 1939 and he actually used it whenever he went home to Hyde Park, until his death in 1945—there have been 10 Presidential libraries. I have actually visited seven of them, myself, and I've looked at the plans and the scheme of the other three. And I've tried to lift some of their best ideas in this building.

But basically what I wanted to do was to, first of all, have a building that was beautiful and architecturally significant, that people would want to walk in 100 years from now, but one that would also work—would work for average citizens. Ninety percent of the people who come to Presidential libraries are people who come as visitors. They want to see the museum; they want to know what happened in this point in our history related to everything else and how it relates to the present and the future.

And the challenge for any architect is that you've got to protect all these documents, and they have to be in buildings that don't get overly exposed to the light. So if you put all that stuff in one building, you have to have a lot of solid walls. And so the thing that we were able to work out that I'm really pleased about is, we're protecting all the documents in the back there, and we don't have to worry about that interfering with the enjoyment of the people who actually come to see the museum and the building and participate in all of that.

So I think that's really the thing that will make it fundamentally more interesting and

more enjoyable for all the people, plus the fact that we—thanks to the good people of Little Rock, we've got enough land here to have a park, which will always be accessible to the local citizens as well as to all the visitors. And I'm very, very pleased about that.

I also want to say that it was very important to me to try to faithfully present the history of this time. And I want to say a special word of appreciation to Ralph Applebaum. Some of you know he did the Holocaust Museum here in Washington, which I think is the finest museum of its kind anywhere in the world. And I was elated when he agreed to do this.

I also want to say, since we'll be living in New York, I think that the planetarium that's been done in Manhattan by the Polshek firm, which some of you have seen pictures of, is basically this great square building in steel and glass with a globe inside—it's just breathtaking. And I knew that when I saw that, that they could do what I wanted to do down here. And so I'm very, very pleased.

Skip has already talked about this, but I wanted this library to also benefit the city and the State. And I think recovering this portion of the river, recovering this part of the neighborhood—you can't tell here, but those of you who aren't from Arkansas don't know, but once you get down here, over here, you're immediately into perhaps the most historic part of our State, the Old State Capital, which is mentioned, where I announced for President and where I had my very first reception as a public official in January of 1977 in an ice storm—was built during the period in which we became a State, from 1833 to 1836. And it's a wonderful, wonderful old building.

So it was very close to this present State capital and a lot of other very historically significant buildings, including the magnificent new library we have there. So I'm very pleased about it.

I'm very pleased that the library will be accessible and interactive. You know, because of technology, you don't really have to go anyplace anymore to get whatever is there. And we were laughing about all these tens of millions of documents. The people who work here at the White House who are part of the permanent staff, who work from

administration to administration and preserve these documents, one of the things—I went over to visit them not very long ago, and they showed me what they are doing, and it’s amazing.

This may be somewhat embarrassing for me, but people will actually be able to pull up on the Internet copies of actual memos that I wrote on. And the woman said, “The reason we’ve got to have so many documents here is that you wrote more letters, more notes to your staff on more pieces of paper than any President in history.” [Laughter] And unfortunately, most of them are unreadable, but—[laughter]—at least the people will be able to get a picture of that. You will be able to see drafts of the Inaugural addresses and what I wrote and what they wrote, and that’s good, because it will let a lot of my speechwriters off in history. People will think, “Gosh, what he marked out was better than what he said.” But anyway, all that will be available, and I think that’s very important.

The third thing I would like to say is that I really wanted the relationship that this library would have to the University of Arkansas to be focused on public service. I want more and more people to want to go into public service. And we are going to offer a master’s degree in public service, but in addition to that, I’m going to attempt to set up partnerships with employers all across America to get them to come and send their young executives to our place for a couple of months as a kind of an orientation in preparation for doing a year of public service in the National, State, or local governments all across the country.

I got this idea just basically from the Presidential Fellowship program we have here. But I can tell you that all the people who come here as White House Fellows make an incredibly unique contribution, as do all the volunteers, all the interns, everybody who works here, and it changes them forever, but they also help us do what we’re doing here.

And it occurred to me that if we had a critical mass of people all across the United States who are out there working in businesses of all kinds and nonprofits and whatever, but they had spent at least one year of their lives working in the public sector at

the Federal, State, or local level, that, number one, the Government would always work better, would always have a sense of how whatever is being done affects people who are not in Government, but secondly, we would not ever return to a period where the American people felt as alienated from their Government as we did for, in my judgment, too many years in the latter part of the 20th century.

And I really think it could—if we can get enough people to do this, it could pretty much permanently change the relationship of the American people to the way the Government works and the way that would have the Government making better decisions, and also, having more people in the private sector who had actually had the experience of being there. So I’m very, very hopeful about it.

In 1941 President Roosevelt’s library was dedicated. And he said, and I quote, “Building a library is really an act of faith, a belief in the capacity of a Nation’s people, so it will learn from the past, that they can gain in judgment in creating their own future.”

Well, this is a similar act of faith. And I hope that it will not only allow people to see these remarkable 8 years but will help to empower people and give them the confidence to believe that they can build America’s greatest days in the new century.

So again, I want to thank you all. And especially, I want to thank those who have helped me to develop these plans. And I want to thank Terry and all the others here who have agreed to help me figure out how to build it, which is now the next big challenge. But I’m looking forward to it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to J.L. (Skip) Rutherford, president, and Terence McAuliffe, fundraiser, William Jefferson Clinton Foundation; former White House Chief of Staff Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty; Joe Ford, chairman and chief executive officer, ALLTEL Corp.; and James S. Polshek, lead architect, and Ralph Applebaum, interpretive designer, William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library.

Exchange With Reporters Following the Unveiling of the Design for the William J. Clinton Presidential Library

December 9, 2000

Florida Supreme Court Decision

Q. Mr. President, can you comment on the Florida Supreme Court decision?

The President. Well, it appears to me that they basically said we ought to get an accurate count, and we have time to get one. I think that's what all the American people want, and I think that the more people feel there was an accurate count, the more legitimacy will be conferred on whoever the eventual winner is. So I think this is a positive development.

Q. Do you think it gives Gore the advantage for the first time?

The President. Well, I think—I honestly don't know. I don't know the answer to that. I think it shows that what the Supreme Court, in their first decision, is what they meant. People voted and their vote—and it can be determined for whom they voted; their votes ought to be counted so that the count will be accurate. And I think that's a positive thing.

But it's not clear to me—I've got to go back; I've got to look at the decision. I don't know—are they going to go back through Palm Beach again, because there are still a lot of undervotes there? I don't know a lot of the questions. I just know that the thrust was to get the most accurate possible count, and I think that is something the American people feel good about. And when it's done, I think it will help the eventual winner, whether it's Governor Bush or Vice President Gore, to settle things down and get on with the business of America.

So I think it will be positive.

Q. Do you think all of this is going to deliver the people a weakened Presidency?

The President. Not necessarily. I said before, I think that we have had—we had two Presidencies that went into the House of Representatives: One produced John Quincy Adams, who only served one term; one produced Thomas Jefferson, who started a dynasty that lasted 24 years. We had two Presidencies that were decided where a majority

of the votes went to one candidate and the majority of the electoral votes went to another. One was quite controversial, in 1876; the other just happened in the course of things. So I don't think you can draw any conclusions. I think that the American people will be inclined to give a spirit of good will in supporting it and a grace period to the incoming President. The country could hardly be in better shape, if we have to go through this level of uncertainty. And if the Members of the Congress will work in good spirit, I think we can have 4 very good years.

So I wouldn't be very worried about it. I think that, truthfully, if this whole process leads people to believe that every reasonable effort was made to get an accurate count, then I think that will help the incoming President. Then I think the country will rally behind the new President, and we'll go on with our business, the way we always do.

Edmond Pope Pardon

Q. [Inaudible]—Mr. Putin—

The President. Well, I talked to him yesterday, and he told me he was going to do it, and we've had several conversations about this. I'm very appreciative of his action. Mr. Pope is not in good health, and we need to get him—

Q. Does the U.S. have to give back anything?

The President. There was no deal. We just had a discussion about it.

Press Secretary Jake Siewert. Thank you.

William J. Clinton Presidential Library

Q. [Inaudible]—favorite building is?

The President. [Inaudible]—coming here by the tens of thousands all the time, and look at all these exhibits and everything and kind of being caught up in it—unless there was a lot of light in the building. But I didn't want it to be a total energy guzzler and one that would be an environmental nightmare. So we really worked hard on this, and I think we've got a good balance here. I think it's going to be a very good building.

Florida Supreme Court Decision

Q. Do you think the Vice President was thrown a lifeline yesterday?