

I personally will be at his disposal, and I call on all Americans—I particularly urge all who stood with us to unite behind our next president. This is America. Just as we fight hard when the stakes are high, we close ranks and come together when the contest is done.

And while there will be time enough to debate our continuing differences, now is the time to recognize that that which unites us is greater than that which divides us.

While we yet hold and do not yield our opposing beliefs, there is a higher duty than the one we owe to political party. This is America and we put country before party. We will stand together behind our new president.

As for what I'll do next, I don't know the answer to that one yet. Like many of you, I'm looking forward to spending the holidays with family and old friends. I know I'll spend time in Tennessee and mend some fences, literally and figuratively.

Some have asked whether I have any regrets and I do have one regret: that I didn't get the chance to stay and fight for the American people over the next four years, especially for those who need burdens lifted and barriers removed, especially for those who feel their voices have not been heard. I heard you and I will not forget.

I've seen America in this campaign and I like what I see. It's worth fighting for and that's a fight I'll never stop.

As for the battle that ends tonight, I do believe as my father once said, that no matter how hard the loss, defeat might serve as well as victory to shape the soul and let the glory out.

So for me this campaign ends as it began: with the love of Tipper and our

family; with faith in God and in the country I have been so proud to serve, from Vietnam to the vice presidency; and with gratitude to our truly tireless campaign staff and volunteers, including all those who worked so hard in Florida for the last 36 days.

Now the political struggle is over and we turn again to the unending struggle for the common good of all Americans and for those multitudes around the world who look to us for leadership in the cause of freedom.

In the words of our great hymn, "America, America": "Let us crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea."

And now, my friends, in a phrase I once addressed to others, it's time for me to go.

Thank you and good night, and God bless America.

Source: CNN.com Transcripts, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0012/14/se.06.html>.

Consider the source and the audience: Gore is speaking to several audiences here. Who are they? Why does he address "our fellow members of the world community"? At the time, Gore was certainly considering a run for the presidency in the future. How might that have shaped his message? How could he have used this speech to rally supporters if he had wanted to?

Lay out the argument and the underlying values and assumptions: What personal values of Gore's become apparent in this speech? How do they affect his political views? What is Gore's view of the common good here? How does that differ from partisan advantage, and when should the former take precedence over the latter? When should a political outcome be accepted even when one doesn't like it? How do the "honored institutions of our democracy" help to resolve contests like this? In what context does Gore refer to the Supreme Court and the Electoral College?

Uncover the evidence: What kinds of evidence does Gore use to support his argument that the result of the election process should be accepted even if one doesn't agree with it, and that George W. Bush is the legitimate president of the United States?

Evaluate the conclusion: Did Gore's use of symbolism and references to history, law, and religion convince supporters to accept the election result? Did they convince the world that the United States was a stable and solid nation? Did they convince the nation to put the trauma of the partisan backbiting behind it and move on?

Sort out the political implications: Many electoral reforms were debated following the election, but few were enacted. Who would have resisted reform, and why?