



Suite 412
400 North Capitol Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
202/737-3220

Excerpted quotes from an interview with Sen. Albert Gore, Jr. (D-TN) conducted December 18, 1986. C-SPAN's Brian Lamb is the host.

On the differences between serving in the House of Representatives and the Senate:

"It [serving in the Senate as opposed to the U.S. House of Representatives] is more different than I thought it would be. The first most important difference, of course, is the size of the institution. [The Senate] is so much smaller and that has a lot of implications for other things. The rules are very different because with a smaller institution you can afford to allow each individual senator to speak a lot longer. That has created some interesting situations, as you know, on a regular basis. The similarities between the two institutions are of course quite pronounced. C-SPAN viewers are familiar with that now. But the rules are so different -- the size of the institutions and the feel of the institutions are very different."

On differences in relationships with House colleagues compared to Senate colleagues:

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On whether or not the Senate is more partisan than the House of Representatives:

"Well, at times less and at times more. Usually [the Senate is] less partisan because the personal relationships ride over partisanship quite frequently. And as the Constitution intends, the Senate tries to take a somewhat longer term view of issues and in any two-year election cycle only one-third of the Senate is facing election. So that cuts down the partisanship as well."

On serving in Vietnam and the impact that serving there had on his way of thinking:

"One affect it had on me was to make me realize the situation was not as simple and uncomplicated there as I had imagined it to be. There were a lot of South Vietnamese who were really glad we were there and were terrified of the prospect of the forces of

in the North coming through. It was not a simple situation there at all. There now is of course, a tremendous movement among historians to flesh out the true story of what happened there and why. I still think our policies that led us into that war were profoundly in error. But I think that it gave me an appreciation for subtlety in policy and a tolerance for ambiguity that I didn't have before. It's tempting a lot of times to see things in stark black and white tones; good guys and bad guys; right and wrong. A lot of times that's appropriate, but other times you have to be sensitive to the fact that sometimes you have to choose between options -- none of which are ideal and none of which are clearly just plain wrong. So, I think I grew a lot in that experience. It was difficult for anybody who was there."

On the national issue Sen. Gore considers most important:

"I chose to make my top priority nuclear arms control because I think in the long run that's the most important issue we face. We've never had a time in all human history when the human race could be destroyed if the wrong mistakes were made. It's hard to keep that in perspective, but if you look at that possibility clearly and you look at the fact that both super powers are still building up fairly steadily, and fairly dramatically, we've got no greater responsibility than to avoid the destruction of the human race. I've studied that issue extensively and I've tried to make a difference. To me, that issue [nuclear arms control] is by all odds the most important issue."

On the possibility of running for president of the United States:

"I do not look beyond the responsibilities I have right now. I'm sincere in saying that I think it can be harmful to allow yourself to be drawn into speculation and planning about something that might or might not take place. My philosophy is to do the best job I possibly can with the responsibilities I now have and let the future take care of itself. That's what I intend to do."

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