Again?
Midwest states leave U.S. wondering

This morning began the way many people feared and predicted: without an answer on who the next president of the United States will be. At 1:30 a.m., President Bush was close to the magic number of electoral votes, 270, required for a victory. Ohio and Iowa hung in the balance. Even if answers evolved overnight, questions will linger as to whether challenges could prolong our national angst.

DAYS UNTIL INAUGURATION: 79

What created the uncertainty
In a nail-biting election that kept Americans guessing the outcome well past midnight, Ohio could turn out to be this year’s version of Florida 2000. President Bush kept Florida in his corner, while Kerry held onto Pennsylvania, a state coveted by the Republicans. “We promised every vote would count, and every vote will be counted,” John Edwards said.

What it means
As candidates, Bush and Kerry defined sharp differences in policy and philosophy. As president, the winner will help shape world politics. “The differences that the candidates embody are not merely of policy but of values and culture,” said the Belfast Telegraph. “The division marks a line between two Americas.”

Two of the states in the balance: Ohio and Iowa
At 1 a.m., President Bush led Sen. Kerry by approximately 150,000 votes in Ohio. The Kerry campaign had not conceded the state, and its 20 electoral votes were up for grabs.

Ohio’s seven electoral votes could still go to either candidate. Election officials are dealing with broken machines and delays in counting absentee ballots.