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There is a different Dole for the '80 race

Bob Dole pressed the flesh, shed his jacket, accepted a styrofoam cup of decaffeinated coffee, and sat back to chat. For one hour and 52 minutes. It was his first visit to The Hutchinson News since his run for the vice-presidency. His first visit, indeed, since the rough and tumble days of his last senatorial joust with Dr. Bill Roy in 1974. Nothing much seemed to have changed in those years, except the tone. That, and the physical fact that there is a bit more fat around the jowls.



Otherwise the visit seemed much the same as it had been in 1960, when the young Russell county attorney dropped by to discuss his candidacy for Congress from what was then the Kansas Sixth district.

HE WON that contest by 20,000 votes. Until last November, he had never known rejection by the voters. The experience may have sobered him.

"What can we do to change the image voters have of the Republican party?" he asked.

He already has answered this question for himself. He first worked at changing his own image — teaming with Sen. George McGovern for food stamp reform (the Washington Odd Couple); seeking, and getting, a spot on the special commission to check on international compliance with the Helsinki agreement; conferring with veteran news people in search of clues for a stronger party; stomping the nation, in part to see how he rates with his Republican colleagues.

Does all this mean he already is running for the 1980 presidential nomination? Of course.

HE DOESN'T say it directly. But you ask him:

"Is 1980 a good year to want the GOP nomination, with Jimmy Carter just finishing his first term?" And he answers:

"If it's not then, I'll be facing the same age problem as some of the others." Dole celebrated his 54th birthday in July, and would be 61 if he waited for 1984.

You ask him:

"Who are potential presidential candidates in 1980?" And he answers: "It boils down to which person has the broadest support among all Republicans. I have never tried to divide the party. We can't have liberal-conservative splits because there aren't enough of us to split any more."

Sen. Howard Baker, the minority leader, is working at the nomination. He has influence and some strength, but — "Baker has some problems."

Illinois' new governor, Jim Thompson, is an appealing figure and is drawing attention, but — "Several of us think he needs more political experience."

Ronald Reagan? "He will be 69 in 1980, and 73 by the time his first term ends."

And, "I've known Gerald Ford a long time. There has been no evidence I know of that he is interested in running."

The odds for a Dole nomination look highly favorable, in August of 1977.

HOW DOES it happen, Senator, that you have been relatively subdued about Jimmy Carter?

"I don't want to be known as an anti-Carter man. That was my assignment before. I did it. I have a different job now. To do this job well isn't to go around griping at the President all the time. The best way to break your spear is to try to lunge at someone every day."



BOB DOLE...
A chat at The News

Besides, Jimmy Carter "could come off pretty strong in the first session. If he has an energy package, and he will, and if he can get some kind of welfare reform and tax reform, he could go to the people and claim a pretty good record. Of course, those packages depend on what's in them. Politically, he'll be able to claim three legislative packages that could earn him quite a few points."

DOLE is happy about the new farm act, which he helped engineer. He is confident the President will sign it. One assurance coming from Sen. Hubert Humphrey ("with whom I can

get close") and another from Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland.

He is not sanguine about the future of the land he calls home, the western plains of Kansas. After visits this week to Russell, Colby, Salina and McPherson, he grasps only a dim picture of what lies ahead for rural America.

Many of his visits this past week have been with well-heeled farmers, the sort who own their land and have large operations.

"Even these farmers are worried. About prices, about production costs, about machinery, about water tables and a lot of other things."

But, he adds with a tone of wonder, "they are still optimistic... They'll get by this year, maybe next year. But what about the others? What about two or three years down the road?"

THE MOST intriguing question of all, to me, comes last. Is there a new Dole? Is this a born-again politician spawned by the 1976 campaign, or the defeat? Is he manufactured fresh for the 1980 campaign?

Or is it the result of his marriage to Mary Elizabeth Hanford?

Dole grins.

"I think I've changed," he says. "I think I've begun to see a lot more of both sides and try to work that way. Elizabeth did open my eyes to a lot of consumer views that I never realized before. And she makes a lot of sense."

The Senator says thanks for the time, and leaves to catch a flight to Kansas City. I am convinced on two counts:

1. There is a different Bob Dole today from the Bob Dole of 1960, or even of 1976.

2. This different Bob Dole is running for the Republican nomination for president, and might well make it.

Dole eyes White House: Will he or won't he?

By JEAN CHRISTENSEN

Journal's Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Bob Dole would be pleased if someone offered him the Republican Presidential nomination, but he won't say he's looking for it.

Kansas' junior senator and last year's Republican vice-presidential candidate is rumored to have his eye on the Presidency. National columnists have said so, Kansas editors have said so, and so have political observers in Washington.

Dole says the facts people cite as evidence he is seeking the nomination don't necessarily mean anything.

But among the mounting clues are the following:

- Dole has given speeches in 24 states so far this year, and has nearly reached his \$25,000 honorarium limit.
- The senator has become more congenial and less combative. He seems to be making more of an effort to get along with people — Democrats as well as Republicans. He is trying to erase the hatchet-man image he gained during the vice-presidential campaign and during his last race for senator.
- He serves on the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, and has joined its chairman, Sen. George McGovern, D-S.D., in sponsoring food stamp legislation that was opposed by conservatives of both parties and would have changed the program more radically than the Carter administration proposal. Dole also spent several

days this month studying nutrition programs in Kansas.

- He's hired a couple of people who used to work for former President Ford. Myron Kurupos, Ford's White House liaison for ethnic groups, until this month advised Dole on ethnic matters and human rights. He has been replaced by another former White House staffer; and Fred Slight, Dole's executive assistant, once worked in Ford's office of communications.

- Dole circulates. For example, he visited the House floor in July to talk to his former colleagues during consideration of the farm bill. Rep. Keith Sebelius, R-Norton, who replaced Dole in the House when he was elected to the Senate, said then, "He comes over to visit more than any other former House member. It gives him a chance to visit members from other states if he's trying to build up a base."

- Also, Dole has served this year as a member of the Helsinki Commission, which was formed to monitor compliance with the Helsinki human rights accords, and he expects to go to the followup conference in Belgrade this fall.

Some of these activities might be taken as indications that the senator is taking more liberal stances to widen his vote-getting appeal. He doesn't agree.

There are other explanations for all these things, Dole says.

He's been travelling around the country "as long as I can remember" and sometimes finds it tiring to always be "packing up and taking off somewhere." He travelled extensively when he was Republican National Committee (RNC) chairman in 1971-73, and has travelled more since he ran for vice president.

For some of his speeches he was paid, "so they weren't all political," he said. But for 9 out of 10 speeches he said he isn't paid. Either kind can be of political value. And while he is in a city giving a paid speech, he can also meet with local Republicans.

Dole has asked the Federal Election Commission (FEC) if he could donate his speaking fees to charity after he reaches the \$25,000 limit, but the FEC has so far refused because of a possible conflict of interest where a charity he aided could help him politically.

'The Odd Couple'

Dole and McGovern, who was the Democratic Presidential candidate while Dole was RNC chairman, have been called "the odd couple" for the nutrition legislation they have cosponsored.

"Early on I was critical of the Nutrition Committee. I thought it was a vehicle to catapult (McGovern) to the White House," Dole said. After McGovern's defeat, Dole said he realized the South Dakota senator "has a sincere interest" in nutrition, and he decided to work with him.

Dole acknowledges that running for President would put him in a political bind on the question of campaign financing. He supported the Republican-led filibuster that recently killed public financing of Senate campaigns. But as a Presidential candidate, he might have to accept public financing. "I would have to think about that a long time," he said.

The Kansas said he has doubts about public financing because he wants to see limits on donations for outside expenditures. He said a loophole in the campaign financing law now allows special interests to make indirect contributions.

Dole would have to announce whether he will accept federal funds when — and if — he announces his candidacy.

'Everybody's running'

He's not ready to make those announcements now. "I don't know who's running (for President)," he said. "Everybody is."

During the last campaign many Democratic senators were labeled as potential candidates, and now the same thing is happening to the Republicans, he said.

"If you yell 'Mr. President' in the cloak room, 10 people would turn around," he said. "I'll just keep edging along, working hard and seeing what happens."

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Advice and Dissent

Another View of Dole

By BILL WOHLFORD

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author of the following article is a former administrative assistant to Sen. Bob Dole and is now a Wichita attorney.

On August 10th, the Wichita Eagle carried an editorial suggesting that Senator Dole's personality profile established by his conduct during the 1976 presidential campaign was not the profile potential presidential candidates would want to create. I would guess that the image of any vice-presidential candidate following a campaign in which his ticket began the campaign 30 points behind in August would be somewhat harsher than the candidate would like.

And I am equally certain mistakes were made — certain that Sen. Dole would himself alter some of his actions if he could relive the campaign "with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight. Be that as it may, there remains a fascinating story yet untold regarding Sen. Dole's selection by President Ford, his campaign experiences, and the very positive impact of his campaign efforts that is not presented by the quotes included in the Wichita Eagle editorial.

THE FIRST POINT to be emphasized is that Sen. Dole didn't run in 1976 to enhance his presidential image in 1980. He was the back-up person on the Ford-Dole team. As the vice-presidential candidate his role was to be on the offensive, to shore up support among party regulars, and to attract the support of special interest groups and geographical segments of the country. This he did and did well.

He did what needed to be done for the good of the ticket even if over the long run it was not beneficial to Bob Dole's presidential image. He shouldn't be faulted for that.

During the first 45 days of the campaign he was on the road — on the offensive — while President Ford remained in the White House. During that time the Carter-Mondale lead was cut from 30 points to less than 10. Being the point man wasn't a pleasant task, but it was a job that had to be done at that time and Sen. Dole did it in an effective manner.

THE EAGLE EDITORIAL quoted several polls and news analyses of the campaign, but there are others that cast quite a different light on Sen.

Dole's campaign efforts. For example, the same Rowland Evans and Robert Novak columnists cited in your August 10th editorial stated in a recent column that polls taken "in the counties which Dole campaigned last fall showed a consistent two point lag in their swing to Carter-Mondale compared with counties where he did not campaign."

The same columnists gave Sen. Dole very high marks for his campaign efforts in an early October column.

A major reason Dole was added to the ticket was that in early August President Ford was trailing Carter in most of the traditionally Republican midwest farm belt states. Dole was assigned these states as a primary campaign responsibility. All but Ohio and Wisconsin ended up in the Ford-Dole camp.

AS THE PARTY unifier, Dole has his work cut out for him. Throughout the campaign, he remained the primary link between the Ford and Reagan factions of the party which had been badly divided by the pre-convention battle. Dole's effort in the

vice-presidential debate, which followed two of the three presidential debates on national issues, was directed at Republican defectors to the Carter ticket. Until the vice-presidential debates, Republican defection had averaged between 16 and 20 per cent. Following the Dole-Mondale debate, they dropped to 6 per cent and remained at that level for the duration of the campaign. The national pollster, Robert Teeter, who produced those statistics, attributes the drastic shift to Dole's much criticized debate performance.

But rather than analyzing last year's campaign, possibly more time should be spent reviewing the manner in which Sen. Dole has conducted himself since the 1976 election. It has now been more than a year since Sen. Dole was chosen as President Ford's vice-presidential mate. He has returned to the Senate, remained an active legislator, and in the eyes of many, is a leading candidate for the 1980 presidential nomination.

This growth in stature is attributable to hours and hours of hard work and is a just return for his efforts as an elected official and national political figure. But more than that his national posture is paying dividends for Kansas and the Kansas issues he champions.

Look at the Farm Bill as an example. As an Eagle-Beacon reporter recently indicated in an article published August 7, Secretary of Agriculture Bergland says a Carter veto of the farm bill "would enhance the stature of Bob Dole, and I am sure he (President Carter) has that in the

back of his mind." When a senator's championing of a home state issue becomes an element of a President's decision making process, I would say the senator is using the powers of his position to the ultimate.

THERE IS ONE QUOTE from a UPI analysis included in your Aug. 10 editorial that deserves contravention since I feel there is no basis whatsoever for such a statement. That quote stated Bob Dole's "lack of physical stamina" as a candidate was "less than presidential."

Anyone who ever worked with or for Bob Dole knows that if he lacks anything it isn't stamina. Sen. Dole is a battler when it comes to Kansas issues and legislation. A 12 to 14 hour day in the office is the rule not the exception. And in his spare time, on the weekends, late in the evenings, sometimes on Senate matters, sometimes traveling across the country speaking to political groups, he also works. He eats, sleeps and lives his role as a senator from Kansas and 95 per cent of the time, Kansas benefit either directly or indirectly from his efforts. During the two months of the last year's campaign, the Dole express flew over 63,000 miles and made over 143 stops in 44 different states, with each stop normally including several different events such as a dinner speech, a shopping center rally, airport rally, or a press conference. That is hardly the schedule of a slacker.

The Eagle reasonably exercised its right to be critical of Sen. Dole's campaign effort. I only wish that it would now follow up on what I considered to be a most interesting and exciting initiative by an outstanding Kansas native son. Sen. Dole's vice-presidential campaign story deserves the attention of a five-part series, not the analysis of a five-paragraph editorial.

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