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Dole Hosts a Recital and Most Leave Early

By TOM BETHELL
Sen. Robert J. Dole's deficit-reduction hearings earlier this week followed a well-worn pattern. At the outset, the Finance Committee hearing room was ablaze with TV lights. Camera operators attentively peered into their lenses, swiveling their machines around in unison from the grand senatorial personages on their elevated dais to the lowly witnesses (18 economists, one after the other) armed only with glasses of water and a microphone. Reporters scribbled dutifully for a decent period, and the doorman assumed a short-lived importance as he examined credentials and found space for those still queuing outside.

Then, at a certain point, Phil Jones of CBS News snapped his notebook shut and seemed to have more pressing business elsewhere. The TV lights somehow waned, reporters for the major dailies began to gather up their belongings, sometimes in mid-sentence, and the half-dozen or so senators who had returned from Christmas recess to participate in this appeal to the sound fiscal judgment of the American people began to disappear, one by one, from their judgment seats. By the midpoint, only a resolute Sen. Dole, a persistent C-Span television crew, and a sizable contingent of apparently underemployed Senate aides remained to see things through to the undramatic end.

Bob Dole, who has shed his old acerbic manner, now has a lean and tanned, some would say a hungry, look. According to George McGovern, the Kansas Republican has "grown." This is well understood in Washington; it not fully deciphered yet in Wichita. Sen. Dole now favored undoing the indexing of the tax brackets that he helped to enact in 1981. On Tuesday Sen. Dole said, a mite reproachfully, that "the president has now adopted indexing as his own." For some reason, he now believes that "a lot of people would be prepared to vote for" those with the courage to dismantle indexing according to a "CPI minus three" formula.

Sen. Dole's fiscally conservative arguments for routing a greater proportion of the national income through the nation's capital have made him the toast of Georgetown and a hero of the adversarial press corps. His image as a flinty Republican is convenient: Most of the hearers to whom it appeals still haven't figured out that when Sen. Dole says the government should spend no more than it takes in, he prefers it to take in more rather than spend less.

It emerged in the course of the hearings that the mysterious phrase "broadening the tax base" means closing tax "loopholes." Sen. Dole repeatedly asked witnesses if they weren't in favor of "closing loopholes," without seeming to realize that loopholes are intentional tax abatements, enacted for specific groups and purposes, and jealously guarded by his fellow legislators. But most witnesses were cued into submission by the pejorative "loophole," implying, as it does, something inadvertent. A notable exception was Richard Rahn of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who retorted that "we should ask whose income it is to begin with."

The senator said he wanted to "raise the level of debate about budget deficits," without "pointing fingers" at those responsible for them. Such fingers might of course point at Congress, which not only has thwarted attempts to cut spending, but has raised it to 25% of gross national product—up from about 22% when President Reagan was elected. But Sen. Dole's real goal seems to be to raise taxes in the approaching election year—a trick he last pulled off in 1982. Spending cuts promised

then were mysteriously transmuted into increases by the "budget process."

This could easily happen again, as was suggested by the following colloquy. Sen. Dole had suggested a "deficit-reduction package" of \$150 billion spread over the years 1984-87, to be "evenly split between tax increases and reduced spending." At the microphone was Carol Cox, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget and, according to Sen. Dole's accolade, a woman awesomely familiar with the intricacies of federal budgeting.

Sen. Dole first made the genial observation that, according to Louis XIV's finance minister, taxing was much like plucking a goose. "The art is to get the greatest number of feathers with the least amount of hissing." (The cameramen had gone home by this time, but within the hearing room the appreciation of Sen. Dole's wit and growth was widespread.) Then he got down to business and posed the following problem for the expert Mrs. Cox. Supposing, he said, that by next April we have laid our hands on \$75 billion in tax increases, but only \$30 billion in spending cuts, and the White House stubbornly insists that the spending cuts must equal the tax increases. Then what?

"Sir," she reassured him, "we can package it. There are institutional ways of packaging it."

Did one detect a sigh of relief in the hearing room? Sen. Dole then asked if she might forward him one or two such "scenarios," and she said that she would be happy to oblige. One trusts she will send copies to the White House.

One is also bound to wonder whether the White House knows what it is doing getting into the ring with Washington's budget pros, with their five-year projections, spend-outs, reflow estimates, outlay re-estimates and supplemental appropriations. The White House on this occasion was cautious enough not to send any witnesses into Sen. Dole's spider web, but he will have more traps and more hearings waiting for them when Congress formally returns in the new year.

Another Washington trap, that of out-year budget projections, was set in the mid-1970s when the new and confusing "budget process" was enacted. Five-year budgeting enables planners to see long-range problems where none currently exists, and so to urge belt-and-suspenders policy making calculated to give us "certainty," but in practice giving us higher taxes.

Rudolph Penner, the new director of the Congressional Budget Office, thought that "the problem with the deficit is in the longer run," and was quoted the next day on the front page of the Washington Post as expressing concern about the deficit . . . in 1989. (\$280 billion, apparently.) He worried that "the horizon is clouded," and Sen. Max Baucus (D., Mont.) likewise saw "a big cloud on the horizon." Sen. John C. Danforth (R., Mo.) worried about "long-range damage to the economy," while Sen. George J. Mitchell (D., Maine) was more subtle. "The current reality of good economic news is being used to mask the future reality that it will not be sustained," he thought.

Herbert Stein of the American Enterprise Institute thought that the deficit problem "does not portend an imminent crisis." Nevertheless, future deficits were "really frightening." He was concerned about "what the economy will look like 10 or 20 years from now," and suggested that we might want to "reduce the consumption of the great mass of Americans" by raising taxes. That, he seemed to think, would reduce our future worries.

Allan Meltzer of Carnegie-Mellon Uni-

versity, on the other hand, said that "a year ago, the dominant view of Wall Street economists, the media and prominent politicians was that deficits would produce rising inflation, slow growth and a hesitant recovery in 1983." Now, he said, "many of these forecasts have been shown to be wrong." But the "sub-chump about the deficit continues," he added. To illustrate his point, C. Fred Bergsten of the Institute for International Economics said at the hearing that deficits cause high real interest rates that result in an "overvalued" dollar, depressed exports and lost jobs. (If true, this means that big deficits cause strong currencies. M. Mitterrand, for example, could restore the franc easily.)

Perhaps the most revealing comment about the deficit was made by Stuart Butler of the Heritage Foundation. He pointed out that deficit projections only nine months ahead have recently been off target by as much as 400%, and he mentioned a Cato Institute study showing that only three times in the years 1971-82 did the official estimate of the deficit come within 75% of the actual level.

Will the White House really sign on to a tax increase in an election year? Carol Cox predicts a revenue bill of some kind in 1984, while the Chamber's Mr. Rahn gloomily predicts an election-year tax increase, as in 1982. The president Wednesday seemed to rule that out, but Sen. Dole was in any event "greatly encouraged" by Treasury Secretary Donald Regan's statement that the administration's 1985 budget will contain some type of tax increase, contingent upon spending cuts. "I'm not so certain it won't happen next year," Sen. Dole concluded. "I wouldn't sell the Congress short yet, especially if we get that push we need from downtown." And if a tax increase does pass, Sen. Dole believes the American people will be duly grateful on Election Day.

Mr. Bethell is a contributing editor of Harper's and Washington editor of the American Spectator.

Congressional Record
Statement of
Senator Bob Dole
DR. HAMPAR KELIKIAN
1899 - 1983

To: Russ Townsley
From: Sen. Bob Dole

MR. DOLE. MR. PRESIDENT, "AS YOU GET OLDER," ERNEST HEMINGWAY ONCE WROTE, "IT IS HARDER TO HAVE HEROES, BUT IT IS SORT OF NECESSARY." NOWHERE IS IT MORE NECESSARY THAN HERE IN WASHINGTON, WHERE IT'S SO EASY TO BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH LAST WEEK'S PRIORITIES AND THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES. HERE, WE CAN FOCUS ON THE TRANSIENT AND OVERLOOK THE ENDURING. WE SPEAK OF "THE PEOPLE" AND DON'T ALWAYS TAKE THE TIME TO RECOGNIZE THOSE REMARKABLE PERSONS WHO BROADEN OUR OUTLOOK AND DEEPEN OUR SYMPATHIES, WHO PUT FLESH ON THE BARE BONES OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER.

TODAY, I PAUSE TO RECALL SUCH A MAN, A HEALER OF SHATTERED BODIES NAMED HAMPAR KELIKIAN. DR. KELIKIAN EARNED FAME FOR HIS HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE OPERATING ROOM. HE EARNED THE GRATITUDE OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO, LIKE MYSELF, LIVE A MUCH MORE FULL EXISTENCE BECAUSE OF HIS OPERATIVE SKILLS. HE EARNED THE ADMIRATION OF THOSE WHO KNEW HIM ONLY THROUGH PRESS COVERAGE AS ONE WHO WAS STILL PERFORMING TEN OPERATIONS A WEEK AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY.

NO FEATURE STORY, HOWEVER GENEROUS, COULD FULLY CONVEY THE PERSONAL HEROISM OF HAMPAR KELIKIAN. AS A BOY, HE ESCAPED THE BLOOD-SPATTERED LANDSCAPE OF ARMENIA, WHERE THREE OF HIS SISTERS DIED IN THE SENSELESS VIOLENCE THAT HAS FOR SO LONG MARRED THAT CORNER OF THE GLOBE. HE ARRIVED IN CHICAGO IN 1920, POSSESSING TWO DOLLARS IN HIS POCKET AND A RUG FROM HIS NATIVE LAND. HE WENT TO WORK ON A FARM, WORKING HARD

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ELSE WOULD FIGHT A LONELY BATTLE. HE DECLARED HIS OWN WAR ON CONGENITAL DEFORMITIES. HE WAGED THAT WAR ON MANY FRONTS: IN SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS AND ON THE OPERATING TABLE, AT HOSPITAL BEDSIDES AND IN THE LIVING ROOMS OF PARENTS WHO CAME TO REGARD HIM, RIGHTFULLY ENOUGH, AS A SORT OF MODERN-DAY MIRACLE WORKER.

"THE MECHANICAL PART OF SURGERY," HE ONCE EXPLAINED, "IS LIKE CARPENTRY. ANYONE CAN LEARN THAT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO BE ABLE TO SUFFER WITH THE PATIENT, TO SEE IF THEY ARE IN PAIN."

TODAY IS OUR TURN TO SUFFER, FOR DR. K HAS ENDED HIS CAREER OF SERVICE ON THIS PLANET. HIS PASSING MAY COUNT FOR LITTLE IN THE WORLD'S RECORD, BUT FOR ANYONE WHOSE PATH EVER CROSSED HIS, THE MOMENT HAS ITS RIGHT TO SORROW, AND THE YEARS AHEAD WILL BE AT LEAST A LITTLE LONELIER.

ROBERT FROST SAID IT BEST...
"NATURE'S FIRST GREEN IS GOLD," HE WROTE,
HER HARDEST HUE TO HOLD,
HER EARLY LEAF'S A FLOWER,
BUT ONLY SO AN HOUR.
THEN LEAF SUBSIDES TO LEAF,
SO EDEN SANK TO GRIEF,
SO DAWN GOES DOWN TO DAY,
NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY."

HAMPAR KELIKIAN WAS PURE GOLD. AND IF HE CANNOT STAY HERE, AMONG HIS FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS, WE CAN AT LEAST TAKE HEART AND TAKE COURAGE FROM THE LIFE HE LIVED. ONLY A FEW AMONG US CAN GENUINELY CLAIM TO HAVE IMPROVED THE LOT OF HUMANITY. DR. K WAS TOO MODEST TO MAKE ANY SUCH CLAIM. AND SO WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE IT FOR HIM. HE WILL BE MISSED, AS SURELY AS HE WILL BE MOURNED. HE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN. I EXTEND MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS WIDOW OVSANNA, HIS DAUGHTERS ALICE AND VIRGINIA, AND HIS SON ARMEN. GREAT AS THEIR CURRENT SENSE OF LOSS MUST BE, THEY CAN TAKE ULTIMATE PRIDE IN HAVING SHARED IN SO TRIUMPHANT A LIFE.

ENOUGH THAT HIS EMPLOYER HELPED PAY HIS WAY THROUGH COLLEGE IN RETURN. THE YOUNG IMMIGRANT WENT ON TO MEDICAL SCHOOL AND AN APPRENTICESHIP AT COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL.

WHEN WAR AGAIN CAME TO EUROPE IN 1939, DR. KELIKIAN SHARED HIS GENIUS WITH HIS ADOPTED HOMELAND. HE DISCOVERED SURGICAL METHODS PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN, AND HE FOUND WAYS TO RESTORE USE TO OTHERWISE USELESS LIMBS. HARRY TRUMAN GAVE HIM A MEDAL. THOSE WHOSE LIVES WERE RESCUED GAVE HIM THEIR LOVE. MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEARS I SPENT IN ARMY HOSPITALS - TOO MUCH ABOUT ME, NOT NEARLY ENOUGH ABOUT DR. KELIKIAN. HE BELIEVED WITH SHERWOOD ANDERSON THAT "A MAN NEEDS A PURPOSE FOR REAL HEALTH." AND HE GAVE ME A PURPOSE AS WELL AS THE USE OF AN ARM.

HE PROVIDED ME AN EXAMPLE WORTHY OF EMULATION. HE TAUGHT ME THAT "THE PEOPLE" ARE NOT AN ABSTRACT, FACELESS MASS GLIMPSED BUT DIMLY THROUGH THE DARK GLASS OF POLITICS - BUT HIGHLY INDIVIDUALIZED MEN AND WOMEN, AS CAPABLE AS HE WAS OF BETTERING THEMSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM - AS IMBUED WITH HIS IDEALISM - AS PROTECTIVE OF HIS FAITH. HE TAUGHT ME THAT THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SERVE THE PUBLIC MUST BE HEALERS THEMSELVES, MINISTERING TO THE BODY POLITIC AS HE MINISTERED TO THE PHYSICAL ONE.

HAMPAR KELIKIAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS DID NOT HALT WITH THE END OF THE WAR. HAVING SALVAGED LIFE FOR SO MANY MEN IN UNIFORM, HE RETURNED TO THIS COUNTRY TO TURN HIS ATTENTION TO DEFORMED CHILDREN, FOR WHOM NO ONE

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