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The 99th Congress has come to its end, and whatever one thinks of its accomplishments, there is no question at all about its highly beneficial effect on the presidential prospects of Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole.

Two years ago at this time, Mr. Dole was a senior Republican figure in the Senate, chairman of its Finance Committee, and a former (1976) Republican candidate for the vice presidency — a losing race that injuriously enhanced his reputation as a highly partisan campaigner with a savage wit. He was known to aspire to the presidency, but where lay his upward path?

Though broadly conservative in his outlook, Mr. Dole had gotten into Kansas Republican politics before there even was a conservative movement, and thus was not first and foremost an ideologue. In a party as firmly in the grip of conservatives as the GOP that was at least potentially a disadvantage.

Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker had let it be known that he would retire from the Senate at the end of his term in 1984, to free himself to pursue his own quest for the 1988 nomination. Mr. Baker felt, with some reason, in view of recent political history, that running for the presidency is a full-time job, and in any case certainly incompatible with the duties of a Senate majority leader.

Mr. Dole thought about the matter carefully, and came to exactly the opposite conclusion. When Mr. Baker stepped down, Mr. Dole won the contest to succeed him as majority leader — and then coolly let it be known that he would rest his own case for the 1988 nomination in large part on his performance as leader.

It was a breathtaking gamble, but it is now clear that it has paid off

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Sen. Dole: looking good



has been replaced with that of a serious and highly effective political leader. He has played a key role in virtually every legislative triumph of the second Reagan administration.

Perhaps most important of all in straight political terms, Mr. Dole has delivered for Ronald Reagan and the conservative movement again and again. At the end of the 98th Congress in 1984, his cumulative rating by the American Conservative Union over the whole period of his 16 years' service in the Senate was 75 out of a possible 100 — a reasonably conservative performance, with many of its blemishes attributable to the necessary concerns of a farm-state politician. But as majority leader during the 99th Congress, Mr. Dole has been almost totally loyal to the Reagan agenda and immensely effective on its behalf. Conservatives have every reason to be grateful to him.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Dole's ratings in the polls have risen steadily; in most of them he is now second, albeit still a rather distant second, to George Bush. But somebody has to be second, and the thing to notice is that thus far it isn't Jack Kemp, whose candidacy was supposed to command wide conservative support, but who has not yet managed to get airborne. Are conservatives, perhaps, waiting for Paul Laxalt? Are they reconciling themselves to Mr. Bush? Or are they, just possibly, on the verge of deciding that they would prefer Mr. Dole?

Mr. Dole's immediate future depends, of course, on whether the GOP retains control of the Senate next month. If it does, he presumably will continue in the high-visibility post of majority leader. If not, he will (assuming his own reelection, which seems certain) be able to pursue his presidential candidacy a good deal more vigorously and single-mindedly. Either way, Bob Dole is entitled to reflect that it has been a good two years

spectacularly. While Mr. Baker has all but vanished as a presidential contender, Mr. Dole has been in the headlines and on national television practically every day. His previous image as a sarcastic wisecracker

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FACT SHEET: BOB DOLE FOR PRESIDENT VIDEO

"To the Stars Through Difficulties"

This fact sheet contains basic background information on the Dole for President Committee's film, "To the Stars Through Difficulties" including details on production techniques, content, locations and technical credits.

- Locations. The film was shot on location in Russell, Kansas; Amherst, New Hampshire; Scott and Louisa counties, Iowa; Managua, Nicaragua; and Washington, D.C. Historical footage came from various film libraries. Aside from some material filmed inside Senator Dole's office and interviews filmed in Russell, all U.S. shooting was done at public events. No professional actors appear in this film.
- Filming. Most of this film was shot in 16mm color negative film. Extensive use was made of hand-held cameras and other highly portable gear to insure an intimate, documentary style. Some of the historical footage, the speech at the Russell high school gym and the Nicaragua material was shot in videotape. No tele-prompters or cue cards were used.
- Producers. This film was written, produced and directed by Mike Murphy and Alex Castellanos of Murphy & Castellanos, Inc., a leading Republican political media firm working for the Dole for President Committee. Past Murphy & Castellanos clients include Senators Helms, Thurmond, and Symms, as well as Congressmen Wortley, Carney and Spence. Key Dole national staffers involved in the project were Senior Consultant Donald Devine, Communications Director Mari Maseng, and Operations Director Bill Lacy.
- Technical Credits. Cinematographer: Bob Peterson. Editors: Jaime F. Gonzales and Rosanna Herrick. Original score: Demos Chrissos and Matt Nicholl. Narration: Peter Thomas.



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DOLE STUMPS VIA VCR

More than 20,000 people will be watching Bob Dole campaign via VCR at video parties across the country next week.

Dole volunteers are inviting people to see an 18-minute presentation in the hope of recruiting their support for his candidacy. The parties, now scheduled for 1,417 homes, are expected to draw an average of 25 people each.

"These video parties are the next best thing to having Bob Dole in your living room," said Bill Lacy, Campaign Director. "Their strategic value is twofold. Most people know Bob Dole as a leader in the Senate, but they don't know much about the forces that shaped his strength and his values. This video will also serve as a recruiting tool to energize and add to our organization. We believe that folks will be moved by Bob Dole's story and go home committed to help elect him our next president."

The video opens with Dole speaking to a high school graduation, then flashes back to his childhood, his World War II experience and recovery from life-threatening injuries.

Later, upon returning to Russell as Gerald Ford's running mate in 1976, Dole is overcome with emotion when he looks out among the crowd of people who years before had collected money in cigar boxes to pay for his hospital bills.

The video highlights Dole's achievements as a leader in the U.S. Senate. It emphasizes his leadership in passing the Reagan tax cuts in 1981, saving the Social Security System in 1983, and securing aid for the contras in Nicaragua. Dole is shown as one of the strongest supporters of President Reagan in the Senate.

Speaking to a group of farmers in a golden corn field, Dole explains the philosophy behind his actions in the Senate.

"I believe the American people, whether you're Democrats or Republicans or independents, are looking for strong leadership, someone who can take charge, someone who can work with the Congress, someone who understands government. I would say as a Republican I think I understand the needs and the desires of those who may be disabled, who only want something to eat or a place to sleep. I certainly understand the hopes and dreams of many in agriculture who only want to earn a living, to pay their bills, send the children to school, buy machinery. I think we have an obligation to all of those people. I'm an optimist. If I weren't an optimist, I wouldn't be standing here today. I think I've been tested. I think I understand."

Later, in his office, Dole describes the kind of leader he believes Americans are seeking.

"I happen to believe that most Americans would like to feel that the people who work for them really understand what their life might be like. I'm talking about the average voter, who really doesn't pay much attention to politics, who really believes in the system, would like to believe that whoever leads that system is someone from the people, someone who's climbed up the ladder with a lot of help from a lot of people, and once they got up the ladder, they didn't forget where they came from and kept looking back to see if they couldn't give a hand to somebody else. That's what America is all about."

The film was produced and directed by Murphy & Castellanos, a leading Republican political media firm based in Alexandria, VA.

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