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U.S. NEWS

BUSH VS. DOLE

several important ways—even though the stories of his silence at cabinet sessions are both legendary and true. Bush's most public activities have had little impact. He headed task forces to recommend deregulation and antiterrorist policy and to improve coordination in the interdiction of drugs. Behind the scenes, the story is more promising. By most accounts, it is Bush who prevailed upon Reagan to shelve plans to resuscitate the affirmative-action executive order in a form that would have watered down its requirements. Bush's advice helped Reagan to decide to withdraw U.S. Marines from Lebanon and, in 1983, Bush convened a top-level "crisis management" meeting that recommended the military invasion of Grenada to Reagan, who was then in Augusta, Ga. In 1985, the Vice President was responsible for overcoming State and Defense department objections to using American planes to airlift 800 Ethiopian Jews to Israel, an action that saved them from almost certain starvation.

Most significantly, Bush moved Reagan to a less hostile view of the Soviet Union—a change accomplished by inches during weekly private lunches with the President. The first tangible result of Bush's efforts came Jan. 16, 1984, when Reagan delivered a speech saying, "We must and will engage the Soviets in a dialogue as serious and constructive as possible." The latest result of Bush's subtle pressure is the INF treaty. Not a bad record at all for "standby equipment," to borrow Nelson Rockefeller's description of the Vice Presidency.

But it's a record under a cloud. Bush received a nice lift last week when Don Regan, former White House chief of staff, confirmed that Bush had privately expressed reservations about the Iran arms sale. But questions remain unanswered. For example, when did Bush actually learn that the Iranian overture was an arms-for-hostages swap, and how involved were he and his staff with Contra operations at a time the Boland Amendment prohibited such actions?

#### The danger in perceptions

Bush has answers, but some of them have been contradictory, and he has yet to put the affair behind him. Even if he can never be accused of an illegality, there is potential danger. If the polls eventually show that the public perceives Bush as having lied about his role, he will be headed for retirement in 1989.

Taking Bush at his word is no more satisfying. As a regular attendee at National Security Council sessions, the administration's chief antiterrorist planner, designated "crisis manager," a former CIA director and a self-described



"fan of intelligence," Bush should have seen the writing on the wall from the beginning, especially since he takes great pride in having been, as he once said, "in on everything." That he didn't (if he didn't) is not comforting. "Frankly," said Bush's longtime chum Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige shortly before he died, "I thought George was the one guy in the administration who could protect [Reagan] from things like Iran-Contra. Why he didn't, I don't know."

Bush isn't alone in the putative scandal department. A whiff of similar trouble may now be enveloping Dole—a complicated matter involving a blind trust established by the candidate's wife Elizabeth, the former Transportation Secretary. Dole says there's nothing to it, but his national finance chairman, David Owen, who allegedly had business dealings with the trust, quit the campaign last week—and the Office of Government Ethics has begun an inquiry. The best bet is that the matter will have little impact on Dole as Iran-Contra will have on Bush.

So what to make of Dole? Two things about him define his character—his service in World War II and his love of politics.

On a mountainside in Italy in 1945, Dole suffered wounds that left him paralyzed. Thirty-nine months and eight operations later, he left the hospital with one kidney, a withered right hand and a fierce desire to demonstrate his independence. His war injuries may account for an anomaly in Dole's character: He often shows compassion for the little guy—a cornerstone of his campaign—but he hates to cede control



and can be ruthless to his own staffers when they mess up.

Dole chose politics to test himself, beginning at age 26 while he was still in law school. "I couldn't go out and play golf or shoot baskets or play touch football any more," he says. "I wanted to get into something where I could compete."

And win. Dole jokes that he ran his first race as a Republican, bucking his Democratic parents, because the GOP outnumbered the opposition. From the Kansas Legislature, Dole climbed the ladder—county attorney, congressman (1960), senator (1968), vice-presidential nominee (1976) and presidential candidate (1980). Over the past decade or so, there is widespread agreement that he has matured politically. "He has shown a real capacity to grow," says a top Democratic strategist. "You've got to admire that in any politi-



cian, because it's so rare." But one thing hasn't changed: Dole remains, in the words of a GOP colleague, "one of the most driven men I've ever seen."

In the process, he seems never to have paused long enough to stand for anything. His reputation turns on his talent as a master legislator who reconciles the causes of others. He has shown some leadership on budget issues, and perhaps his most far-reaching achievement was salvaging the tattered Social Security System in 1983. But he has also shown a flair for expediency that puts Bush's to shame. Even a supporter, Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum, his Kansas colleague, complains that Dole is reluctant to stake out a position on issues. Dole, says Kassebaum, wants to see "which way the wind will blow." Last week, for instance, Dole proposed a one-year spending freeze designed to slash

\$150 billion from the federal budget deficit over three years. But Dole has opposed similar proposals, despite backing from key supporters such as Iowa GOP Senator Charles Grassley, because Reagan opposed the legislation.

#### An eye on expediency

Like Bush, Dole has also tacked to the right. Over the past year, he has positioned himself as a by-the-numbers conservative, siding with Reagan on most of the President's favorite issues. He called for abandoning the unrattled SALT II treaty and, despite his expressed reservations, voted to aid the Contras. He joined with Jesse Helms in holding the appointment of America's next ambassador to Mozambique hostage to a change in U.S. policy toward the Marxist government there. He also played to Helms's private ambition. Dole looked away long

#### STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

The race is so tight that points are won or lost in such areas as spousal campaign ability. Elizabeth Dole, above, is among her husband's biggest assets—more in demand than Barbara Bush, left. The candidates stress experience. Bush, with world leaders such as Gorbachev and Dole, with his role in Congress.

enough for Helms to displace Richard Lugar as ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—a move rewarded with Helms's neutrality in the presidential campaign.

Now that it's time to say what he would do with the big prize, Dole can only muster a vague patter. "I'm a leader, I'll lead. People are looking for a leader who has been making decisions. [Bush] doesn't make decisions. It's not his fault. I make decisions." The result is that Dole has trouble answering the puzzle he poses. "I think we have to decide where we want to be in the year 2000. Where does Bob Dole want America to be, and what should our policy be?"

Even less cosmic questions can stump him. "I'm a high-school senior," began a young woman in Clear Lake, Iowa, recently. "I know where I want to go and how I want to get there. But I'm worried that I won't have enough money to go to college. How will a Dole administration help me?" This, in the currently fashionable vernacular, was a softball—which Dole swung on and missed, never looking the student in the eye and rambling on in unfathomable generalities.

Unfortunately for Dole, such performances are all too common. They do, however, help explain his answer to another simple question: "Who are your model Presidents?" Dole was asked last week. First among equals, the candidate responded, is Gerald Ford. "If you could combine Ford's knowledge of government with Reagan's ability to communicate, then you've got something."

Where does this leave Dole? Better prepared to be President, he insists. Why? Because "I'm ready"—the exact words Walter Mondale used to advance his candidacy in 1984.

Mario Cuomo, the Great Kibitzer, likes to remind that Reagan once said the best preparation for the White House is to be a big-state governor. "We deal with it all," says Cuomo. "We propose it, we message it and we often have to ram it past reluctant legislators." By this logic, it's hardly surprising that we know little about how Bush and Dole would perform as President—a matter of no small concern in normal times, a matter of great concern given the extraordinary difficulties the next Chief Executive is almost certain to face. A best-case scenario for these two men most likely to succeed is that they will rise to the occasion. And it is possible. Forget Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. Think Harry Truman—and pray.

Glenn Berger, Kenneth L. Walsh and James Rosenfield contributed to this article.

## Dole: Curb rise in benefits

By Philip Lentz

Chicago Tribune

MERRIMACK, N.H.—Sen. Bob Dole, providing his most detailed plan to date to cut the federal deficit, endorsed Friday the idea of a 2 percent ceiling on cost-of-living increases for Social Security and other entitlement programs.

The GOP presidential candidate also again called on his chief rival, Vice President George Bush, to release his notes and answer questions about the Iran-contra scandal.

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natically under law. Asked later which proposal he favored, he said, "I've set forth some options—an absolute freeze, one would be a freeze plus 2 percent, one would be no freeze on Social Security. I prefer the second option, frankly, but we have to negotiate with Congress. We can't leave all entitlements off the table."

A 2 percent across-the-board spending-increase cap would save \$50 billion a year, Dole said. The total freeze would save \$70 billion, but he said it was unlikely to be approved by Congress.

A freeze exempting entitlements would save \$35 billion to \$40 billion, he said.

In all cases, he said, a freeze would not affect programs benefiting the poor.

Cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security and other entitlement programs have long been targets of federal budget cutters, but Congress has been unwilling to restrict the adjustments because of pressure from the powerful senior citizens lobby.

The Social Security adjustment was 3.5 percent in 1985 and 3.1 percent in 1986.

Dole has endorsed various cost-of-living adjustment limits in the past, including a 1985 plan to freeze adjustments for a specified time, but his comments Friday were his first specific suggestions as a presidential candidate.

Asked if his stand would offend older voters in Iowa and New Hampshire, the first two key tests in the presidential campaign, Dole said: "I focus on leadership. I focus on making decisions, but we don't cut anyone's benefits. This is a cost-of-living adjustment."

On the Iran-contra scandal, Dole warned that the Democrats would continue to make it an

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saying the issue will continue to nag the Republican Party until he does.

Dole, the Senate minority leader, made his comments at a news conference in Merrimack after spelling out his proposals

to reduce the federal deficit to the New Hampshire Association of Realtors. The Kansas senator has been talking about a federal spending freeze for several weeks, but Friday was his first attempt to flesh out his ideas.

He said a freeze could take the form of: a total freeze of all spending; a freeze that would limit spending increases to 2 percent; or a freeze that would exempt entitlement programs, which are benefit programs where spending increases auto-

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Rep. Richard Gephardt, speaking Friday in Ames, Ia., says his campaign themes are bottom-line concerns of all Americans.

issue until Bush answered questions on his role.

"One way to get it behind us as a party is for him to release his notes, especially his notes to the President, notes that don't fall under national security," the senator said.

"It keeps nagging away out there until the person involved lays it to rest, and that person is George Bush."

In other campaigning Friday, Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri, a Democratic leader in recent Iowa polls, sought to answer criticisms from opponents who say he has tailored his campaign to Iowa and has no national vision.

In a speech to an Iowa State University audience, Gephardt said that trade, jobs, senior citizens and agriculture—his major campaign themes in Iowa—are not just the narrow concerns of Iowans but are the bottom-line concerns of Americans everywhere.

"We are told that if the trends continue, the next generation of Americans will be the first generation to be less well-off than their

parents," said Gephardt. "If we as Democrats don't fight for workers and farmers, for seniors and young families starting out, if we don't carry this cause, then who will, and what really are we all about?"

Following a strategy to appear "presidential" in the closing days of the Iowa campaign, Gephardt delivered the speech with a presidential-style teleprompter and without the jokes and anecdotes that usually precede a candidate's speech.

He also addressed another major critique, that his populist rhetoric is a recent conversion for a congressman who made his reputation as a Capitol Hill insider. "The critics say that there is a contradiction between speaking for people and the capacity to get things done," said Gephardt. "If the term 'populist' has a relevant meaning in our politics, then the greatest populist of the century was Franklin Roosevelt, who was also a legislative master and a patriot from one of America's first families."

Tribune reporter Mitchell Lacin in Iowa contributed to this article.

### Curbing Excesses

## Dole: The Good Traits Can Hurt

By RICHARD E. MEYER,

Times Staff Writer

On whining microphones, in overheated rooms, to bundled and booed voters across Iowa and New Hampshire, Bob Dole tells this story about how he became a Republican.

Years ago, when he had returned home to Russell, Kan., his body shattered by a war wound that almost killed him, the leading Democrat in town came to his house and told him that he ought to consider going into politics.

"But I don't know anything about politics," Dole protested. "It's not necessary," came the reply. "You got shot. I think we can get you elected."

His next visitor was the leading Republican in town. He, too, told Bob Dole he should run for office—but as a Republican.

"Why a Republican?"

"Twice as Many Republicans"

"Because there are twice as many Republicans as Democrats in Russell County."

So, Bob Dole tells the voters, huddled inside, out of the blowing snow and cold of early campaign America: "I made a great philosophical decision right there on the spot. I'd learned how to count in the Army."

Practical? Certainly. Bob Dole is pragmatic. It is one of his strengths. But he is a man with a larger vision of what he could accomplish as a politician, or of what it means to be a Republican? Hardly. Opportunistic? Perhaps. But pragmatism taken to its extreme often looks that way. And he can be practical to an excess. His vision is whatever works.

Bob Dole's weaknesses are his strengths in excess.

That is what sets him apart from others, both Republicans and Democrats, in this race for the presidency.

There might be some question about whether this candidate or that has the resourcefulness, say, or the toughness to be President. But with Bob Dole, there is no doubt: He has both. The question, however, is whether he has them in excess, and whether he can control his excesses. Or whether they control him.

#### Hands-On Manager

He is self-reliant, self-determined, self-sufficient and hands-on. But Bob Dole can rely on himself too much. He has trouble delegating authority, especially when the matter involves himself.

He is resourceful, smart, skillful, ingenious and savvy. But he also can be manipulative, crafty and sly. He is a doer, pragmatic, practical, down to earth. But he is not a conceptualizer, a deep thinker, a visionary or a dreamer.

Because his wound left him with a withered arm, he is sensitive. That makes him compassionate, sympathetic and charitable toward the disadvantaged. But it also can make him defensive about himself, private, retiring, remote and a loner.

He is ambitious, hard-working, determined, enterprising, indefatigable. But he also can be unsparring. Please see DOLE, Page 22