Bob Dole talks about leadership, the Iran-Contra affair and his war wounds

'My whole life raced in front of me'

In the living room of his apartment at the Watergate complex in Washington, Senator Bob Dole spoke with David Frost for his television series on "The Next President," presented by U.S. News. In a wide-ranging dialogue, Dole discussed his war injuries, his political odyssey, his leadership role in the Congress and his attitudes toward the Reagan administration, the

PRESIDENT

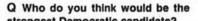
Q Who do you think should take the blame for the whole Iran-Contra mess? Well, as the President said, he accepts re-

sponsibility. He is the President. Q That's responsibility; what about blame,

which is more uncomfortable? Blame-I assume the President gets a little of that. Everybody around him gets a little of that. But I don't think he was very well served by some of those who took it upon themselves to make judgments on what the President should know and what he shouldn't know.

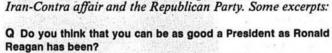
Q You once said that the Republican Party was too "country

club," not caring enough for the poor or blacks-I think we do care, but I believe there is a perception [that we don't]. Otherwise, why would so many people be in the other party-because the Democrats promise more spending? Not necessarily. I happen to believe that one way to change that is to reach out-give somebody reason to join the Republican Party. There are good reasons for a lot of Americans-hard-working, real people.



strongest Democratic candidate? Well, I've been saying that I don't want to get in trouble with any of my friends on the Democratic side.

But I've been watching Paul Simon. I've watched Simon for many years. Paul Simon is campaigning the same way he votes. He is a decent human being. He's a genuine liberal, old-fashioned Democrat-makes no excuses for it-and it's having an impact.



Well, he's been pretty good. But we each have our focus. I think the President came in as sort of an outsider-after another outsider, Jimmy Carter—and he was not convinced

you couldn't do all these things people said you couldn't do, so he did them. He lowered taxes. He dealt with inflation. He put people back to work. And he's done a good job. I think he has brought back respect to America around the world. . . .

You don't stand on the Reagan record; you build on the Reagan record. And I would deal with the deficit. I think that's the one area that we need to focus on.

Q Describe what happened to you on April 14, 1945, the day that really changed your life-

It was two days after the death of Franklin Roosevelt, which was a sad day for all of us. . . . And we had delayed the offensive [in Italyl a couple of days. . . .

We were supposed to cross a hedgerow, and we were pinned down by fire. As a result, I had gone back to sort of drag the radio man into a little shallow hole. ... And about the time I got

back, I felt this sting in my shoulder. I must say: My whole life sort of raced in front of me ... and then I don't remember anything for a long time.

Q How many times during the 39 months of battling back from that injury were you written off?

I don't think anybody ever told me. . . . But, you know, compared with a lot of young men, I didn't have much trouble at all. . . . I was healthy and strong and athletic; had good, kind, loving parents and friends. .

But I think you go through stages. I think that, first, it's sort of a self-pity. I mean: "Why me? Why should it happen to Bob Dole?

Q Don't you think there's still something deep down-

Not bitterness, but I think I'm certainly more sensitive. ... It takes a while. You sort of start over. You learn how to feed yourself . . . and you learn how to let somebody else help you dress. . . . So it's a big, big change for a young man who is 21 years of age.

Q Would you support an amendment forbidding all abortions? I support the human-life amendment, which prohibits abortion except when the life of the mother is in danger. It has been a consistent position, and it's a very controversial issue. . . . My hope is that we are not going to be judged on

one issue.

The minority leader: "Build on the Reagan record"

Q If you were willing to take the risk, how would you summarize your vision?

I guess the problem I have with vision is the word. I think you ought to know what you want, but if you ask the candidates, they are all going to be pretty much alike. They are going to say they want a better America for our children and grandchildren. And that's a vision.

Is that Bob Dole's vision? Well, to some extent. As I look out at different audiences, I've got to believe that 90 percent of the people who have thought about it would say to themselves, "When I'm gone from this earth, I want it to be better for my kids." That's what the people want, and that's what I want as a leader.

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16 NEWSWEEK: FEBRUARY 22, 1988 = **Dole: A Lone Wolf**

Can this sometimes-brilliant, but often aloof operator pull a team together?

By Margaret Garrard Warner

Darkness was falling as Bob Dole's motorcade sped toward a Nashua, N.H., Republican dinner. George Bush had at first declined and then, after his Iowa loss, agreed to attend and now was to be given the coveted final speaking slot among the six candidates. Dole, in annoyance, made it clear he felt his staff had failed him. "I want to know how it happened, why it happened and what we're going to do about it," he demanded. Dole's chief New Hampshire strategist, 42-year-old Concord lawyer Tom Rath, just stared at him. "You shouldn't be worrying about things like that," Rath said. "You may be the next president of the United States, and you're going to have to start acting like one." Dole, startled by the challenge from an adviser, gave a pained smile and sub-sided into silence.

he episode with Rath was pure Dole. It revealed the senator's compulsive need to control every detail of his political life and his often icy, peremptory manner toward those around him. These traits haven't inhibited his success as a legislator. But Dole's operating style has already hampered his campaignand could create problems for a Dole presidency. Dole is struggling to overcome these limitations, but it won't be easy. For one thing he must resolve a career-long paradox: Dole hires bright and aggressive people, and is so demanding of them that they once nicknamed him the Aya-Dole-Ah behind his back. Yet, the aloof and acerbic Dole mistrusts you're good, he wants you, and after you from subordinates, then often undercuts nothing happens," said another former

leave, he really helps you, but while you're on his staff, it's as if he's saying to himself, 'If this guy's so good, why is he working for me?" said Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Armi-

tage, a former Dole assistant. Why is Dole the way he is? A war injury that left him with a withered right arm-he must rely on others to cut his meatmade him despise dependency of any kind. And some associates point to his frightful treatment in a veterans' hospital after the war, when doctors let his muscles atrophy for six months without treatment or exercise. That experience bred in him, these associates say, a deep mistrust of others' judgment. "The last time he trusted someone with his life," said a former top aide, "it nearly

On Capitol Hill, where there are many different legislative styles, Dole is a brilliant inde-

pendent operator. He has su-perb political instincts and legendary vote-counting abilities. Soaring solos are possible on the Hill, where legislators can pick their shots. But the demands and drudgery of day-to-day management are something else again. And so far Dole has not demonstrated the executive talents necessary to run a successful cam-

paign-or the presidency. Interviews with more than two dozen current and former staffers reveal a lot about Dole's executive skills-and his anyone's judgment but his own. "If | temperament. Dole demands the best



'He puts you in the deep freeze': The senator

and second-guesses them. He will make a deal with a fellow senator, and let his staff learn about it from the other sena-tor's aides. After 27 years Dole still insists on reviewing all press releases and form letters leaving his Senate office, frequently rewriting a phrase or slap-ping on a new headline. He operates as his own chief of staff, dealing with a half dozen senior aides directly, making the ultimate decision himself on everything from negotiating strategy to scheduling. "Until he gets involved in something,



Memories of war: Veterans who served with Dole in Italy where he was wounded

aide. Periodically there has been deep dissatisfaction on the staff and Dole has tried to deal with it in his own way. "Make my office happy. They're unhappy," he told one new administrative assistant. But most of the time he is impatient with management concerns. When Chris Bolton, a top aide, grumbled about the turf battles fracturing the staff, Dole replied. "What are you complaining about? [You're]asurvivor."

Like servants: Staffers think he is simply oblivious to their concerns. One former and one current staff member used precisely the same words to describe Dole's attitude toward his staff. The senator, they said, treats subordinates "the way the newly rich treat servants." Dole is swift to dismiss those he considers incompetent. "If a staff member doesn't measure up to his standard, they are quickly gone," says Jo-Anne Coe, Dole's longtime senior political adviser. But he is sparing with his praise and thanks for those who do make the grade. When displeased, he cuts the offending aide off for a time. "He puts you in the deep freeze," said one former staffer. "It's mid-August and you're walking around Washington in mittens and a muffler."

Dole's staffers see flashes of his charm and legendary wit. But for the most part, said one, "he reserves that effort for those outside the family." Dole is a tough, demanding boss, but he continues to at-

tract top talent drawn by the excitement | undercut. After negotiating for days of working for such an activist senator. | with the White House about just when He likes subordinates to present ideas and how Dole would endorse the presisuccinctly, in brief memos if possible. He | dent's proposed intermediate-range misreplies quickly, and decisively, with a sile treaty, Brock got a call from a scrawled "Yes," "No" or "Need more." stunned Reagan aide. The aide had just Staffers who want to ask him something learn to catch the busy senator on the the administration had managed to fly. "There's an elusiveness about him, a "stuff the INF agreement down the hit-and-run quality," said former aide throatof NATO." An embarrassed Brock Stanley Hilton, author of an upcoming

unauthorized biography of Dole. Dole's wintry demeanor does not invite challenges from his staff. "You risk Dole admirer familiar with the incident putting him in a bad mood," said a former | Dismayed by Dole's continued urge to aide. Campaign press secretary Mari Maseng insists Dole "doesn't respect you if at one point told him: "There are two jobs you play the yes man." But some subal- in this campaign-candidate and camterns seem almost in awe of Dole's judgment. When Coe, who's been with Dole 21 years, was asked what she did if she | will grow, that he can adjust his temperthought he was making a mistake, "I ament and style to accommodate the

high-powered finance-committee aides | was trying to "let go of a lot of things," to guide him through the arcana of tax but in the same breath defended his policy. But the authority of the group, | need for tight control. "You stay out of leash," says a former Reagan official. | staff, 'If I goof up, they're not going to Dole's most trusted senior aides tend to | blame you, they're going to blame me'." Lighthizer—a possible White House chief of staff if Dole becomes president— and only his way.

as "a cold, aggressive producer, like the boss." Another aide described the toughminded Coe as "Bob Dole in an Ultrasuede suit."

At the campaign office, Dole is now on his third wave of managers. Despite his stunning success in Iowa, staffers still joke about "the C-word"-chaos. Dole partisans welcomed the arrival in November of the newest campaign manager, Bill Brock, because the former labor secretary and Republican National Committee chairman was seen as a strong figure whose judgment Dole would respect. "We can shout at each other because we're peers," Brock said. But early on, Brock learned what it was like to be heard about a Dole speech charging that was equally surprised. "Using the words 'Dole' and 'management' in the same sentence is an oxymoron," lamented a paign manager. You can have one."

His way: Dole's admirers insist that he don't think there ever was such a time," campaign and, if he wins the White she replied.

Dolein the late 1970s did hire a group of last week with Newsweek, Dole said he headed by lawyer Robert Lighthizer, was trouble that way," he said. "I think my tightly restricted. "They were on a short instincts are good. I keep telling my resemble him. A Dole staffer described Dole was suggesting that whether he