



Dole on a Roll

With help from Pat Robertson, he turns the G.O.P. race upside down



The day after the Iowa caucuses, an earthquake shook New Hampshire. It was a small tremor, just enough to give folks a jolt. On the same day, Senator Bob Dole of Kansas swept into the Granite State for a final round of campaigning before this week's primary. The often tightly coiled politician seemed a changed man: jaunty, self-possessed, rejuvenated. After winning the Iowa contest with 38% of the Republican vote, he suddenly had the aura of a champion. "We're winning!" he exulted as he greeted a supporter in Nashua. His rhetoric was sharp-

er, his jokes funnier, his rapport with voters seemed warmer. For Dole and his chief opponents in the Republican presidential race, the Iowa results promised to have earth-shaking ramifications.

As he barnstormed through the snow, Dole was clearly on a roll. When he posed for a photographer on a street corner near Exeter, a passing driver honked his horn and yelled, "Give 'em hell, Bob!" Dole marveled at his reception. "People are wishing me luck now," he gloated to his staffers. "He's grown as a candidate in just the last four days," said his pollster Richard Wirthlin late in the week.

"He's more confident, more assured."

The flip side of Dole's Iowa victory was Vice President George Bush's defeat. Despite his status as Reagan's heir apparent, the advantages of office and more than \$5 million in campaign funds, Bush finished a distant third, with a slim 19% of the vote. Pat Robertson, the former religious broadcaster who has never held public office, stunned the Republican establishment with 25% of the vote and a second-place finish, emerging as a powerful and potentially disruptive force.

The Iowa results set the stage for gripping political drama in both parties as the

primary season opened this week. With no incumbent to rally around, each party had hoped for an early consensus behind a strong candidate. Instead, the muddled Democratic results and the turmoil in the G.O.P. increase the chances of protracted warfare right through the spring.

As expected, the chorus of lesser G.O.P. candidates began making their exits. Alexander Haig (0% in Iowa, last place) quit the race last Friday with a parting shot at Bush—and, indirectly, at the Reagan inner circle that had ousted him as Secretary of State. "From my point of view," said Haig, "Bob Dole is head and shoulders above George Bush as a potential President." Pete du Pont (7%, fifth place) will soon be heading back to Delaware's chateau country. Jack Kemp (11%, fourth place) had counted on outflanking Bush and Dole on the right as the true-blue conservative candidate. But Robertson's message of moral regeneration proved more appealing than Kemp's pep talks on economics, and the Buffalo Congressman could only hope that a strong finish in New Hampshire would keep him in the game.

"He's grown as a candidate," the Senator's pollster says. "He's more confident"

Struggling to keep his candidacy viable, Bush badly needed a win in New Hampshire. Two weeks ago polls showed him leading Dole by 20 points in the state. Late last week most surveys found the race too close to call. Dole was poised to upset a rival whose nomination had been portrayed as inevitable.

In Iowa, Dole capitalized on dissatisfaction with the Reagan Administration. But in New Hampshire, where the President remains popular, Dole struck a more conservative note, reiterating his support for the Nicaragua *contras* and, most notably, the Strategic Defense Initiative. "I will develop SDI, I will test SDI, I will deploy SDI," he thundered to the state legislature. A Dole aide boasted, "Ronald Reagan couldn't find any room to the right of that speech." Dole sounded even more like Reagan at a G.O.P. forum in Nashua. "As President of the U.S.," he vowed, "I pledge to veto any attempt to increase new taxes."

Yet even in the midst of his roll, Dole could not completely check the crusty streak that has proved his undoing in the past. His testiness surfaced when liberal students at the University of New Hampshire grilled him about South Africa. "Aren't there any conservative students here?" Dole bantered at first. Then he lost patience. Why, one questioner persisted, was Dole unwilling to support "realistic sanctions"? Dole shot back, "Name those realistic sanctions." When the student faltered, Dole bore in on him. "Name 'em," he growled. "Give me a list of them." The student replied, "I'm sorry, I can't." His point made, Dole drawled, "Oh, O.K. Go ahead."

Afterward, Dole defended his harshness. "I'm trying to make the point up here that Bob Dole is a conservative Republican; Bob Dole is tough enough to stand up to some of these ideas," he told TIME. "They ought to know that if Bob Dole is President... that's the way I operate." But after Ronald Reagan's sunny optimism, Republican voters may be startled when they encounter Dole's occasional cold furies.

While Dole built up momentum, Bush appeared unanchored. The Vice President's men blamed external factors for the crushing loss in Iowa: six years of a depressed farm economy, Dole's Midwestern background, Senator Charles Grassley's support for Dole. In truth, the Vice President had simply failed to motivate caucus goers. Bush had garnered 35,000 pre-caucus commitments, but wound up with little more than 20,000 votes. His projected supporters either changed their minds or stayed at home on caucus night.

When asked what he could do to turn his campaign around, Bush wanly replied, "Do a better job of getting my message out. Work harder, though I don't know how I can do that." In fact, Bush has been campaigning relentlessly for two years.

His weak support in Iowa did not stem from lack of hard work, or even from his involvement in the Iran-*contra* scandal. The essential problem with the Bush campaign was the man himself.

His "message" builds on his loyalty to Ronald Reagan, but his rhetoric evokes images of following rather than leading. His stump speech—delivered in disjointed sentence fragments and punctuated by jittery mannerisms—does little to command respect or confidence. When Dole preaches about reducing the deficit, compassion for the poor and "hands-on leadership," he sounds convincing, even urgent. Bush tells his audiences, "I want to be the education President," leaving them sitting on their hands. Try as he might, Bush has not attained the stature that a successful candidate needs.

At midweek the Bush camp brought in former Reagan Wordsmith Peggy Noonan to rewrite his stump speech. The result was a tight, effective assault on the recent lack of congressional leadership. Bush's biggest weapon against Dole. The Vice President scaled back his intimidating Secret Service entourage and toured shopping malls to engage in the "retail politics" required in New Hampshire. Before an audience of retirees in Portsmouth, he pleaded for understanding: "I don't always articulate well, but I always do feel. Nobody believes more strongly." It seemed to work.

Even if Bush rallies for a clear win in New Hampshire, he faces tough tests ahead. Robertson could prove to be more of a spoiler in the South than he was in Iowa. Robertson credited his dazzling showing in Iowa to God and his "invisible army" of supporters. Actually, Robertson supporters functioned less like an army than a skilled commando brigade. They understood the caucus system well and adroitly concentrated on group voting. Robertson organizers even rented buses to deliver their supporters to meetings en masse. Throughout the South and in such

Bush: no longer the "inevitable" nominee



Nation

states as Michigan and Minnesota, Robertson has built up similarly efficient organizations full of fervent campaigners.

To some Republicans, the Dole-Bush-Robertson conflict taking shape is a sign of fragmentation and discord in the G.O.P. "All the cultural contradictions of the party are coming home to roost," says John Buckley, a senior Kemp aide. "We are paying for the coalition we put together in 1980." Unlike Reagan in that year, no Republican in 1988 seems capable of winning the support of both moderate conservatives and right-wing evangelicals. Moreover, Robertson voters seem unlikely to throw their weight to a more electable, coalition candidate. "They hold their views

with a ferocity that makes compromise impossible," says John Deardourff, a longtime G.O.P. consultant. "There is no middle ground for them."

Though Dole and Bush are both seen as traditional G.O.P. politicians, there seems to be a cleavage in culture and outlook, between their respective supporters. Says Charles Douglas, a former New Hampshire Supreme Court justice and a Kemp supporter: "It's the difference between those who buy their clothes at Sears and those who go to Brooks Brothers." If Dole represents Main Street, Bush personifies Wall Street. Dole's roots are rural; Bush's are suburban country club. Like Reagan, Bush is upbeat about the future. Dole, and Robertson as well, speaks

for those who are concerned or resentful about America's lost jobs and lost innocence.

The fractures in the G.O.P. coalition that surfaced in Iowa could deepen if the three-way battle drags out and grows bitter. For months the Bush campaign counted on its broad support and organization in the Southern states as a "fire wall" against any damage suffered in the early contests. But if Dole and Robertson continue to scorch him, Bush may not reach his fire wall intact—and the others must hope that the spreading conflagration does not destroy the party's chances of keeping the White House.

—By Jacob V. Lamar.
Reported by David Beckwith and Alessandra Stanley/Nashua

The Undoing of Bob Dole

Blaming everyone but himself for his blunders

At a campaign stop in Chicago two days after Bob Dole's massive defeat on Super Tuesday, senior campaign aide Mari Maseng reassured staffers that there was no doubt in her mind: Dole would stay in the race. Yet in another room just a few feet away, longtime Dole adviser Kim Wells was on the phone telling a fellow strategist exactly the opposite. "I think we're only hours away from a decision to pull out," he declared.

Bob Dole's campaign seemed to be ending the way it began: in chaos. The confusion between Maseng and Wells, who are confidants, was typical. Remote and aloof as ever, Dole had listened impassively or made cryptic remarks while advisers debated whether he should fight on or quit. Left guessing at the candidate's intentions, aides came away with conflicting impressions, which they passed on to Washington insiders and the press. In the end, Dole decided to hang on through the Illinois primary. But by then, speculation about an early withdrawal had ruined his admittedly slim chance of staging a comeback.

Bob Dole should have been a formidable contender for the GOP nomination. The Senate Republican leader had plenty of money, experience and name recognition. His record of strong, hands-on leadership could have played well against George Bush's yes-man image. But his campaign has been a series of blunders for which Dole blamed everyone but himself.

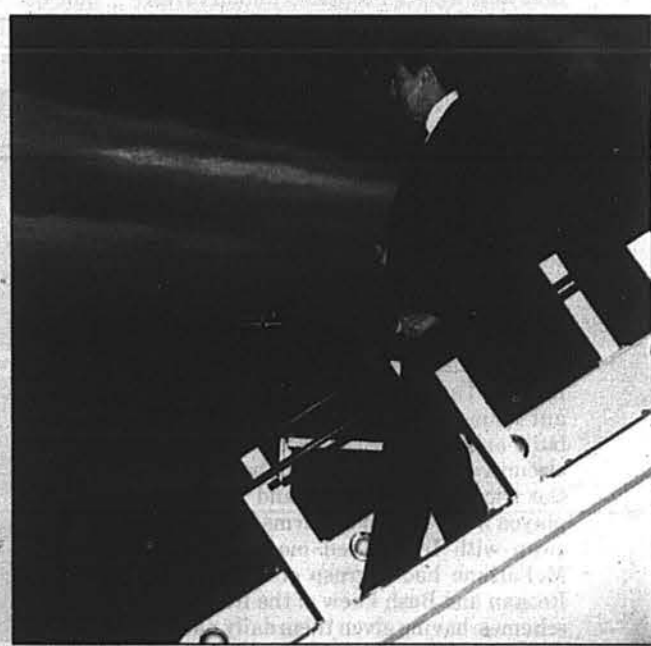
Slow to start, Dole hired campaign aides, lost confidence in them and hired some more. His final campaign chief, William Brock, didn't come aboard until last fall, long after the Bush juggernaut had begun to roll. Though he rarely trusts the judgment of others, Dole believed pollster Richard Wirthlin's prediction that he could coast to victory in New Hampshire after winning in Iowa. Bitter when he lost, he began referring to Wirthlin mockingly as "Doctor Dick." Heading South for Super Tuesday, he reached out not to Brock but to a pair of his rivals, consultants David Keene and Donald Devine, who countermanded the campaign chief's decisions. Outraged, Brock fired them in plain view of reporters. Mean-

time, the funds had fizzled away. After wasting money on staff and overhead, the campaign could only budget \$1.3 million for Super Tuesday ads.

Dole railed at Bush's royal progress toward the nomination. He did not try to conceal his resentment of the vice president's advantages, in life and in the campaign. Dole's frustration erupted on the eve of Super Tuesday, when he arrived in Tulsa to find he couldn't make a call because the telephones didn't work. At a press conference minutes later, Dole began ranting about Bush's built-in edge—"the millions of dollars in subsidies he gets from the government—the helicopters, airplanes, White House advance, personal staff, limousines... All those goodies! Plus the mansion." On the sidelines, his aides winced.

Yet as the dimensions of his defeat became clear, Dole was oddly chipper, wandering back in the plane to crack off-the-record jokes with reporters. The poor boy from Russell, Kans., who lost his youth and athletic grace to a stray German shell, can be a fatalist. The morning after Super Tuesday, as Dole sat in a suburban Chicago restaurant, he said simply, "Nothing's ever easy in life—for me." What he failed to acknowledge was that in this campaign, at least, he had made life harder for himself.

MARGARET GARRARD WARNER with Dole



■ "Nothing's ever easy in life": After his defeat, a sense of fatalism

TIME, MARCH 28, 1988

Sailing Against the Wind

Like Captain Ahab, Bob Dole seems driven by his quest



"What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing it is... I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time...?" —Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville

Robert Dole would not give in. Looking ghastly, his eyes glittering behind a sallow mask of TV makeup, Dole began a last-ditch 30-min. appeal to the voters of Illinois. Minutes into the live broadcast, the screen went black. Like Captain Ahab, who laughed when a freak storm reversed his ship's compass, Dole remained eerily serene. Adversity and bad luck had become so familiar—they were almost old friends. He kept on going.

Dole's personality has always been the real problem underlying his candidacy; his complex presence overshadowed his policies and views on issues. Even before George Bush trounced him last week, Dole's campaign had become a psychodrama: How far would he go in his relentless quest? In Washington, Senate colleagues delicately urged him to be "positive"; they didn't want the brilliant and witty minority leader to come off like an obsessed sea captain stalking the Great White Whale.

Dole had never been able to mask his anger: his valid arguments against Bush kept getting ensnared in personal discontent. Advisers who implored him to stop missed the point. He couldn't. On the

campaign trail, he had trained himself to describe his crippling war injury so matter-of-factly that people forgot how deep a psychological scar it had left. His all-consuming political drive had been forged in hardship, pain and solitude. Fiercely independent and iron-willed, Dole really trusted only his own judgment. Not surprisingly, he failed to assemble a first-rate



Seeking the lee shore: the candidate moves on to Wisconsin. For one week, the radiant smile of a young man in love.

organization. "It's not that we're falling apart now," said a veteran last week. "It's that we were never together."

When Dole came close to carrying New Hampshire, he briefly seemed transformed. For one week, he wore the radiant, goofy smile of a young man in love. His campaign badly miscalculated, and Bush prevailed instead. Neither Dole nor his shaky organization recov-

ered. Soon after, Dole mocked himself, joking that he had worked on his Inaugural Address instead of strategy. Along with his sense of humor, Dole regained his fatalism, resentment and mistrust: those instincts, at least, had never let him down.

Dole began teasing the press corps about David Owen, the friend who resigned after questions arose about Elizabeth Dole's blind trust. He developed a comic riff, joking that Owen was secretly dividing up his wife's trust fund with General Noriega. There was an edge: Dole was brooding that he had been forced to sacrifice his friend while even after Iran-*contra* broke, the Vice President had held on to staffers with alleged links to the scandal. The comparison became another haunting symbol of life's unfairness.

After the crushing Super Tuesday defeat, several senior aides prepared for a dignified withdrawal. Dole wasn't ready to quit, and he fought it furiously. "Others may be advising you," he snarled to reporters in Madison, Wis., "but they haven't been advising me." No one dared tell Dole directly to get out. He is not a man to be confronted.

Last Wednesday morning, after his defeat in Illinois, Dole returned to the Senate floor, too proud to appear vulnerable or idle. When colleagues warmly welcomed him to their fold, he snapped, "I'm not back." Serenity has never come easily to Dole. "If you're out there and you've been twisting in the wind for six or seven months and you start to smell a little," he said in Chicago, "then maybe somebody has to cut the rope." —By Alessandra Stanley/Washington