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Editorial Opinion

Dole Suck-up Watch 14

Senator knows better than to cut taxes

This very nearly was Part 2 of the Dole Backbone Watch.

But, under pressure from such puppetmasters as Newt Gingrich and Phil Gramm, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole has backslid to his habit of kissing up to the radical right.

Make no mistake about it. Dole, the Dole Kansans know and have habitually voted for, is a real conservative.

Gingrich, Gramm and those they represent are not conservatives. They are radicals.

The Old Dole, for example, knows better than to savage the federal treasury and aggravate the federal deficit by giving away a \$245 billion — that's billion — in tax cuts, mostly to the rich, over the next seven years.

Sunday, prompted by other true conservatives in the Senate, Dole was making noises that indicated the Senate would once again play the grown-ups to the House's fitful children and resist the drive for such a tax cut.

There are many in the Senate, good Republicans, credentialed conservatives, who know that Congress would be irresponsible to the point of insanity to cut taxes by such a large amount when, to their minds, the real goal should be to reduce or eliminate the federal deficit.

And, while they are at it, they are also supposed to be figuring out a way to save Medicare, reform Medicaid and find a way for millions of people to escape genera-

tions of dependency on welfare.

It is going to be hard enough to sell Americans, especially the well-organized elderly and medical lobbies, on the sacrifices that will be necessary to solve these problems.

To try and do that with one hand while, with the other, draining the treasury of billions of dollars it would have received from people who can very well afford to pay their taxes, is not only irrational, it is bad politics.

Grand Old Party stalwarts such as Orrin Hatch and Alfonse D'Amato have pointed out the political inconsistency, not to mention the poor math, of the tax cut rush. Under ordinary circumstances, Dole could be counted upon to join those ranks.

But, now that Dole is seeking the Republican presidential nomination, and the party's nominating process is dominated by the radicals, the senator has abandoned reason and Tuesday he again spoke out in favor of the huge tax cut.

The risk of such an obvious suck-up, of course, is that those he is sucking up to don't believe him.

Dole is too experienced and too reasonable to think that a tax cut is a sane idea given the nation's current financial fix. He would prove his ability as a leader, someone worthy of the office he seeks, if he would say so and concentrate the Senate's efforts on the Medicare and welfare issues without the clutter of the tax cut fight standing in the way.

Or, he can try again to kowtow to a group of irresponsible radicals who don't believe him anyway.



Dole

Bob Dole's presidential campaign is kaput

After a solid month of Powellmania, I am certain of only two things:

1. Anyone who counts "The Producers" among his favorite movies — see "My American Journey," page 593 — can't be all bad.

2. Bob Dole's campaign for the presidency is kaput.

Since only the second of these two assertions is debatable, please forgive me for dwelling on it to the exclusion of an extended exegesis of the cultural overlap of Colin Powell and Mel Brooks.

Powell remains an enigma in any case — a Rorschach test, as prognosticators are fond of prognosticating, whose nearly papal popularity is more revealing about the rudderless populace that cheers him than it is about the man himself.

And now that the Rorschach test has been taken by the political party to which Powell claims affinity, the preliminary results are easy to read: The Contract-era Republican establishment doesn't want Dole whether Powell runs or not.

"It has grown harder and harder to fake any enthusiasm for GOP front-runner Bob Dole," wrote Arianna Huffington last week in the lead essay on the most influential conservative editorial page in the country, The Wall Street Journal's.

Huffington — whose latest cultist calling is as what Vanity Fair calls a "ubiquitous" and "self-appointed guardian" to Newt Gingrich — is hardly speaking just for herself.

She is in fact merely stating in blunt language the message other leading Republican conservatives have been tip-



toeing around since the Powell boom began in earnest after Labor Day. When William Kristol and William Bennett talk up a Powell candidacy, as Huffington also is, they never endorse the retired general's few known specific views — which are patently opposed to the Gingrich revolution they stand for and the religious right they are in bed with — but instead use his glowing presence to beat up implicitly on Dole, for whom they can't muster even fake enthusiasm.

None of this has stopped the press from referring reflexively to Dole as the "GOP front-runner" — describing his candidacy much as Theodore H. White once described another front-runner in "The Making of the President 1972." White wrote that Edmund Muskie's campaign that year "seemed irresistible" because "he had solid financial backing, a large and experienced staff, the endorsement of the party's leading figures, the advice of the party sages, the affirmation of the nation's pollsters."

Dole, too, leads the existing GOP field by far in cash, polls, staff and endorsements, but who believes this emperor has clothes? "Man Without a Message," declared a recent anti-Dole editorial in The Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader, the conservative primary-state rag that could yet bring Dole to grief as it

reduced Muskie to tears.

As mushy in his views as was Muskie — whose campaign slogan, "Trusty Muskie," emphasized the ur-Dole virtues of moderation and tried-and-true Washington experience — Dole stands in relation to the true Gingrichian heart of his party's right-wing leadership as his Democratic antecedent did to his party's McGovernite left. As Arthur Miller wrote of Willy Loman, he is liked but not well liked.

On a recent "Crossfire," Kristol foresaw a Dole nosedive as soon as Nov. 17, when he is "likely" to do "badly" in a debate on "Larry King Live."

The front-runner has no one but himself to blame for his stumble. As the Powell book was published, the senator was already taking heat for reversing his principled, lifelong record on affirmative action and even changing the church where he worships to pander to the Christian Coalition.

But he kept on flip-flopping — whether by trying to stall Bob Packwood's departure, embracing the supply-side economics he once ridiculed or returning a contribution from the gay Log Cabin Republicans.

No universal has been the condemnation of Dole for such hypocrisies that no one bothers to talk about the age issue anymore — as if the unlikelihood of a Dole presidency has rendered it moot.

Last weekend "Saturday Night Live" revealingly focused on the Dole character issue instead, depicting him as eager to score political points by implying Colin Powell was gay. The sketch would have been far funnier if its Bob Dole had not so sourly evoked the real thing.

GOP rivals bash Clinton, not Dole

By The Associated Press MANCHESTER, N.H.

Agreeing with one another more often than not, the Republican presidential candidates used their first televised forum Wednesday to preach the virtues of lower taxes and less government and the dangers of giving President Clinton a second term.

If the goal of Bob Dole's rivals coming into the forum was to knock the GOP front-runner off stride, none appeared to succeed. Dole delivered a crisp account of why he believed he was the best candidate in the field and offered a detailed defense of his conservative credentials.

At every turn, Dole said Clinton was defending the status quo against a new Republican Congress trying to balance the budget, cut taxes and shift power from Washington to the states.

"We must elect someone who knows how to make that change," Dole said. "I will not permit the slow decline of America — a country that I love."

It appeared that Sen. Phil Gramm was ready to go after Dole, using a pre-forum rally to suggest that Dole was a politician all too ready to break his promises.

But the Texas senator made no



GOP presidential hopefuls pose prior to Wednesday's forum in Manchester, N.H. From front row left are former Tenn. Gov. Lamar Alexander, Sen. Bob Dole, Steve Forbes, Rep. Bob Dornan and Pat Buchanan. From back row left are Alan Keyes, Sen. Arlen Specter, Morrey Taylor, Sen. Richard Lugar and Sen. Phil Gramm.

such comparison during the forum. His toughest criticism of Dole came when Gramm pledged not to "cut deals with Democrats in Washington because you know cutting deals with Democrats in Washington is not going to bring back the American dream."

Given the format, which allowed for no interaction among the candidates, the rival camps said it made little sense to level direct attacks.

Each treated their eight minutes of air time as an extended campaign commercial.

More than any other candidate, Dole drew a contrast with Clinton, criticizing the president for raising taxes, "hollowing out our military" and standing in the way of GOP efforts to balance the budget, reform Medicare and allow voluntary prayer in schools.

Dole: Mission begun in WWII not yet complete

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The aging generation that won World War II has much left to contribute to America's battles against problems such as the federal budget deficit and drug abuse, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole said Wednesday.

In a speech to a rare joint session of Congress called to commemorate the end of World War II more than 50 years ago, Dole said while it is important to remember history the country must "look ahead to the next 50 years ... to the ordeals yet to come."

"Our mission is not yet fulfilled," said the Kansas Republican, who is the front-runner for the 1996 GOP presidential nomination. "Our mission is not yet complete."

Dole, who was seriously

wounded while fighting in Italy in 1945, quoted from a speech made shortly after the war by then-Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, a fellow Kansan whom Dole described as his hero.

"There's no doubt that the spirit of our people's determination will fire this nation through the ordeals to come," Dole said.

Dole was introduced by Vice President Al Gore, who said anyone who knows of the senator's war injuries and long convalescence "knows something about

true courage."

Dole himself alluded briefly to his lengthy stay at a veterans hospital in Michigan, noting that a fellow patient, Democratic Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, was a frequent card partner, and that another patient, former Sen. Phillip Hart, now has a Senate office building named for him.

"We consider ourselves fortunate in that we returned home from the war ... you think about your best friends who didn't come

back," Dole said.

Dole recognized two guests in the House chamber: 95-year-old Anastasia Ford of Kensington, Md., who lost two sons in the war; and John Eisenhower, son of the general and former president.

Quoting from former Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Dole said the day commemorated the times when the war generation's "hearts were touched by fire and when America saved the world."

Dole: Senate to vote on term limits

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate is reluctantly moving toward a vote on congressional term limits, in a nonbinding resolution pushed by a Missouri senator to determine where senators stand on the issue.

"The vote would show the American people who supports term limits and who does not," said Republican Sen. John Ashcroft. "It's an important signal that the U.S. Senate is a new and different body than it has been in the past."

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., told Ashcroft on Thursday that the Senate would vote next week at the earliest on a resolution stating that the "sense of the Senate" is to pass a term limits constitutional amendment before adjourning this year.

The move comes after Dole — according to a written request from all Republican freshmen except Ashcroft and Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine — had decided to delay the vote until early next year.

"I'm sorry the freshmen are not in agreement," Dole told Ashcroft on the Senate floor. "I thought they were in agreement. You'll get your vote."

Dole's rivals for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination have attacked him over the delay, including in TV ads aired by magazine publisher Steve Forbes saying "Senator Dole is wrong" to postpone a vote on term limits.

The drive for term limits stalled after the House failed earlier this year to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote for a constitutional amendment. Despite that loss, Dole assured Ashcroft at the time that the Senate would consider its own term limits amendment in short order.

Voters in 23 states, including Missouri, have approved some form of term limits on their congressional representatives, but the Supreme Court last May said states could not set terms for federal officeholders. Polls consistently show about two-thirds of voters support term limits in general.

Sen. Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., who co-sponsored a term limits bill with Ashcroft, wrote the Oct. 3 letter to Dole requesting a delay on a term limits vote. He said a few more months would give supporters more time to marshal their forces.

"Would it be better to move to a vote now? We'd have a quick vote and we'd lose," said Thompson. "I prefer to fight for a good cause and win."

Added Sen. John Kyl, R-Ariz.: "Most of us who support term limits want to have a vote when we have a chance to win it."

Ashcroft, however, said a delay is "an admission of defeat before we've begun to fight."

"We must show (voters) we haven't given up," he said.

Ashcroft forced the vote on his resolution by trying to attach it as an amendment to unrelated legislation that would strengthen existing sanctions against Cuba. Without the deal, Ashcroft's amendment would have interfered with progress on that bill.

Dole holds stride in forum

Continued from page 1-A

remarks." Another colorful moment came as long-shot candidate Morry Taylor, an Illinois businessman who has never run for public office, suggested his rivals couldn't be trusted because "these men have 138 years of Washington political experience."

In advance, it appeared Texas Sen. Phil Gramm was ready to aggressively go after Dole, using a pre-forum rally to suggest Dole was a politician all too ready to break his promises.

"How are we different from Bill Clinton if we don't keep our promises?" Gramm asked at his rally.

But the Texas senator made no such comparison during the forum, and never mentioned Dole by name. His toughest criticism of the Senate majority leader came when Gramm pledged not to "cut deals with Democrats in Washington because you know cutting deals with Democrats in Washington is not going to bring back the American dream."

Several others also took issue with Dole, at least indirectly, hoping to chip into Dole's big lead here.

"We do not need to replace their set of professional politicians with our set of professional politicians," said commentator Pat Buchanan.

"I think it will take a candidate from outside Washington, D.C., to beat Bill Clinton," said Alexander.

Given the format, which allowed for no interaction among the candidates, the rival camps said it made little sense to level direct attacks. Most seemed intent on introducing themselves to voters beyond hardcore GOP activists, given that the state's lead-off primary is four months away.

"If you were talking about someone else you were wasting your time," said Tom Rath, a senior Alexander

adviser. "So they all competed for the Mr. Congeniality award."

Each treated their eight minutes of air time as an extended campaign commercial, an opportunity to press staple themes.

Alexander, for example, stressed that most of his experience was outside Washington and repeated his calls for term limits, cutting congressional pensions and reducing the length of congressional sessions. "It is hard to change the culture of Washington if you are the culture of Washington," Alexander said.

Buchanan delivered a similar message, but lumped Alexander in with the others as "professional politicians." Buchanan spent most of his time looking for recruits beyond his core of social conservatives, stressing economic issues and promising a hard line against Japan, China and other nations that enjoy huge trade surpluses with the United States.

Before the debate, Buchanan raised eyebrows by saying he would not rule out a third-party candidacy if Republicans nominated a candidate he considered unacceptable.

Gramm took time to walk through his work helping write President Reagan's 1981 budget, and said he would make balancing the federal budget his paramount concern as president. "I am not afraid to stand up alone when I believe I am right," he said.

Anticipating attacks on taxes, always a sensitive issue in New Hampshire, Dole stressed in his opening statement that he was committed to cutting taxes by \$245 billion this year.

More than any other candidate, he drew a contrast with Clinton, criticiz-

ing the president for raising taxes, "hollowing out our military" and standing in the way of GOP efforts to balance the budget, reform Medicare and allow voluntary prayer in schools.

"We are going to be on the right track when Bob Dole is in the White House," he said.

On the issues, the candidates found themselves largely in agreement.

There was unanimous support for dramatic tax reform, with a few differences on the details.

Publishing heir Steve Forbes backed a pure flat tax, one that would eliminate the popular home mortgage interest deduction and all others.

Indiana Sen. Dick Lugar, on the other hand, said a national sales tax was superior to any form of income tax, although he said he would sign a flat tax if Congress passed one while he was president. The others support versions of the flat tax, including Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter, who used a giant poster to show viewers how simple filing would become under a new system.

The candidates also were near-unanimous in defending Republican cuts in social programs, and the GOP plan to leave decisions about welfare programs to the states.

Specter, though, said Republicans need to use "a scalpel not a meat ax" in trimming federal spending, specifically warning against education cuts.

Rep. Bob Dornan of California praised his GOP rivals but took out after Clinton and another potential candidate, independent Ross Perot, saying it was unfair for the Texan to criticize the GOP field.