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Maturity and political strategy contribute to Dole's new image

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his Kansas political advisers said, Kansas Republicans who defend Mr. Dole said they encountered more resentment toward him in 1983 than in previous years.

Political intimates of the senator find the contrasts difficult to explain.

Dave Owen, a Johnson County banker and Kansas GOP chairman who has held almost every top campaign post for Mr. Dole since 1974 and is likely to direct the senator's 1988 re-election effort, was asked to reconcile the descriptions of Mr. Dole as a benevolent statesman and as a short-fused senator who strikes fear in people.

"I can't," Mr. Owen said. "That's the mystery of the guy. He can be meaner than a junkyard dog yet there's no doubt in my mind that he's a compassionate person."

Bob Wells, a Garden City, Kan., broadcasting executive and former Federal Communications Commission member who has been associated with Mr. Dole for 21 years, offered a more terse observation: "The guy's a paradox."

Dole family values

Clues to understanding Mr. Dole lie on the plains, in Russell, Kan., in the Depression-era 1930s; and in the mountains, in the Po Valley region of the Italian Alps near the end of World War II.

As a child Mr. Dole was taught the virtue of hard work. His father, Doran, whose jobs included running an egg and cream business and managing a grain elevator, frequently rose at 5 a.m. to be at work by 6 a.m. When his father awoke, so did the senator's mother, Bina, his brother, Kenneth, and his sisters, Gloria and Norma Jean. Sometimes the elder Mr. Dole would help his wife sell sewing machines at night to bring in more money. Both sons worked at odd jobs.

"There was no 9-to-5 in this family," said Kenneth Dole, an oil lease broker in Russell who is 15 months younger than his brother. "That may be Dolly Parton's song, but it's not ours."

The Doles were a poor family rich in wit. Doran Dole found humor to be a tonic because, Kenneth said: "It's boring in this part of the country. A joke kind of helped the morale."

Decisions in the Dole family were made independently, Kenneth said. Bob decided to go to the University of Kansas in the early 1940s but had to support himself by waiting tables because his parents couldn't provide much money. He eventually earned a law degree from Washburn University in Topeka.

Praise was not dished out regularly by Doran Dole because, Kenneth said, if someone was doing what he was supposed to do, there was no need for a pat on the back. "If a guy's out painting your house and he's doing his job right, why give him a bouquet of flowers?" Kenneth said.

If there was a family maxim, it was about "doers and stewers," Kenneth explained. "This is a family thing. Bob Dole puts people in two categories: doers and stewers. If a ship is sinking and everyone is sitting around stewing over what they're going to do, someone has to get up and do something. That's a doer. That's Bob Dole."

Mr. Dole was leading a U.S. Army mountain infantry platoon up a hillside in the Po Valley in northern Italy in April 1945 when he was felled by a spray of German machine-gun fire. Near death, he spent almost 40 months in hospital. He regained the use of his legs, but lost a kidney and the use of his right arm.

"Those years in the hospital enabled him to deal with adversity," said his wife, Elizabeth.

Out of that personal struggle Mr. Dole developed a sensitivity for the underdog and learned how fragile life can be, his associates said. Mr. Dole called Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey almost every day when the Minnesota Democrat was in a hospital dying of cancer. And, overcome by grief, Mr. Dole was forced to leave the Senate floor last July while reading a eulogy for the doctor who mended his war wounds, Dr. Humphrey Kelikian of Chicago.

"I learned I could handle it," Mr. Dole said of his war injuries. "It was the biggest problem. It takes awhile. I was going from doctor to doctor, in Kansas City, Denver, Chicago, Wichita, looking for a miracle to restore me just as I was the day before it happened. It's a big shock to your whole system to go from 190 pounds to 120 pounds. Once you learn to handle it, you learn to live with it so you don't go through fits of depression."

Kenneth Dole explained further: "There's no limitation on what you want in life if you go out and work for it. A handicap shouldn't interfere. That's his foundation. That's the Bob Dole story."

Top-speed manager

Traditionally the weeks before Christmas are slow ones for members of Congress. They generally use the time for junkies, trips home, vacations and getting a head start on campaigning.

For Mr. Dole the session never ends; the frenetic pace is like a campaign schedule. In less than three days recently, for example, Mr. Dole conducted two Senate committee hearings, gave five speeches in Washington, appeared on two national news shows and had six interviews. Then he left for Chicago and Champaign, Ill., where he gave three more speeches, held two news conferences and appeared at two fund-raising events. From there it was on to Kansas City and eight cities in Kansas for speeches and meet-

ings before returning to Washington.

"Most people are driving 65 miles per hour, but Bob Dole is going 65 or 75 miles per hour and doesn't have time for anyone going 65," said Rep. Pat Roberts, a Republican who represents Mr. Dole's old 1st Congressional District in western Kansas.

"I'm restless," Mr. Dole explained. "I always want something to do."

People who deal with the fast-paced senator quickly learn that they must keep up. Otherwise, Mr. Dole can create headaches for them.

Current and former Dole staff members and others sketched a picture of an administrator who has a low tolerance for people who don't do things exactly as he wishes. Mr. Dole's mood shifts radically, associates said, which leaves people uneasy. The senator can be snide, they said, if he believes a staff member's work is inadequate.

Morgan Williams, a former Dole aide, said he had to write eight versions of a major speech on grain embargoes in 1980 before he satisfied Mr. Dole. The senator's former chief counsel on the Senate Finance Committee, Robert Lighthizer, said he has had to comfort committee staff members who have felt the senator's sting. And, consistent with his upbringing, the senator rarely tells people they are doing a good job.

"I almost assumed a military relationship with the senator," said Ernest E. Garcia, a former top Dole aide who now is a Pentagon official.

"He was my commander, and I was his subordinate. He isn't the kind of guy you can go in and small talk with, chew the fat. You've got a job to do. You do it, present it to him and then get out of there."

On Capitol Hill, where turnover generally is high among lawmakers' staffs, Mr. Dole has a reputation for being unable to keep aides on the payroll for very long. The long hours and Mr. Dole's fast pace simply burn people out. Many go to better jobs that Mr. Dole helps them get.

"He does have a reputation for being difficult to work for, but that's unfair," said Anne Cos, his political director and senior staff member of 16 years. "It's not a cushy job working for him, but I don't think he drives his staff harder than anyone else in politics."

Those who know Mr. Dole best said that he tends to become angry with people when his schedule is spread too thin, which is often, and that he regrets his behavior afterward. As Washington lobbyist and former aide William A. Taggart put it: "He's an s.o.b. to work for, but he's the best s.o.b. I know."

Nevertheless, the people who are helping chart Mr. Dole's political future said he needs to improve how he deals with people, especially because he is being identified publicly with people-sensitive issues.

Two principles guide Mr. Dole's treatment of people who work for him, he said. The first is: "If you're looking for a retirement program, don't apply." meaning staff members should be expected to work long and hard for their boss. The second is: "You people (staff) can goof off, but I'm the one on the ballot. I'm the one who takes it if you guys don't follow through. I don't think that's demanding. That's normal."

Independent streak

Tom C. Korologos and Mr. Dole are old friends. They got to know each other when Mr. Dole was one of former President Richard M. Nixon's principal Senate patrolmen in the early 1970s and Mr. Korologos was a White House aide, and later became a lobbyist. Mr. Korologos is a lobbyist for former President Gerald R. Ford. There is a relaxed relationship, the kind that allows them to trade insults and jokes.

Mr. Korologos now is a lobbyist for a high-powered firm that counts among its clients the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, Amherst-Busch Inc., major league baseball and some leading pharmaceutical companies. His friendship with Mr. Dole doesn't always count for much, however, when he is trying to peddle legislation that would benefit his clients, he said.

"Dole's an independent cuss," Mr. Korologos said. "He'll do what he thinks is right and damn the torpedoes."

Sometimes their relationship does produce legislative results, as in 1982 when Mr. Dole shepherded an amendment through the Senate repealing a section of the federal gun control law that required ammunition dealers to register the names of persons who bought .22-caliber ammunition. Mr. Korologos was the lobbyist for the National Rifle Association, which sought the change.

Mr. Dole has often agreed with positions promoted by lobbyists for farmers and independent oilmen, two strong Kansas constituencies. But most groups know that his independence is the central characteristic of his decision-making ability.

Washington agriculture lobbyists complained that they can't always rely on the senator to support the initiatives of wheat growers and livestock producers. He also has opposed some of the wishes of independent oil producers and veterans groups, which usually find a friend in him.

The senator's independent streak, several associates said, points up a contrast in the man: Mr. Dole's independence sends a signal to special interest groups and the public that the chairman of the revenue-raising Senate Finance Committee can't be easily manipulated, but steering his own course sometimes causes some people to think he is too inflexible and tries to do too much by himself.

His willingness to go his own way has shown up in his persistent attempt to persuade President Reagan and congressional leaders to agree



The powerful chairman of the Senate Finance Committee greets constituents at the Chilly Bowl Cafe, above, in Cherryvale, Kan., with a "Good morning, I'm Bob Dole." The senator makes the rounds of businesses, below, on the main street of the small southeast Kansas town.

on a deficit-reduction package of tax increases and spending cuts.

"We recognize the fact that he's prodding, but we don't view that as anything more than an expression of his own view, to which he's entitled," said White House chief of staff James A. Baker III.

Despite being well-connected to the White House and generally supportive of Reagan administration goals, Mr. Dole sometimes finds himself at odds with the president and isn't afraid to say so. Ratings by congressional research services show that Mr. Dole increasingly has challenged administration policies during the course of Mr. Reagan's first term.

"There's no question that Reagan respects Dole's independence," said Charlie Black, a conservative political adviser to the president and Mr. Dole. "Mr. Reagan also knows that Mr. Dole has extremely good political judgment. If Mr. Dole said a certain policy wouldn't sell in the Senate, the president wouldn't want it."

The Senate Finance Committee is among the most heavily lobbied in Congress because its legislation has enormous financial implications. During the deliberations on the \$98.4 billion tax bill of 1982, Mr. Dole noted the "wall-to-wall Gueccia" of lobbyists in the room and quipped, "They'll be barefoot in the morning."

Roderick DeArment, chief counsel of the Finance Committee, said he knew of no lobbyist with whom he must confer before presenting proposals to Mr. Dole. But at times the senator will ask him to call Kansas oilmen and bankers about pending issues, Mr. DeArment said.

To Tully Flesser, Mr. Dole's New York pollster, the senator fits the pattern of a contemporary politician. "A contemporary politician picks and chooses issues he feels are important, pursues goals that cut across constituencies and picks issues that he finds at odds with important groups. He uses the media to make his case rather than rely on whispered exchanges in back rooms."

But there are drawbacks to being independent, several of Mr. Dole's staff members and other associates said. The senator, they said, tries to make too many decisions on his own. "As much as anything, it's an old habit that's not easily broken, and he feels that it's his responsibility (to make the decisions)," said Ms. Cos, his political director.

Mr. Dole said, "I guess my biggest problem is I like to keep my fingers in everything."

Over the years Mr. Dole has been unable to keep administrative assistants for long. When a management firm was retained in 1980 to make recommendations on how to structure the office, it concluded that Mr. Dole didn't need an administrative assistant because he was so deeply involved in day-to-day decisions himself.

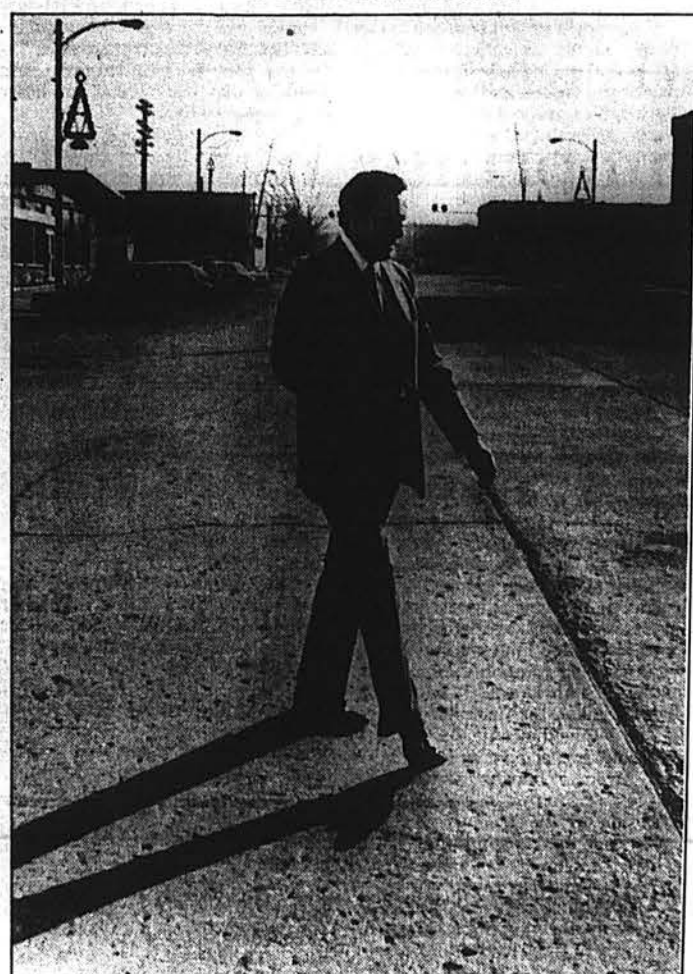
Mr. Dole said that as long as he must seek re-election, he would run his office his own way. "I'm willing to delegate when a person understands his job," the senator said.

Mr. Dole's unwillingness to delegate authority worries some of his most trusted political intimates. Lyn Nofziger, Mr. Reagan's former political director and now a Washington consultant, and Mr. Black, the Reagan adviser and consultant, said that if Mr. Dole aspires to be president, he has to learn to delegate more authority because many decisions in a national campaign and in the White House cannot be made by one person.

Mr. Black said, "He would need to delegate more than he ever has and discipline himself not to do everything."

Working with his Senate colleagues, Mr. Dole sheds some of his independence in order to get along and to secure legislation he wants. "He's an excellent team player on votes that don't matter to him personally on the theory that when he's in the driver's seat, they'll go along with him," said Mr. Lighthizer, the former top aide on the Finance Committee.

In Washington, friends and foes of Mr. Dole laud his skills as a legislator, and cite them as a major reason why he occupies such a visible place



in GOP politics. They said the senator knows the legislative process better than most of his colleagues and shows a willingness to consult with other members of the Finance Committee, picks up complex subjects quickly, is not indifferent to compromise, displays a doggedness in pursuit of what he believes is important, and sprinkles humor at the appropriate time to ease difficult moments.

Some typical appraisals: Mr. Baker at the White House: "In our view, he's one of the best legislative strategists on the Hill, a superb negotiator. If Bob hadn't been pushing as hard as he did, we might not have got the Social Security compromise (early in 1983 that led to a bail-out of the troubled system). He's a good tactician, ever conscious of the need to have his ducks in a row before something surfaces."

Sen. Alan J. Dixon, an Illinois Democrat: "You need a maverick in every legislative body, but you also need people who can put it all together. He's the one who puts it all together."

J.D. Williams, a lobbyist and Democrat: "He has an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the legislative, personal and political concerns not only of the members of his own party but the other members of the Senate. What is memorable about Bob Dole, other than his wit and policy-making ability, is that he can be rather catholic in his quest for support."

Sen. Russell B. Long, a Louisiana Democrat and former chairman of the Senate Finance Committee: "In my judgment he's the most effective committee chairman in the capital. He's learned everything I knew and developed some tricks of his own. When he first came here he was real partisan. He still is, but he doesn't anger or irritate Democrats nowadays."

Changing image

Mr. McGovern's first public appearance after announcing his candidacy for the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination was, of all places, at a rally honoring Mr. Dole for his work on behalf of hungry Americans.

"As you know, George and I have a lot in common besides our advocacy of food and nutrition programs," Mr. Dole told members of Public Voice, the rally's sponsor and a non-profit group promoting consumer interests in national food and health policy.

"Both of us have come within a whisker of winning the presidency. George carried Massachusetts and I won Russell, Kansas."

That good-natured kidding was in stark contrast to views of Mr. McGovern once expressed by Mr. Dole. "George McGovern is an opportunistic politician who has engaged in one of the dirtiest political campaigns ever to cover up a record full of questionable conduct," Mr. Dole said of Mr. McGovern in a statement released days before Mr. Nixon pulled the South Dakota Democrat out in the 1972 presidential election.

As Mr. Nixon's partisan point man, Mr. Dole developed a reputation for being vituperative. He defended Mr. Nixon's Vietnam and domestic policies so vigorously that even some of his GOP colleagues were offended by his style. After the Watergate scandal toppled Mr. Nixon, Mr. Dole fought for his political life in Kansas, narrowly winning re-election in 1974 in a campaign marked by its stridency.

Mr. Dole's heavy-handed style continued in 1976 when, as Mr. Ford's running mate, he crisply crossed the country hurling invectives at Democrats Jimmy Carter and Walter F. Mondale.

Those political campaigns left many Americans with a largely negative view of Mr. Dole, his associates said. Determined to change that, Mr. Dole started to soften up on such issues as food stamps and to make peace with such people as Mr. McGovern. After becoming chairman of the Senate Finance Committee in 1981, Mr. Dole's transformation of image was almost complete: Suddenly the media and political insiders in Washington were writing and talking about "a new Bob Dole."

But many of his advisers and other observers said they doubt there really is a new Bob Dole. They said the senator simply has been discovered now that he's a committee chairman; that it's the way people perceive him that has changed.

"I don't see a new Bob Dole," said Mr. Williams, the Democratic lobbyist. "I read all these stories, but I don't think he's changed. The perception is what's changed."

Added Mr. Flesser, the pollster: "There's a new perception of the old Bob Dole. People have come to recognize what he's about, which has led to a more favorable reputation."

But Mr. Dole doesn't fully accept the perception that he has changed his basic attitude on many issues. "I'm perceived as trying to work out differences, but to me that's normal," he said.

Image disagreements aside, Mr. Dole clearly is not a carbon copy of the politician who first came to Washington in 1961 or ran for vice president eight years ago.

Part of the change, associates

said, stems from Mr. Dole's realization that a leader gets things done by advocating ideas instead of attacking them. Part of the change was a calculated effort by Mr. Dole to broaden the base of the GOP by trying to present himself and his party as advocates of compassionate programs to help the little guy. And he also has adjusted to changes in the national political climate over the years.

In addition to his advocacy of nutrition programs, Mr. Dole in recent years forged a compromise between liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans to extend the Voting Rights Act, started a foundation to help the handicapped and gave an eloquent speech in support of a national holiday for the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian groups praise him and charities receive a share of his outside income; he even used some of his honorarium checks to buy his mother's home in Russell.

Mr. Dole once had a sharply different outlook. He opposed most of the domestic reforms advocated by Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, such as Medicare and the War on Poverty, even though he supported the bulk of civil rights legislation.

"If you have any judgment, you begin to understand after a few years of on-the-job training around here that some of the nation's problems can't be decided on what some poll says in your congressional district, because some of these problems are national and international," Mr. Dole said. "You don't have to give up your philosophy to address those concerns. The feeling of some around here is that the only thing to do is to vote no on everything and never try to work things out."

The friend and adviser who has known Mr. Dole the longest, Huck Boyd, a newspaper publisher in Phillipsburg, Kan., said: "The inflexible position in politics is difficult to live with because you have changing circumstances. As the years have gone by he's learned that you must have flexibility and meet those changing circumstances."

Coming off the razor-close re-election campaign in 1974 during which Mr. Dole was criticized for his votes on social programs in the 1960s and for his general defense of Mr. Nixon until the Watergate scandal, Mr. Dole began to change.

"In 1974 he almost lost because he was too conservative," said Mr. Taggart, the Washington lobbyist and former Dole staff member. "The electorate thought that he had no concern for the needy, that he was too capitalist oriented. . . . We got the drift real quick that this (support for food stamps) would be a new thrust."

But in 1976, when Mr. Ford was running for president and Mr. Dole was on the GOP ticket as the vice presidential candidate, advisers to Mr. Ford instructed Mr. Dole to be a campaign hatchet man. Mr. Dole, in a slashing style that was heavy-handed, carried out his orders but offended many voters and leaders in his party.

After several "damage control meetings" after the 1976 election, Mr. Dole concluded that instead of always attacking ideas, he would emphasize his own. "The attitude after 1976 was, 'It's time for us to be for something, not against everything,'" said Kim Wells, a Kansas City lawyer and former top Dole aide who was instrumental in the effort after the election.

Except for agriculture and nutrition issues, Mr. Dole's light didn't get a chance to truly shine until 1980 when the Republican Party wrested control of the Senate from the Democrats for the first time in 28 years. More than anything, his elevation to chairman of the Finance Committee gave him the platform he needed.

"Since the Republicans seized the majority, he as well as anyone understood what being a member of the majority and a committee chairman meant," said Mr. Nofziger, the consultant.

Even Mr. Dole's characteristic wit was altered in order to erase the nasty-man image. "When he first ran for the Congress, he'd come off with quips directed at someone else," said Mr. Boyd. "I'd yank at his coattail about being too jocular. Now he directs a lot of jocular remarks toward himself. The change is noticeable, and I don't think it's an accident."

Mr. Dole disagreed somewhat with his advisers, saying that he began to change his jokes well before 1980. "I learned long before 1976 that it's all right to get up in front of an audience and have fun with your colleagues and people in the audience if you first have fun with yourself. You let people know you're not a stuffed shirt who just flew into town to insult someone, because that will come back to haunt you," Mr. Dole said.

One thing that has not changed about Mr. Dole, however, is his tendency to bite too hard when stating a case, several of his backers said. He can be too caustic in making a point, such as his conduct early in 1983 toward the banking industry during the fight to keep the withholding provision in the tax bill, his associates said.

"Dole has the reputation of being a scorcher," said Robert F. Ellsworth, a former Kansas congressman, NATO ambassador and now a Washington consultant who heads the senator's political action committee.

"He doesn't suffer fools gladly," Mr. Nofziger said. "That has been hurtful to him from time to time. So many times he doesn't mean it in a harsh way."

Close associates and colleagues of Mr. Dole said that he should not modify his style as a neophyte. Doing so, they said, would be a disservice.

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