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Bush, Dole forces claim local victory

By HAROLD LIDIN
Of The STAR Staff

Supporters of Sen. Robert Dole for the Republican presidential nomination claimed a 3-to-1 sweep in Sunday's islandwide, precinct-level balloting to reorganize the local GOP.

But backers of Vice President George Bush said he had emerged from the voting still the preferred choice of island Republicans.

Proof of which of the two — Bush or Dole — came out the winner was not available because the local Republicans voted for members and officers of the precinct committees and not for a presidential hopeful. The precinct officers elected Sunday will pick the GOP local leadership, who will in turn select the 14-member delegation to the Republican presidential convention.

In most of the island's 104 precincts, GOP members endorsed the slate of the New Progressive Party leadership. But

in eight precincts, the NPP slates were changed as dissenters nominated other candidates from the floor.

In Guaynabo, Mayor Alejandro Cruz Jr., the Dole campaign chairman in Puerto Rico, almost came to blows with GOP national committeeman Mickey Galib when the latter accused Cruz of shutting him out of the slate. Galib and other ranking members of the GOP State Committee, led by former Gov. Luis A. Ferré, favor Bush.

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Most NPP mayors, with the exception of San Juan Mayor Baltasar Corrada del Río and Ponce Mayor José Dapena Thompson, have endorsed Dole.

Galib subsequently was nominated for one of the 15 seats on the precinct committee, but drew only 57 votes.

Ferré journeyed from his Guaynabo home to Ponce, his native city, to vote. In a telephone interview, Ferré said the turnout "shows tremendous interest in the Republican Party."

Some Republicans said 8,000 went to the polls, but partial returns showed the tally closer to 6,000.

In Guaynabo and in San Juan's Precinct 1, the supply of GOP affiliation blanks fell short of the demand, Cruz said. About 400 people voted in the Guaynabo precinct, the largest showing among the precincts, Cruz said.

The lowest turnout was in Villalba, where 30 people — the minimum required by party regulations — cast ballots, GOP officials said.

The turnout exceeded expectations, GOP officials said.

Cruz called it the start of "a new Republican Party" here. Donald Devine, Dole's senior consultant, complained of little advance publicity for the balloting. Devine quoted Ferré as saying a shortage of party funds limited the publicity.

The Dole forces also complained about pro-Bush radio spots carried by a local radio station last week. It was not reported who sponsored the ads.

The official GOP organization in any state or territory is barred from sponsoring ads for a specific candidate, but may publicize the caucuses. Ferré denied any connection to the Bush promos and said that if anybody on the State Committee sponsored the ads it was done without his knowledge.

Dole's campaign chairman said a group identified with former San Juan Mayor Hernán Padilla's Puerto Rican Renewal Party had a hand in placing the ads. However, Cruz cleared Padilla from any involvement.

Both the local GOP and Democratic Party primaries are scheduled for March 20, 1988.

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Montgomery County, Maryland

Germond & Witcover

And in right field, Dole

By JACK GERMOND
and JULES WITCOVER

DES MOINES

Iowans for Life had just heard from Rep. Jack Kemp and television evangelist Pat Robertson, trying to outdo each other in their opposition to abortion. The final speaker was Sen. Bob Dole, also anti-abortion but not as identified with the issue as are Kemp and Robertson. Like them, Dole proceeded to make a hard pitch to the special interest of this particular group. He told the audience that "I have always been on the side of life" and that he had cast his first pro-life vote in 1975, and on every pro-life vote since. It sounded as first as if Dole was just trying to out-Robertson Robertson and out-Kemp Kemp on the issue.

But then he began to talk "electability." He cited polls that indicated he has the strongest appeal to Democrats and independents. "You've got a stake in electability," he said. "You've got to make a judgment on which of these candidates... can be nominated and elected in 1988. Because if it's someone on the other (Democratic) side, your marches are going to be longer and they're going to be colder, and it's going to be a steeper hill to climb."

The total candidate

But, Dole went on, "there are other issues that concern people in this audience. There are some single-issue people, yes. But I've got to believe that for the most part the American voter is looking at us as a total candidate." The voter is looking for leadership over a range of issues, he said, and he had the most experience and best background to provide it.

Dole's pitch was another way of telling the right-to-lifers that he saw them as voters of more well-rounded interests than just abortion, and that he was the well-rounded candidate equipped to advance all of those issues.

The remarks demonstrated Dole's hope not only of getting his share of the anti-abortion vote now, but also of positioning himself to inherit the Robertson supporters once, as widely expected, it becomes clear that their first choice will not be nominated.

All along, a premise of the Kemp campaign has been that Robertson will fall short and that Kemp will be the obvious place for the Robertson supporters to go, as the ideologically purest conservative candidate. Dole clearly is mounting a direct challenge to that premise with his own record on litigious conservative issues, and with his additional emphasis on electability.

At the Iowa Republican Party's big presidential-candidate cattle show at Ames later, Dole made the pitch again. The hall was packed with cheering newcomers to Iowa politics sporting Robertson T-shirts and straw boaters. The other candidates had acted as if they weren't there, but Dole talked directly to them.

Bork and the Contras

"I'm very thankful to Pat Robertson and others," he began. "who have brought new people into the Republican Party." He was with them on the abortion issue, prayer in the schools and the rest, he said, "but there are a lot of other things." He listed some of them, including the confirmation of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court and aid to the Contras.

Longtime Republicans in the crowd knew all the candi-



Robert Dole, above with his wife Elizabeth, used his Iowa stump to catch up with evangelist Pat Robertson and Rep. Jack Kemp. Among his key points:

■ **SOCIAL ASSISTANCE:** Dole, whose right arm was crippled in World War II, promised he would "provide... inspiration to the disabled" and the physically or socially handicapped.

■ **ON ABORTION:** Dole said he had voted pro-life since 1975. It appeared Dole was trying to keep pace with Robertson and Kemp, who have each sounded anti-abortion calls.

■ **THANKS TO OPPONENT:** Dole said he backed Pat Robertson returning prayer to public schools. He added his support for the confirmation of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court and for new Contra aid.

dates, he said, but these newcomers "don't have the foggiest notion of who we are," and he proceeded to tell them who Bob Dole was. He launched into an appealing biography of his small-town childhood in a working-class home, his war record and long hospitalization that, he said, made him sensitive to people's hurts and needs.

Something had to be done, he said, about the GOP's image as a party more concerned with the country club set than with people who need help. "I can provide an inspiration to the disabled," the man with the withered right arm said, and to other physically or socially handicapped Americans as well.

This is a far different Bob Dole on the stump than the one who stumbled his way to an early exit in the 1980 Republican nomination race. Then he was all wisecracks and legislative jargon, reluctant to talk about himself. He still peppers his speeches with one-liners, but they are nearly always self-deprecating. For example, he tells how he got into politics after World War II: "I told them, 'I don't know anything about politics.' They said, 'We know, but you got shot. Maybe they'll vote for you.'"

Dole is not out of the woods yet regarding suspicions that he may quip himself out of contention. But his eye is on broadening his appeal as the "total candidate" who is right on all the issues of concern to traditional Republicans — and open to those still outside the fold, or just getting in.

Jack Germond and Jules Witcover are political columnists for the Baltimore Evening Sun.

OPINION

Fri., September 18, 1987 ■ THE DES MOINES REGISTER/15A

JAMES FLANSBURG



ROBERT DOLE'S lead in the Iowa Poll and Pat Robertson's solid victory in a party straw poll last week are not flukes.

They're solid evidence that George Bush's presidential campaign is in deep trouble in Iowa.

Rich Bond has come in to take over — he ran Bush's 1980 Iowa campaign — but it appears to me that he's too late. I don't see how he can break away those who've decided to support Dole and the others, and I doubt that the remaining pool of unrecruited Republicans is big enough to change things.

Bush plainly forgot the lesson he learned in 1980: The Iowa caucuses are retail politics.

Bush beat Ronald Reagan in Iowa that year by shaking more hands, kissing more babies, making more speeches, visiting more towns, and giving more folks a chance to take some personal measure of him.

It was a page out of the book written by George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter in 1976, and it paid off against Reagan's big-time approach of an organizing effort sparked by a few brief visits with select supporters.

So what have we seen this year? George Bush running a you-may-kiss-my-ring campaign.

To be sure, Reagan came awfully close to taking Iowa in 1980 — he might have won it if they hadn't stopped counting — but he was helped along by an organizing terror that isn't evident in this year's Bush campaign.

This year's organizing game belongs to Robertson and Dole. In that order, and for Bush to get into it now, he's got to find some new people who ordinarily do not get involved in these things.

That's difficult because that's the vein that Robertson's working. He's a Yale lawyer with the organizing talents of a small-church preacher who knows that failure means no food on the table.

Someone asked me, in light of the Dole showing in the Iowa Poll and the Robertson straw poll, what I would do if I were running the Bush campaign.

Take it underground, I said. Go right to the grassroots now and get the precinct workers to start extracting promises from people to show up at the Feb. 8 caucuses.

Follow that up in about two weeks with a personal letter from Bob Ray — Bush's top Iowa celebrity — thanking each individual for promising to be there, and following that up two weeks later with the same kind of letter from Bush.

The idea is to form a personal contract, a bond, that transcends the usual political relationship.

"I don't think that will work," said my friend. "Bush doesn't have enough people in the precincts and the organization to do it."

"Then you'd know within two weeks how deep your trouble is and have a better idea of what you'd have to do to get out of it," I said.

Well, what the heck. I've never said that anybody who knew anything about politics thought I knew anything about politics.

What I do know, though, is George Bush's Iowa game plan isn't working. Robertson is beating him on the org-



Dole Robertson

nizing front and Dole is beating him on the rhetorical circuit.

Dole's doing something that's commonly talked about but rarely seen. He's picking up votes with every speech; he does indeed know how to play an Iowa audience.

The Robertson story could be significant. My colleague Dave Yepsen thinks that it's the mirror image of the antiwar movement within the Democratic Party 20 years ago.

That's a provocative piece of analysis. The movement wasn't to do profound things within the Democratic Party but was unable to transmit its passion to a general election.

Their nomination politics pulled the party so far to the left that its general election candidates were crippled in their efforts to compete for the center.

It's a bit early to tell, I suppose, but it's easy to make a case that the Polk County Republicans are writing the same story. They've made Des Moines and suburbs an even stronger Democratic stronghold.

They remind me of several generations of Southern Republicans, who cared only about national elections and the resulting patronage.

A candidate cracks that only by bringing the center back into the party, and the only way to do that is with retail, one-on-one politics that give folks a personal stake in a candidate's success.

Bob Dole recognized that several months ago. Rich Bond's arrival means that it's dawned on Bush.