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With Bush down, Dole hopes to go the distance A front-runner by default?

These are perilous times for Bob Dole's presidential effort. With less than one month before the Iowa caucuses, statewide polls show the senator consistently—and substantially—ahead of George Bush. The Vice President's campaign of invincibility is being battered by nagging questions about his role in the embarrassing Iran-Contra affair. And suddenly, the Dole campaign is skulking to avoid the heightened expectations of its new favored-to-win status—a pinnacle every candidate feverishly works to



With Brock: The old Dole?

reach, but ardently disowns once he gets there. As the GOP brethren met in Des Moines last week to debate, there were the usual questions about how the newly anointed Iowa front-runner would perform. Would Dole be able to assault his competitor without resurrecting his old hatchetman image, or would Bush succeed in coaxing out what his aides call the "bad old Bob"? But beyond such momentary strategic quandaries lay some very real problems: Given Dole's uneven temperament, gauzy political vision and an increasingly disorganized national organization, could he win a campaign beyond the early states?

First the Bush dilemma. Within the fractious Dole contingent, the debate has raged over the best way to handle the Vice President. Some argued, as one adviser put it, that "this battle has got to be joined, and we can't wait for God or the other candidates to do it." Others counseled against a gloves-off approach. The "stay cool" school won. Perhaps because of his increasing lead in the Iowa polls, Dole avoided attacking Bush directly in Des Moines. As it turned out, he didn't have to. Others did the dirty work—but Bush turned back the assault and seemed to score with the GOP audience when he said: "I don't think anyone is going to ride to the White House by attacking the Vice President or President over Iran."

It remains to be seen whether Dole's low-key, populist strategy will do the trick. But even if he wins convincingly in Iowa, his campaign is divided between veteran staffers and those brought in by the new campaign chief, former Labor Secretary William Brock. Bickering was rife over Dole's decision to back the INF treaty after much initial hedging, for example, and some cite Brock's lack of national campaign experience, especially when he recently opted for a 10-day Caribbean vacation.

Some outside operatives even question whether the necessary work is getting done: They report the Dole efforts to garner enough ballot-qualifying signatures in New York, Texas and Pennsylvania are so lax the candidate may not succeed. Dole's organization, says Bush Deputy Campaign Chairman Rich Bond, is a "bunch of Potemkin villages." Such problems can fade, of course, with money and momentum from early wins. More worrisome to many partisans is Dole's perceived inability to tell Republicans just why they should abandon solid, dependable George. Without a chasm of substantive differences between the two men, the burden of proof could be overpowering.

By Gloria Berger with Harrison Raine in Des Moines

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Bush ends truce, lashes out at Dole

By Jon Margolis
Chicago Tribune

DES MOINES—Vice President George Bush went on the attack against his chief campaign rival Monday, claiming that an oil import fee, one of Sen. Bob Dole's proposals, "would devastate Iowa's economy and halt [the economic] recovery in its tracks."

Trailing Dole in all the polls just three weeks before the Iowa precinct caucuses, Bush called the fee an "antibusiness, anti-farmer, anticonsumer tax."

The vice president's new tactic set off a dispute between his campaign and Dole's over the intricacies of the fee. The skirmish comes only a week after the two candidates agreed to a peace treaty of sorts on another issue, disclosure of personal finances, after it became apparent rank-and-file Republicans were becoming upset over the squabble.

It also provided further evidence of Dole's lead in Iowa and of Bush's need to do something to narrow it, even if he cannot overcome it.

Dole has come under criticism before for his support of an oil import fee, most recently from Rep. Jack Kemp of New York at Saturday's debate at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

Dole's contention is that an oil import fee would make the



● George Bush puts on an unparalleled road show. Page 2.
● Presidential candidates pause to honor King. Page 2.

United States less dependent on foreign oil and would give the domestic oil industry a boost. He also says rebates should be given to make up for energy price increases caused by the fee.

On Monday, before anyone here knew what Bush would say in Iowa, Dole spoke at a Rotary Club luncheon in Manchester, N.H., and again defended his support of the fee. He criticized the Reagan administration for not having an energy policy.

"What's going to happen when OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] gets a stranglehold and they'll determine the price arbitrarily?" Dole asked about 150 Rotarians. "We have a domestic oil industry that's flat on its back. If we want to try to regain energy independence in America, we gotta be prepared to do something about

See Bush, pg. 2

Bush

Continued from page 1

it. "So I've said I would support, not advocate—if I get into some budget crunch, making a deal with somebody and they say you gotta eat some revenues—I said I would support an oil import fee," Dole said.

"But I've also said it right off the top: You're either going to rebate or credit or exempt any additional charge for heating oil. As I happen to believe the people in this part of the country understand what happens if we have a shortage, because heating oil prices or whatever you put into your tank will go right up to the ceiling."

Bush's campaign aides indicated that he also would criticize Dole on other grounds, including his leadership of Senate Republicans.

Bush offered a preview of that ap-

proach when he said, "For the second year in a row, Congress failed to pass a single appropriation bill" last year.

Though the Senate was controlled by Democrats last year, Dole was the majority leader the year before, and Bush will reportedly criticize the Kansas for the Senate's failure to pass a federal budget.

In a speech in Cedar Rapids, Bush said a \$10-a-barrel fee on imported oil "would cost Iowa \$668 million a year," or \$625 for every household. "While Sen. Dole is for it, I'm against it," Bush said.

Katie Boyle of the Dole campaign said that while Dole does favor some kind of fee on imported oil, he has never specified the \$10-a-barrel amount.

She said his plan also calls for a rebate to low-income customers and that it would help farmers by creating more incentive to develop alternate fuel sources, including grain-based ethanol.

Rich Bond of the Bush campaign

said the \$10 figure was used because "that's the legislative figure usually bandied about."

Bond also said he had a copy of an editorial from the New Orleans Times-Picayune saying that during a New Orleans appearance Dole had told Louisiana oil executives that he favored a \$5-a-barrel fee on imported oil.

The merits of the oil import dispute appeared to be less important than Bush's precarious political position in Iowa, also evident in the decision of his campaign aides to play "the expectations game."

The new Iowa Poll showing Dole leading Bush, 41 percent to 26 percent, "certainly raises Dole's expectations here," said Bush spokesman Pete Teeley, adding that "some little 8-point win wouldn't mean much."

It would probably be enough to help Dole challenge Bush in the Feb. 16 New Hampshire primary, just eight days after the caucuses here.

The spat over the oil proposal, and the Bush campaign's need to

make up some polling points in Iowa, is likely to open again the war of words between Bush and Dole.

Tribune correspondent Philip Lentz in New Hampshire contributed to this article.

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Campaign '88

Uncommitted delegates to dispute Dole supporters

By MARTIN HAWVER
Capital-Journal legislative writer

A full slate of officially uncommitted delegates will challenge the delegates supporting Sen. Bob Dole at the Shawnee County Republican convention in Topeka Feb. 2.

Shawnee County GOP chairman Jim Van Slyke, a Dole supporter, said, "That means, practically, it's an all-or-nothing contest for the delegates."

A majority of the uncommitted delegates are believed by party leaders to be supporters of the Rev. Pat Robertson, the businessman-preacher from Virginia who probably is best known for his time on television as leader of "The 700 Club."

Several Shawnee County Republicans who did register as uncommitted delegate candidates said they doubt that Robertson supporters will make known their preferences publicly.

Shawnee County's convention will elect delegates and alternates to the

2nd District convention, where delegates and alternates to the state convention will be elected. The final tier of the process will be the state convention, where Kansas' 34 delegates to the Republican National Convention will be elected in March.

The state Republican Party has adopted a delegate selection procedure this year which requires delegates who support a candidate to make their preference known. "Uncommitted" is formally a preference, which leaves Dole supporters the job of determining just who the uncommitted delegates support.

The Kansas Republican Central Committee has adopted a resolution in support of Dole for the GOP nomination and unabashedly has made it known that party leaders want all 34 Kansas delegates to the national convention riding the Dole bandwagon.

"The Dole organization is aware of what's happening in Shawnee County and statewide, and is working on it," said Van Slyke.

"What it is going to come down to is who has the most supporters at

the county convention. It's going to be an all-or-nothing situation, where whichever side has the votes controls the entire Shawnee County delegation."

Van Slyke said many of the uncommitted delegates are new faces to party regulars.

"Many of the people who signed

up as uncommitted delegates are people who we don't see at party activities," he said.

"I think that the Robertson people, well, they are not motivated by traditional political considerations. They are by and large people who active party people may not know."

Two uncommitted delegate candidates, the Rev. Donald Rogers and Betty Pistorius, both said Monday

that they signed up to run as uncommitted delegates partly out of protest of the delegate selection system adopted by the state party.

Pistorius, who is a Shawnee County delegate to the Republican State Committee, said "The selection process has turned off a lot of people. There are a lot of people in the state

who are not Dole supporters.

"Myself, I think it is too early to be committing oneself to any candidate yet. It's early in the process," she said. "There are a lot of gutless people who know what the party wants, but I am not one of them."

Van Slyke said he was disappointed in Pistorius' uncommitted status because she was a member of the state central committee when it

passed an apparently unanimous resolution supporting Dole for the GOP nomination.

Pistorius said she's not sure that the resolution was unanimous.

"It went through. I didn't want to make big waves, and it would have if I'd made much noise about it. Instead, I think I'll make some little waves," she said.

Rogers said, "I don't know that I want to be that tied down. My being an uncommitted candidate at the convention is a matter of protest.

"My vote is supposed to be secret. How can it be secret when I announce it ahead of time?"

Rogers said he's not sure "there is any way of telling" the number of uncommitted delegates from Robertson supporters.

"Unless they do something to announce it, make it known, you won't know," Rogers said.

"To automatically put Christians or ministers in that [Robertson] category is very misleading.

"The rules being what they are, this is a real attempt to get everyone to sign up for Dole, and that is

unfair.

"Being uncommitted may mean that they have made up their mind to be uncommitted, or they might have decided on a candidate."

"It's going to be very difficult to tell why people are uncommitted," Rogers said.

"At some time, they are going to have to say who they will be voting for, so people in the room can know.

"It could be that some [Robertson] people will come out ahead of time, but maybe not."

Van Slyke said the county Republican committee has scheduled the county convention for 7:30 p.m. Feb. 2 in the grand ballroom of the Ramada Inn downtown.

"I don't know whether we are going to have enough room there," he said. "The room holds 600 people, and if there is as much interest in this as I think there may be, we may have to move to larger facilities."