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BUSH vs. DOLE

# Battling for the big prize

■ "You're going to see a new Bob Dole," said Bob Dole last week. "It's time for me and George Bush to stop all this Mickey Mouse." "I'm going back to being the old George Bush," echoed George Bush. "I'm going to be the nice, benign guy that I was, an 11th-commandment guy; never say anything bad about another Republican and all that stuff."

And just when the fun had really begun. In steady escalation over the past month, the Vice President of the United States and the Senate minority leader had confounded the experts—and delighted everyone else—with a schoolboy slugfest that bloodied both to no apparent benefit for either. (Among Dole's best zingers: Bush is a "qualified loser," a "résumé only" candidate, a "former Mr. Everything" who will "lose if he gets the nomination." Bush promised "Silk-

worms across [Dole's] bow," but he is far from the world-class verbal executioner that Dole is. The best he could offer was the lame observation that as a creature of Congress Dole "may be part of the problem rather than part of the solution"—hardly a heartfelt crack, since Bush once said he was proudest of having been a House member because "the people elected me to that on my own.")

Great theater but scant illumination. With nearly 60 years of combined government service, the two leading contenders for the Republican nomination have put in their time in the service of more-powerful and compelling men: Bush as the loyal officeholder, a man for all seasons; Dole as the consummate congressional insider without a major piece of legislation to his name, a senator

who lists as his major accomplishments the shepherding of bills proposed by others, including the hallmarks of supply-side economics he now says he always had doubts about.

**What's at stake**

Today, after a year of campaigning, neither has impressed with much of a coherent view of where he would take the country beyond tinkering at the margins of Reaganism. That is all the more distressing when one realizes that, unless an economic downturn revives the Democrats' sagging fortunes, the Bush-Dole battle isn't simply for the GOP nomination. It is for the White House.

No wonder then that the candidates' cease-fire shows every sign of falling apart as fast as the Arias peace plan for Central America. Dole himself is still drawing contrasts between his poor background and Bush's privileged life. And while Bush has remained calm, his troops seem not to have gotten the message. "I feel like one of those Japanese soldiers on some faraway atoll who never heard that the war was over," says one of Bush's Iowa coordinators. "No one's explicitly told me to cool it."

In the other camp, a senior Bush adviser, speaking on background after

are at play. First, little of substance separates the two men, so they feel compelled to find something to distinguish them. It's true that Bush has promised not to raise taxes, "period," and that Dole believes that tax increases are necessary to cure the deficit, which he calls "the nation's public-enemy No. 1." But since few seem to believe that Bush the pragmatist means what he says, the difference has yet to resonate.

Second, Bob Dole and George Bush just plain don't like each other. "George and I get along fine," said Dole last week after he had publicly sworn to restrain himself, "except when we're together." The depth of their animosity appears to be class driven, and it is easily tapped through the candidates' advisers. When Dole's close friend Bob Ellsworth was asked if Dole simply dislikes preppies, Ellsworth snapped: "Doesn't everybody?" Other Dole cronies fondly quote the 1984 observation of Alabama Lt. Gov. Bill Baxley, who called Bush "a pin stripin', polo playin', umbrella totin' Ivy Leaguer, born with a silver spoon so far back in his mouth that you couldn't get it out with a crowbar."



"An 11th-commandment guy": Maybe the best offense is to keep mum



"No more Mickey Mouse": Sticking to the issues, such as they are

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BUSH VS. DOLE

Bush forswore personal attacks on Dole, compares Dole to Richard Nixon. "Both have a mean streak," says the aide. "Bush isn't a hater, Dole is. Dole has a deep resentment toward Bush, a class resentment. The fact of the matter is that Dole, too, is a millionaire, a Lyndon Johnson-style millionaire who has come to Washington and has made his money off his congressional salary. Bob Dole is the perennial professional Washington politician. He's probably one guy who laid there in a hospital after his war wounds—and I don't take this away from him—but a guy who laid there for months and every day said, 'I'm going to be President of the United States. I'm bitter, and I'm going to overcome this.' So he has spent his whole life as an angry guy trying to realize this dream."

There is also rivalry. For Bush, 63, and Dole, 64, there has been career-long jockeying since both were congressmen in the mid-1960s. Bush was a favorite of Nixon. The former President has said that he seriously considered Bush as his 1968 running mate but finally chose Spiro Agnew because Bush was "too new." Later, Nixon sent Bush to chair the Republican National Committee, displacing Dole, who had wanted to keep the job. Both men hoped for the VP job when Agnew resigned in disgrace (Gerald Ford got it), hoped again before Nelson Rockefeller was tagged; after loyal service as Ford's CIA director, Bush was crushed when Dole got the call to join Ford on the 1976 ticket.

**Casting a long shadow**

Four years later, Bush and Dole went head to head again. Both sought to be the alternative to the favored Ronald Reagan. In Puerto Rico, a month before he upset Reagan in Iowa, a frustrated Bush heard that Dole was gaining up North and said, "How long is this nothing going to shadow me?"

Add one more fact to this explosive mixture, however, and it's obvious that there's far more here than a decades-old grudge match. This is probably the last time around for Bush and Dole, and both know that the GOP nomination will be well worth having. They understand how Reagan has moved America rightward, appreciate the arithmetic of the GOP's Electoral College "lock" on Southern and Western states and firmly believe that the Republicans can count on four more years.

The primary calendar further heightens the tension. Both sides agree that Bush's campaign organization is so strong nationwide that a victory in Iowa on February 8 may well "end it."

Early on, Bush thought Iowa would be a cinch. He'd won there eight years

ago, largely because of the phenomenal vote-pulling operation of Bush Iowa coordinator Rich Bond, while Dole, despite being a Kansas "neighbor," had managed to pull only 1,576 votes. But times have changed. Bush, as he says, is "inextricably tied" to Reagan, while Iowa, still scarred by the farm recession despite a sharp improvement last year, has soured on the President. The result: Dole has led in the Iowa polls for months—and Bush can't slough off all the blame on an unpopular boss. To many Iowans, says Bush's Iowa campaign director, George Wittgraf, the Vice President is used goods. "Political romance is the same as personal romance," says Wittgraf. "It's not as exciting the second time around—and Dole did so poorly in '80 that he's seen as a fresh face today."

**The coming five-month brawl**

Dole is pouring everything into his "I'm one of you" Iowa campaign, convention to battle to the New Orleans convention if he wins in Iowa but loses, as expected, February 16 in New Hampshire. As of late last week, Bush's own polls showed him trailing Dole by 8 points. As a rule of thumb, the Bush forces believe Bond can again work his organizational magic and cover a 5-point deficit. Anything more and Dole wins. "But expectations are so high for Dole that a 4 or 5-point win won't give Dole much of a lift into New Hampshire," says Bond. "And if we somehow win by even one vote, that'll do it."

Politics being what it is, anything is possible. There's even an outside chance Bush and Dole could so bruise each other that someone else could slip by them both. But it's far more likely that if Dole wins Iowa, there will be a five-month brawl between the two front-runners, with either an odds-on favorite to take the White House in November. Who are these men? What kind of leaders would they be?

If campaigns were accurate indicators of presidential performance, there would be few questions about George Bush's ability. At least as a candidate, Bush has "grown" in office. Compared with his previous campaign efforts, this one has been masterful. By cozying up to the Republican right—a 1987 priority he pursued relentlessly—Bush suffered cries that he had become the ultimate toady. But the bottom line is that Bush has successfully deflected conservative opposition and rendered all but Dole virtually irrelevant to the race in 1988. His performance in debate has been better than anyone expected. Part is good coaching; part is his assumption of an underdog's stance despite his front-

HOW THE FRONT-RUNNERS STACK UP		
CATEGORY	BUSH	DOLE
Competence on domestic issues	6.3	7.9
Competence on foreign-policy issues	7.6	5.5
Campaign organization	7.3	4.6
Leadership skills and ability	5.8	7.7
Electability as nominee	6.6	7.8

Reported by Richard Klein. The political experts surveyed were: John Deardorff of Bailey, Deardorff & Assoc., Inc.; Alan Ryland of Human Events; Richard Meo of Davis, Park & Wardwell; Bob Squier of Squier-

This score card is based on a U.S. News survey of 12 political analysts—a balanced group of Democrats, Republicans and independents. Each was asked to comment on Bush and Dole and rate them on a scale of 1 to 10—10 is the highest. The scores given are averages.

CATEGORY	COMMENTS
Competence on domestic issues	Dole is clearly superior to Bush. Dole has a sharper mind, has spent most of his career on domestic issues. Bush is out of it as far as [knowing how] government works.
Competence on foreign-policy issues	Bush has been around the track in the foreign-policy arena. Dole has no record there. Iran-Contra shows [Bush's] very sharp lack of judgment.
Campaign organization	Bush is much more organized. The Dole campaign is a disaster. Dole's organization is in chaos—a lot of cooks but no busboys.
Leadership skills and ability	Dole projects an aura of leadership. Dole has toughness, Bush a whiny weakness. Bush is a better follower than a leader. Neither has a capacity to inspire.
Electability as nominee	Dole has tremendous crossover appeal to Democrats. Electorate wants a tough insider, [a situation] tailor-made for Dole. Bush has trained for eight years as a second banana.

Editor: Kevin Phillips of American Political Report; Hal Stone of Capital Cities/ABC; Horace Busby of Horace W. Busby & Assoc.; and Nancy Reynolds of Weber, Reynolds, Harrison & Schaefer



Dole at home after the war: Forging a determination to win



What wimp factor? Bush, the youngest Navy pilot ever, was shot down over water, a war hero by any definition

runner status—and the comfort he has found in that role. It had been said that Dole would have Bush for lunch once both were on the same stage, but Dole has fared miserably—not because he has been overprepared and warned to stay cool but, according to some of his aides, because Dole won't take advice, and so rambles without direction, the net effect being at variance with the "strong leader" image he is trying to sell.

So far, only Al Haig has gotten Bush's goat (in private, he says Haig "doesn't have his oars in the water"), but Bush's overall forcefulness seems to have buried the "wimp factor."

Dole is correct when he says that Bush is running on his résumé—but Bush is proud of it. And, in sketch, it is epic stuff: Top athlete, youngest pilot in the Navy, war hero, wildcatter, politician. On inspection, though, Bush's career is both more and less than generally depicted.

On the stump, the Vice President rarely misses the chance to say that he left his gilded upbringing to "strike out on my own in the oil fields and build a business" (which Bush pronounces "business," about the only vestige of his years in Texas). He rarely adds, however, that the road to success was paved with family help. Bush's first job was with a company on whose board his father sat; his second, his own partnership, was made possible by a \$300,000 loan from Uncle Herbie.

**Chasing those liberals away**

In 1962, the oil business was slow, Bush was bored and the Harris County (Houston) Republican Party was looking for a chairman. Bush took the job, declared himself a "Goldwater Republican," opposed the nuclear-test-ban treaty, called Medicare "socialized medicine" and Martin Luther King, Jr., a "militant." He opposed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ran un-

successfully for the Senate, touring Texas with a country-music band that sang of "chasing the liberals from Washington."

In 1966, at the age of 42, Bush was elected to Congress and was assigned to the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, a rare plum for a freshman. ("His father asked me to help," said Wilbur Mills, then the committee's chairman.) In the House, Bush spoke up for big oil and opposed busing, but he wasn't all reactionary. He sponsored an ethics bill, sided with environmentalists and changed his view on civil rights. In 1968, he voted for an open-housing bill and infuriated his white constituency.

**Leaving few fingerprints**

After a second defeat for the Senate in 1970, Nixon offered Bush the United Nations Ambassadorship, the first of four jobs he held briefly—the others being head of the Republican National Committee (20 months), liaison officer to China (16 months) and director of central intelligence (12 months).

It is said that Bush moved through these positions almost invisibly, that he left few fingerprints, but sometimes he did show his mettle. At the CIA especially, Bush got high marks for boosting morale and professionalism—both seriously damaged after Watergate. A Senate Intelligence Committee report written when the Democrats controlled Congress described Bush as "one of the best directors the CIA ever had."

All this, thought Bush in 1980, qualified him (in the words of his campaign slogan) as "A President we won't have to train." Instead, he finally got the Vice Presidency, but only after exhibiting the same expediency displayed when he first entered GOP politics in Houston. Bush shifted gears on abortion (he now follows Reagan in absolute opposition) and tried to assert he had never coined the term "woodoo economics." ("Please don't keep reminding me of the differences I had [with Reagan].") Bush begged the press during the '80 campaign.

To those of his supporters eager to shape a new administration, Bush was firm: "Don't expect me to make policy," he said in 1981. "My job is to cement my relationship with Ronald Reagan and articulate his policies."

Which Bush has done either admirably or to a fault, depending on your point of view. The conventional wisdom holds that Bush has been only an occasional player, an impression he reinforced in 1984 when he said, "I am for Mr. Reagan—blindly." A perception captured for all time in a Herblock cartoon depicting Bush as a sidelines cheerleader waving a banner saying, "Go Contras."

But Bush has made a difference in

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