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saying that he would veto attempts by Democrats to eliminate the lower taxes of the Reagan era, he said that he would veto any attempts to lower taxes.

Don Ringe, the Dole media producer, recut the Dole tape to correct the language, but, as he acknowledges, "it wasn't going to win any Oscars." Dole tried again at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, but an oncoming blizzard prompted television stations in the region to adjust their advertising deadlines, making it impossible to get the spot on the air. In any case, Dole pollster Richard Wirthlin was insisting that taxes weren't a big issue in the race.

"Some people think those four words — 'I pledge to veto' — stood between Bob Dole and the nomination," says a top Dole adviser. "They were buzzwords. He was willing to say them."

The biggest missed opportunity, however, may have come last autumn, when the notion of naming former Gov. Alexander to the Dole ticket was first broached. Alexander traveled to Concord, N.H., in early September to take his daughter to St. Paul's School, and Rath, the former attorney general and Dole adviser, talked with him then about the unorthodox notion of inviting him onto the Dole ticket before the 1988 political season even opened. The move, Rath calculated, would show unusual creativity by a candidate often regarded as a creature of conventional political behavior, and it would help Dole in the South, already considered a Bush redoubt. But Rath knew that the deal had to be sealed early so that it wouldn't look like a desperation tactic.

Alexander seemed intrigued. A speech was even outlined to announce the union: Dole would say that the most important choice that a candidate gets to make is the selection of a running mate, adding that he wanted to let the voters judge his judgment. The move would have brought pressure on Bush to select his running mate, too; ironically, Alexander is one of the vice president's top choices.

But the idea died internally. To this day, Rath thinks that Alexander would have

accepted the offer. Throughout the critical winter months, the campaign was wracked with dissension, much of it caused by tension between the campaign's chief, former Labor Secretary Bill Brock, a one-time senator from Tennessee and GOP national chairman, and a cadre of advisers who had been with the Dole effort for a year.

Most insiders say that Brock was the sole campaign aide who could treat Dole as a peer. He wrestled such tactical responsibilities as the daily schedule away from the candidate and put together a senior management team to guide the campaign.

But Brock alienated some of Dole's senior aides, including Devine and American Conservative Union President David Keene, and he eventually won the scorn of Dole as well. The candidate, already known for a mean streak that injured his campaign for vice president in 1976, felt that he had to personally launch many of the attacks against the Bush campaign because Brock seemed unwilling to do so.

The campaign, moreover, lacked organizational discipline, and when organizational and tactical decisions were made, they were often disastrous. The Dole effort, for example, concentrated on the entire state of Florida rather than focusing on the west coast, where Midwesterners with an affinity for Dole tend to retire.

The campaign floundered without a theme. When top Republican strategist John Sears was sounded out a year ago about running the campaign, he warned that Dole needed to offer voters a strong sense of where he wanted to lead the country. But the candidate shunned this advice, even making jokes about it; he thought that his skills as a congressional leader would count for more than a vision about the country's direction.

On the stump and in television advertisements, Dole talked about leadership and strength but failed to flesh out his vision. Often, he talked in the argot of Capitol Hill, leaving audiences bewildered as he charted the course of legislation, and used arcane terms like "bracket creep" that are familiar only to lawmakers and lobbyists.

As all this was happening, the campaign

was going through money at an alarming rate. At the end of September, Sen. Dole had spent \$1.4 million less than the Bush effort; top campaign strategists figured that he could spend dollar-for-dollar against the vice president through the Super Tuesday contest and still have a considerable financial edge in later primaries. Since October, however, Dole has outspent Bush by an estimated \$3 million or more. As a result, Dole's cash reserves are now all but depleted, while the vice president has about \$5.5 million in the bank.

Where did the money go? Under Brock, the campaign rented extra space for its headquarters, went on a hiring binge and spent heavily for polling, helicopters and limousines. "Brock's people never said no," complains a veteran Dole campaign official who is still in place. Executive jets were chartered routinely, often from big corporations like Philip Morris and ConAgra. Even before Brock's arrival, Sen. Dole personally hired Republican pollster Wirthlin, whose services weren't cheap. Wirthlin billed the campaign \$50,000 to start, and \$420,000 more in January alone. "They got more than they paid for," the pollster says.

Brock argues that much of the money was gone before he came aboard Nov. 1 and defends the expenditures that were made under his regime. Bernard Windon, his principal deputy, says that at the time he and Brock joined the campaign, only one minor survey had been done, only a single television commercial had been produced, and little organizational effort was being devoted to states outside Iowa and New Hampshire. "We had to spend some money to try to get these things on track," Windon says.

With costs soaring, the money available for radio and television shrank. After \$1 million was spent on Boston TV for the New Hampshire primary, media expenditures for Super Tuesday — which some aides had once planned to total as much as \$4 million — were slashed to about \$1.2 million.

The Dole strategy in the South was to

win enough states and selected congressional districts, and thus delegates, to keep Bush from claiming a decisive victory. "We came very close," Windon insists. "One way you can look at it is, hey, you guys had all this money and you wasted it. Well, had we won all these delegates or all these states, no one would have said we wasted it."

But Dole lost every Super Tuesday state, including the one state, Washington, that every political analyst had placed in his corner. And so, last Tuesday, Dole's most trusted lieutenants began plotting his withdrawal, arguing, "If you go before the Illinois primary, you chart your own course and walk away with your head up instead of having events force you out."

But Dole hesitated. He wouldn't leave the race before his nemesis, Rep. Jack Kemp of New York, withdrew; that came on Thursday. There was little enthusiasm for some aides' idea for a new set of commercials arguing that Dole would be a stronger nominee against a Democrat. "Bush just carried a third of the country with enormous margins," an adviser says, "and we're talking about making an electability argument?"

Still, the campaign continued here in Illinois, day after day, mechanically and without inspiration. Saturday night, Dole appeared in a desperate half-hour broadcast in the face of polls showing him losing to Bush by more than two to one. But the broadcast became a metaphor for the campaign: Technical difficulties interrupted the video presentation and disrupted the program. Even if this flawed, eleventh-hour appeal miraculously revived his effort here, it is generally agreed that his prospects for winning the nomination are negligible.

In the final days, Dole joked that he had run out of any bad things to say about Bush. And as news leaked out that the media campaign was being canceled and the political staff was being dismissed, a few aides returned to their offices. They acknowledged that the campaign was beyond saving. But they said that they were thinking of drafting a plan for Dole to run on in 1992.

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Decisive loss forces Dole into a tough decision

By Thomas Hardy and Mitchell Locin

Vice President George Bush took a giant step toward winning the Republican nomination with a decisive Illinois primary victory Tuesday that left his major challenger, Sen. Bob Dole, facing an imminent decision on whether to abandon the campaign.

Defeating Dole by a landslide margin and expected to collect a lion's share of the 82 delegates at stake, Bush accelerated the momentum of a campaign that began gathering steam a month ago with a New Hampshire pri-

Complete coverage

- Mike Royko says good riddance to election madness. Page 3.
- For details on Illinois and Chicago results, see pages 16 and 17.
- State Rep. James Kirkland leading in tug of war. Sec. 2, pg. 1.
- Sawyer's allies struggle in key committeemen bids. Sec. 2, pg. 1.
- Joliet mayor has early lead in state's attorney race. Sec. 2, pg. 1.
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- Prospect Heights rejects proposal for home rule. Sec. 2, pg. 3.

mary victory and then roared into Illinois after a 16-state sweep of primaries on Super Tuesday. Dole acknowledged that Illinois presented his best chance to apply the brakes to Bush, but his floundering campaign never was able to find the handle in a state where the vice president enjoyed the support of the GOP establishment and where Republican voters viewed Bush comfortably if not

enthusiastically.

With 56 percent of the precincts in, Bush was leading with 55 percent of the vote to Dole's 36 percent. Former television evangelist Pat Robertson was running a distant third with 6 percent. With only a handful of delegate returns, Bush had won 21 to Dole's 16.

Recent history has shown that winners of the Illinois presidential primary, the first test in a major, northern industrial state, go on to win the party's nomination. Gerald Ford did it in 1976, as did Ronald Reagan in 1980, a year in which Dole dropped from the race early after defeats in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Bush now commands a nearly insurmountable advantage as the campaign turns to the East, another region of strength for the vice president.

Dole last week spurned the counsel of key advisers that he concede the nomination to Bush, but as he arrived home in Washington Tuesday night it was certain he'd be cautioned again against plunging ahead.

Campaign chairman Bill Brock said Dole was to confer with his wife, Elizabeth, and spend Wednesday working in his Capitol office and meeting with Senate colleagues to assess his chances in

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their states. The Kansan had pledged before Tuesday to continue beyond Illinois, and he spent the day campaigning in Connecticut and Wisconsin, the states where the next two Republican primaries will be held.

Dole had said that a decisive loss in Illinois would require that he reassess the campaign, especially given his desire to remain as Senate minority leader if the nomination became unattainable. Tuesday's campaign swing was seen as one aimed at motivating Illinois supporters rather than planting the seeds for future matchups.

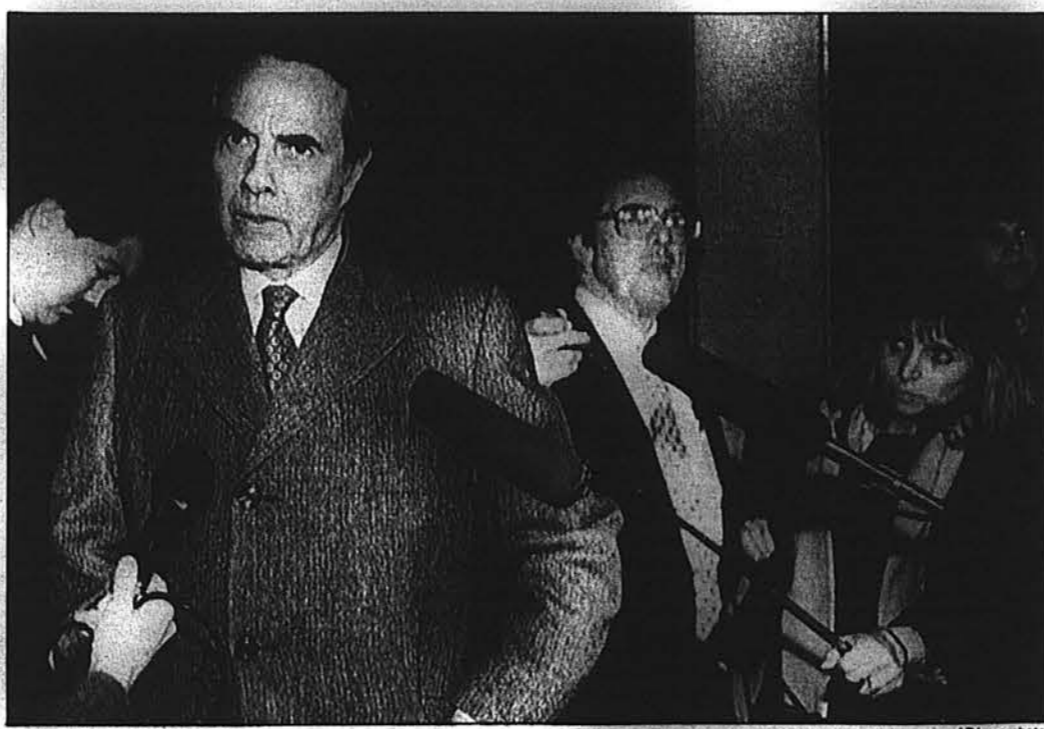
Saying he didn't see a need to "rush to judgment," Dole told reporters in Madison, Wis., "I want you to know Bob Dole is alive and well and running for President."

Asked how long he expected to continue, Dole said: "We need to win one fairly soon. ... I'll listen to my friends, but I believe the candidate has to make the choice."

Even as the votes were being cast in Illinois, Bush signaled he was ready to fight on for the Republican nomination if that's what Dole wants.

Rather than resting from a grueling five-day campaign schedule in Illinois, Bush spent part of Tuesday campaigning in Milwaukee for Wisconsin's April 5 primary.

Campaign chairman Lee Atwater said: "I think Illinois is a big victory for the vice president



Bob Dole, his campaign chairman Bill Brock behind him, talks to reporters Tuesday night at Washington National Airport. Key advisers are certain to again caution the Kansas senator against plunging ahead.

because this was the state that Sen. Dole has been saying all along was going to be his big state to get back in the game." Asked if the campaign was over, Atwater said: "It really ain't over until it's over. There's still a lot of delegates out there. I must say I'd certainly rather be in the vice president's situation than anybody

else's." The Associated Press reported that going into Illinois the Republican delegate count was as follows: Bush, 705; Dole, 165; Robertson, 17; uncommitted, 72. Delegates needed to nominate: 1,139. Looking at the next stop on the GOP campaign calendar, the March 29 primary in Connecticut,

where Bush was raised, as well as the major April races in Wisconsin, New York and Pennsylvania, another senior Bush campaign aide asked of Dole's chances: "If he doesn't win [in Illinois], where is he going to win?"

Looking ahead to the March 29 primary in Connecticut, where Bush was raised, and the April

races in Wisconsin, New York and Pennsylvania, another senior Bush campaign aide said of Dole, "If he doesn't win [in Illinois], where is he going to win?"

Bush offered as good an explanation as any Tuesday of why he has succeeded and Dole has failed. Talking at Marquette University in Milwaukee, he said that the election process is kind of a crucible of the candidate's temperament, the ability to lead, to handle the day-to-day scrutiny and stress, to run an organization, and it's a chance for you to learn about our priorities and our values and what makes us tick."

With few real policy differences between Bush and Dole, what was left for voters to see was Bush's detail-perfect campaign against a Dole campaign in perpetual turmoil. And voters also saw Bush fight back from a defeat in Iowa, compared to Dole's blowup after his New Hampshire loss.

With few real policy differences between Bush and Dole, what was left for voters to see was Bush's detail-perfect campaign and a candidate who fought back from a next-door defeat in Iowa versus Dole's blowup after his New Hampshire loss and a campaign in perpetual turmoil.

For Dole, the campaign in Illinois became a metaphor for what will rank as his worst 30-day period in a political career spanning three decades.

Buoyed by his victory and Bush's disappointing third-place finish in the Iowa caucuses, Dole wound up squandering a substantial lead in the polls and suffered a loss to the vice president in New Hampshire on Feb. 16, a loss from which he has been unable to recover. New Hampshire set off a chain

reaction of events in the Dole campaign that betrayed inherent organizational weaknesses. In-fighting among staffers resulted in a purge of some key campaign advisers. Precious campaign funds were misspent, and the candidate's walling on tactics made it impossible to concentrate on areas of potential strength. All these foibles led to Dole's reeling through the Super Tuesday campaign.

Entering Illinois as his "recovery state," an allusion to his months spent in Chicago hospitals healing from grievous World War II wounds, Dole and his advisers failed to reach a consensus on the best course of treatment for resuscitating the campaign.

Illinois House Minority Leader Lee Daniels, Dole's state campaign chairman, had put together a statewide organization that the candidate described as one of his best and that even won grudging praise from the forces of Gov. James Thompson.

Daniels and his staff were hopeful of keeping Dole competitive by finishing within 10 points of Bush and garnering as much as 40 percent of the Illinois delegates. But they watched helplessly last Thursday as members of the national staff, some of whom were advising Dole to drop out of the race, mishandled a realignment of media strategy and staff layoffs that fueled reports of an impending Dole withdrawal.

Midnight often found staffers putting the finishing touches on the next day's schedule, and Dole's "big event" of the Illinois campaign, a live, 30-minute broadcast from Knox College in Galesburg, suffered a symbolic, momentary technical glitch. Tribune correspondent Dorothy Collin contributed to this report.