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Democrats, Dole wrangle over military move

Associated Press

Democratic presidential contenders debated long-distance with Republican Bob Dole on Thursday over the sending of U.S. troops to Central America, with Rep. Richard Gephardt charging that the Reagan administration had "abandoned the rule of law."

Dole called for U.S. military help for the Nicaraguan contras, who he said were being "slaughtered by the hundreds."

But Jesse Jackson, campaigning in Michigan, said, "We are being told we have to be saved from the Sandinistas. There are no Sandinistas in Detroit."

Jackson also included Vice President George Bush, the GOP presidential front-runner, in his verbal attack. Commenting one day after former White House aide Oliver North and three other men were indicted in connection with the Iran-contra money diversion, Jackson said, "In a real sense, the mailmen have taken the rap for the postmaster."

"North and the others are fall guys in the process. This investigation must conclude the fact that this is President Reagan's policy and the fact that Mr. Bush knew about the scheme," he said.

Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois said of the troop deployment, "I'm skeptical like a lot of my colleagues. I don't know what I can trust from the administration."

Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis said Reagan's decision to send troops was "very regrettable."

Sen. Albert Gore of Tennessee was less critical than several of his Democratic rivals. But he told a news conference in Topeka, Kan., "I think it was wrong to mislead the Congress and fail to provide the information about what led up to the decision."

He also said, "I think the President erred in not vigorously pursuing a Central American peace plan offered last year by the president of Costa Rica."

Dole, in a speech on the Senate floor, declared that the contras were being overrun and "slaughtered by the hundreds."

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WICHITA EAGLE 3-17



As Bob Dole returns to his Senate office to assess the future of his candidacy, he must also assess campaign failings — such as overspending and in-fighting — that have left many of his aides frustrated and dispirited.

Dole campaign plagued by flaws

By Angelia Herrin
Of our Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — Five days before the New Hampshire primary, Sen. Bob Dole and his advisers gathered in a room at the Merrimack Hilton, arguing about how to handle Vice President George Bush's TV ads attacking Dole's "straddle" on tax hikes.

Some argued heatedly that taxes were a "killer issue" in New Hampshire and that Dole's counter-attack should hit the air immediately. Others protested that the TV spot that had been filmed was too poor in quality and that taxes were not the major focus of the voters.

Polster Richard Wirthlin was one of the latter, adamantly telling Dole that his polls showed the Kansas senator firmly in the lead.

"You're going to win," Wirthlin said, according to one participant. "You are going to be president."

Wirthlin's words have a hollow ring today as Dole surveys the remains of his presidential candida-

■ Dole faces rising pressure to quit campaign, 9A.
■ Sen. Albert Gore Jr. campaigns in Wichita, 10A.

cy. Just one month ago, the Kansas Republican, riding the wave of a triumphant victory in Iowa, seemingly was poised to put away Bush in New Hampshire primary and virtually clinch the Republican presidential nomination.

Instead, Dole was stunned by a nine-point loss in New Hampshire — and publicly blamed his defeat on his campaign's failure to respond to the Bush ads. His campaign dissolved into a welter of bitterness and disorganization and he was wiped out by Bush in 16 states on Super Tuesday and then in Illinois this week.

Now as Dole returns to his Senate office to assess the future of his candidacy, he must also assess its failings. And to date it has been

● DOLE, 8A, Col. 1

8A THE WICHITA EAGLE-BEACON Thursday, March 17, 1988

Troubles permeate Dole campaign, top to bottom

● DOLE, from 1A

a campaign whose public problems have been more than matched by its private flaws — such as overspending and in-fighting — that have left many of his aides frustrated and dispirited.

On one level, advisers say Dole failed to articulate a clear message to voters. Just as he sometimes tossed aside his prepared speech texts and schedules, aides say that after Iowa, Dole failed to tie together his speeches, events and TV ads to tell voters what a Dole presidency would be like.

That was a problem, particularly in the South, where the Kansas was not well-known and did not have time to campaign personally. In addition, a post-New Hampshire survey of undecided voters who finally turned to Bush found that Dole had not eased what aides privately called "the discomfort factor" — the uncertainty some voters seemed to feel about Dole and his reputation as abrasive and mean-spirited. That image was only reinforced on the night of his New Hampshire loss when Dole — asked if he had anything to say to Bush — snarled on national television, "Quit lying about my record."

But Dole the candidate also was hampered by his own campaign organization, an office beset with quarreling factions that often failed to accomplish the basic tasks of presidential campaigns. "When its mistakes became public, such as the inaccurate announcement that Dole was pulling off all his TV advertising in Illinois a few days before the primary, the stumbling eclipsed Dole's message."

The problems reached down to the precinct level. For instance, one Dole aide says the campaign targeted 2,000 key precincts in Washington state. But when he arrived in the state two weeks before the March 8 primary, he found that only 447 precinct leaders had been recruited. "There



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are some basic things that you have to do in campaigns that can be measured, just like bank statements. In state after state, they didn't get done," he said.

Early overspending — on everything from staff salaries to chartered jets — compounded the problem. The campaign originally planned to spend \$4 million on Super Tuesday media. But following New Hampshire, aides told Dole they could spend only \$1.4 million.

"There were people in the campaign acting as if Bob Dole were the problem, but the problem was clearly a campaign that offered him no support, that threw money away, did not follow a targeted strategy and never made decisions," said David Keene, a longtime Dole adviser fired after a power struggle with campaign chairman Bill Brock three weeks ago.

"I'm going to write a book and call it 'How the Best Man Lost,'" said one consultant. "It's a damn shame to see a candidate who had come as far as Bob Dole be brought down this way."

But while many of those close to Dole lament the problems, they also say that the senator himself must shoulder responsibility. The man who campaigned on a pledge of "hands-on management" failed to assemble and use a strong organization that could get him to the White House.

"He had too many voices, no

one person making the central decisions," says a frustrated top aide. "It's a tragedy that he was so poorly served, but it's a tragedy he didn't hire the best organization so could turn the decisions over to them."

Some aides say that Dole squandered valuable time early on, by refusing to invest heavily in campaign organization in 1986 and 1987. When he announced his exploratory committee in 1987, Dole named Robert Ellsworth, a close friend and former NATO adviser, as chairman. Ellsworth, who had never run a presidential campaign, viewed the job as temporary — but Brock wasn't hired until nearly a year later. Dole also held back on hiring media consultants and pollsters.

When Brock, a former secretary of Labor, took over in mid-November, he found an understaffed organization: one aide said he found 7,000 letters were piled up, unanswered.

Brock immediately began to hire staff, but the result was an animosity between the "old" and "new" aides. "There was a cliquishness and secrecy," said one

aide. "We often had two people for a job, but nobody got the job done."

Some aides took to avoiding the chain of command and found other ways to get messages to Dole, such as calling Donald Devine or Keene, veteran New Right conservatives who were paid consultants.

There was also resentment about spending, as the campaign budget suddenly doubled under Brock. Wirthlin, for example, billed the campaign \$420,000 in January.

Brock himself comes under fire by some aides for not assuming tight control of the campaign or working with Dole to follow a coherent strategy. After New Hampshire, some aides reported relations between the two men were strained.

At one point, as Dole began to countermand the schedule that the Washington office had set up, Brock began to refer to Dole's airplane as "The Magical Mystery Tour." "I don't even know where they're going. Tell 'em to send me a post card," he reportedly told aides.

"We felt the airplane had raised its own flag and declared itself a unilateral command post," one aide said.

In the period leading up to Super Tuesday, all the weaknesses of the campaign became apparent. "The campaign was in total gridlock. There were 23 commercials shot, but we couldn't get any decision made on strategy, on what we should run," said one source. "It was an incredible waste of time, because you could not get a decision."

As Dole's standing in the polls

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hundreds," and he said Reagan should immediately resubmit a request for military aid.

"Does it make sense, even as thousands of communist troops cross the border of a free country in this hemisphere, for members of Congress to make excuses for [Nicaragua's] aggression, while accusing the President of the United States of fueling the fires of war in Central America?" Dole asked.

But Gephardt (D., Mo.), in a statement released by his office in Washington, strongly criticized Reagan for sending troops to Honduras.

"Now we have this overreaction that puts American troops in harm's way," he said. "This exercise serves no purpose but to draw us into a war that the Ameri-

can people oppose."

Gephardt said, "In pursuit of its failed policy of support for the contras, the administration has lost its sense of direction, abandoned the rule of law and failed to protect American national interests in a troubled region."

Dukakis not only criticized the administration's Central American moves but also attacked Bush for refusing to break with Reagan over a civil rights bill the President vetoed on Wednesday.

Reagan has complained that the bill would expand federal power, and he has offered a substitute. But Dukakis said, "There's a very basic principle involved here. That is that institutions which receive money from the government should not discriminate."

Bush spokesman Pete Teeley said the vice president has not publicly discussed his views of the issue, and he said, "We're not going to respond to Dukakis."