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Dole says he may cast vote against GATT

By Ray Hemman

The Hutchinson News

If the United States had an escape hatch from adverse decisions resulting from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the incoming Senate majority leader would feel much better about supporting the pact.

"Will I vote for GATT?" Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., said. "I don't know yet. If they don't satisfy some of these serious problems, I'm not going to vote for GATT."

Dole's comments came Friday during a telephone press conference with Kansas journalists.

In particular, Dole's office has been inundated with telephone calls about an entity known as the World Trade Organization the GATT would set up. Many people fear the organization would infringe upon U.S. sovereignty.

"I'm a strong trade person," he said. "I want to support GATT. But I think they raise a good point when they call us and tell us their concern about these decisions being made in secret in the World Trade Organization. We don't have any more voice than Bangladesh, for example. Our

Senator: Glickman would do good job as ag secretary

point is, if it is a just decision, OK. But if it's not a just decision, I'm going to recommend some commission to review it."

The commission Dole would like to see would review an adverse decision from the World Trade Organization within 90 days. Then, Congress would have to vote up or down on the WTO's decision.

On the second adverse decision from the WTO, Dole believes the U.S. should have the ability to get out of it on a vote of Congress.

"We are trying to work it out so we can answer as many of these real concerns as people have," Dole said. "If we can't get there, then I don't think GATT is going to pass this year. You can take it up next year if it doesn't pass this year."

Also during the press conference, Dole was asked about his own opinion on what message elected officials should take from the Nov. 8 election. The senator said he saw it as a clear indication

that voters were concerned about government taking over more and more of their lives.

Dole cited the health-care debate as a case in point. The Clinton health care package would have created more than 50 new agencies and never had more than 30 votes in the Senate, Dole said. Nevertheless, the Clintons "wouldn't let go" of it, he said.

In response to the Nov. 8 vote, Dole said he expects one of the first actions of the Senate is to require that Congress follow all the laws it already has placed on business. In the past, Congress typically has exempted itself from labor and safety regulations it passed for business.

At the same time, Dole said the Senate will not be able to act as quickly as the House because rules governing debate differ. Senate rules allow the minority party or any one senator to slow progress on a bill.

"The balanced-budget amendment we are going to move on

very quickly," he said. "The line-item veto is not on our seven (a list of priorities) but we are going to move on that very quickly. We are going to move on things that make Congress comply with the laws on ethics reform, on gifts, on lobbying reform and a lot of things we think the American people are concerned about."

On agricultural issues, Dole said he had contacted Clinton's chief of staff, Leon Panetta, on behalf of Rep. Dan Glickman, D-Kan. Dole is supporting Glickman for agriculture secretary.

"We've never had any serious political problem," Dole said of Glickman. "We don't agree philosophically on issues. But on agriculture, I think Dan would do a good job. I might not agree with everything he did on agriculture, I think he would do a good job."

"It's going to be a Democrat. It might as well be somebody we've worked with over the years and

can continue to work with, and somebody who understands agriculture — not just in Kansas but in Mississippi or Oregon or wherever it may be. ... I don't know what is going to happen, but I'm willing to be helpful."

As far as how agriculture will fare under a GOP-dominated Congress, Dole said he believed Republicans would be less likely to pass more regulations.

At the same time, budget pressures will be the driving force behind any farm legislation.

"Budget numbers always are going to drive the bill and the debate," he said. "There is strong pressure from people like Senator (Phil) Gramm (R-Texas) to reduce or even eliminate farm programs. But my view would be that if everybody else is willing to give up their subsidy, then count the farmer in. If everybody else is willing to cut 10 percent, count the farmer in. But don't count the farmers in and let everybody else off scot-free. Agriculture has made pretty big contributions the past two or three years when it came to cuts."

Dole will back GATT if tax cut included

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bob Dole appeared to up the stakes Sunday for his critical support of the GATT trade accord by linking it to administration backing of a cut in the capital gains tax.

But within hours, the idea seemed to be shot down by White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, who said President Clinton opposes the Republican effort to reduce the tax, whether or not it is connected to the huge trade treaty.

Dole, expected to be the next Senate majority leader, said he discussed the trade pact Saturday with Panetta, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, and others, and sought "some assurances" on capital gains.

Asked on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley" whether he was holding the measure hostage to lowering the tax on the sale of assets, Dole said, "Oh, nothing like that."

But he acknowledged that administration endorsement of a capital gains tax cut — a favored element of the Republican pledge to relieve the nation's tax burden — could affect his decision on the agreement worked out under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

"I suggested that" to Bent-

On CNN's "Late Edition" later in the day, Panetta said such a trade-off would probably not be forthcoming.

"I don't think he's going to get a commitment from us that we're going to suddenly support a capital gains tax cut, particularly as part of" the trade accord, Panetta said.

Republicans have been trying for years to reduce the tax, which is paid on profits from sales of stocks and other property. The GOP says a reduction would stimulate business, while Democrats say the chief beneficiaries would be rich people who own property.

Dole said he thought Bentsen "in his heart of hearts" would like to see a capital gains rate reduction for the right reason.

An administration official who attended the meeting said he did not feel Dole had directly linked his GATT vote to the capital gains issue, although Dole had brought up the tax cut at the meeting.

The administration has shown little enthusiasm for a capital gains tax cut, which critics argue would primarily benefit wealthier people.

Dole, whose support could tip the balance in a tight Senate vote on GATT, has already demanded separate legislation strengthening the United States' ability to withdraw from the accord if national interests are harmed.

He also wants to take up a controversial deal outlined in the GATT accord to give three communications companies a discount on licenses to develop the next generation of wireless telephone systems.

Members of Congress return to Washington at the end of this month for a lame duck session devoted solely to passage of the GATT legislation. The House is expected to approve the accord by a wide margin, but the administration says it still is a few votes short in the Senate.

Rep. Bill Archer, R-Texas, almost certain to be the next head of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, said in a speech to the National Taxpayers' Union on Sunday that he strongly supports GATT. "While it is not perfect, it knocks down \$750 billion in trade barriers," he said.

Dole said he and the administration were "getting close to an agreement" on working out differences.

Dole skeptical of prayer amendment

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senators from both parties voiced doubt Sunday that a constitutional amendment allowing school prayer could pass, and indicated they would prefer to steer away from such social issues.

"I don't think we ought to get bogged down" on such divisive matters, Minority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., said on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley."

"If we're going to bring about change, we better bring up some measures we can pass, so the

American people will get the message that we're serious about it," said Dole, who is expected to become majority leader next year.

House Speaker-to-be Newt Gingrich has promised a vote on a school prayer amendment by next July 4. While most Republicans, including Dole, support the principle, many say the new majority party must first concentrate on economic matters.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, a conservative Republican from Utah, said on CBS' "Face the Nation" it is

more important to pass constitutional amendments on a balanced budget, unfunded federal mandates on the states and a line-item veto.

"On school prayer, I really don't believe the votes are there for a vocal prayer amendment."

He said that while there was support for a silent prayer or reflection amendment, "I would prefer to solve the economic problems first."

Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., appearing with Hatch on CBS, said there was a "real re-

luctance to have this Congress be the first Congress in 205 years to amend any part of the Bill of Rights." He said most Americans would "just as soon the federal government stay out of questions like church and prayer in their schools."

White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, on CNN's "Late Edition," said President Clinton would oppose "any kind of prayer amendment that would impose any kind of coercion on kids in this country." But he said Clinton

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would support "statutory changes" to allow for a moment of silence.

Before limiting his support to a moment of silence, Clinton had last week refused to rule out support for a constitutional amendment.

Constitutional amendments must be approved by two-thirds majorities of the House and Senate, and then ratified by three-fourths of the states. The president cannot veto them.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1962 that organized prayer in public schools violated the First Amendment's separation of church and state. For years Republicans, backed by the religious right, have sought to re-introduce voluntary prayer in schools.

Ralph Reed, president of the conservative Christian Coalition, said on CBS that the government had "taken the phrase 'freedom of religion' and turned into 'freedom from religion.'"

But Arthur Kropp of the liberal People for the American Way retorted that "most people are stunned that one of the first initiatives out of the box for this new leadership is prayer. ... We are in a situation in this country where we've got some serious issues to deal with. I don't think we can afford to pit one American against another."

The importance of tackling economic issues first was also stressed by four Republican governors appearing Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

The four — William Weld of Massachusetts, Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey, Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and Pete Wilson of California — said they had no objection to a moment of silence before starting the school day, and were not necessarily opposed to legislation or a constitutional amendment as long as prayer was voluntary.

But they said school prayer should not be an immediate GOP priority when Republicans take control of Congress in January. Instead, they said the GOP Congress should push for enactment of the economic and government reform items that were at the center of its campaign agenda, such as a balanced budget amendment, welfare reform and tax relief for families.

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Dole says NATO must take initiative

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole prodded NATO Sunday to stop waiting for U.N. direction and take the lead in punishing Serbian military attacks in Bosnia.

"I think the U.N. ought to get off of NATO's back, and let NATO take care of the Serbian aggression in Bosnia," Dole said on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley."

"How many times can we waffle

on Bosnia? How many thousands of people or innocent children have to be killed before NATO does something?"

The Kansas Republican has been an outspoken critic of the Clinton administration and the international community for failing to stop the bloodbath in Bosnia. He has led congressional moves to bring about the lifting of the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia's Muslim government, although he repeated Sunday that

he opposes putting U.S. ground troops in Bosnia.

Dole said he planned to visit North Atlantic Treaty Organization officials in Europe next week and "tell them that I don't see any reason for their existence, if they have to take orders from the United Nations."

NATO air forces, led by the United States, Britain and France, are responsible for enforcing a no-fly zone for Serbian military aircraft in Bosnia.

Dole offers to deal on GATT

By ALAN C. MILLER
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Incoming Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole suggested Sunday that he would be more inclined to support the Clinton administration's effort to ratify the GATT trade pact if the White House endorsed the longtime Republican goal of reducing the capital gains tax.

Dole, appearing on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley," said that he had raised the prospect of such a deal in a meeting Saturday with White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

Panetta responded later Sunday that Dole

Incoming Senate majority leader might trade support for capital gains tax cut

wasn't likely "to get a commitment from us that we're going to suddenly support a capital gains tax cut," particularly in connection with the trade agreement. Appearing on CNN's "Late Edition," Panetta said that the administration was nevertheless "making good progress" in its bid to win the Kansas Republican's support for GATT.

Also on Sunday, Dole, Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, who is expected to be chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and three prominent Re-

publican governors said during television appearances that the incoming GOP House and Senate majorities should make tax-and-budget cuts their top priority rather than seeking a controversial constitutional amendment to put prayer back in schools. This appeared to be a rebuke to presumptive House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., who pledged to bring a prayer proposal to a vote in the House by July 4.

The GATT agreement is a major immediate hurdle for the beleaguered administration,

which is frantically seeking bipartisan support for it. The toughest fight appears to loom in the Senate, where Sens. Ernest F. Hollings, D-S.C., and Jesse Helms, R-N.C., lead the opposition.

Administration sources privately expressed confidence Sunday that they will have the votes to steer the massive accord through the House and Senate. But Dole's support, as the Republican leader colleagues look to for guidance, appears to be crucial.

Dole said that he favors the concept of the expanded global trade agreement but continues to have specific concerns. Nonetheless, he added, "We're getting close to an agreement."

Dole, general defend Clinton

Republican leader Bob Dole joined the nation's top military officer Sunday in disputing Sen. Jesse Helms' claim that President Clinton isn't capable of leading the U.S. armed forces.

"I had some reservations early on, but I think he's up to the job now," Dole, the next Senate majority leader, said on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley."

Clinton's ability as commander in chief, long an issue because of his Vietnam era anti-war activities, was questioned again Friday by Helms, a North Carolina Republican, who alleged during a CNN interview that military leaders share his view that the president is not "up to the job."

That drew a quick response Saturday from Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Shalikashvili: "I think it's important to me that this view not be represented as that of the military leadership, or for that matter, the view of the military as a whole."