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Dole backs more Senate TV coverage

The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Congress should be opened to greater television coverage, possibly with cameras operated by news organizations, incoming Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole says.

"I want to do what I can to increase public access to Congress," the Kansas Republican said in a letter Tuesday to C-Span chief

Brian Lamb. "Improvements can clearly be made."

Last month, Lamb asked Dole, R-Kan., and incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., to improve TV access to floor proceedings and committee hearings. C-Span now televises the floor action live on its cable network.

Lamb said Tuesday both GOP leaders have replied positively, but a major outstanding issue is whether news organizations can gain control of cameras that cover the House and Senate.

"The big, big question is whether they will allow outsiders to control those cameras so we get a true

journalistic view of the proceedings," Lamb said.

Dole said he would look into formation of a "bipartisan Senate working group" to examine allowing news organizations to control the cameras that cover floor proceedings, which he called "worthy of serious consideration."

The cameras are now operated by House and Senate employees and the feed is provided to C-Span and others. The focus is almost always on the person speaking, with no reaction shots or views of the rest of the chamber.

Dole said he would suggest that the Senate Rules Committee consult with C-Span and network news officials to "consider appropriate changes to the procedures determining camera coverage of floor activity, with an eye towards making the coverage as complete as possible."

Dole: \$4.5 million Gingrich book deal raises questions

By John Solomon
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Entering a fray so far dominated by Democrats, Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole said Thursday that incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich's reported \$4.5 million book deal "raises questions that need to be addressed."

Dole told a group of reporters he "did not want to pass judgment" on the deal disclosed last week or get into a "quarrel with Newt." But he added, "it's not too popular around people who talk to me. They think it's a lot of money."

He declined to suggest ways the issue could be addressed, saying it "really is a decision Newt has to make." But he offered a candid assessment of the political implications if it's left to fester too long.

"I can already see when you start cutting programs that might affect low-income Americans that becoming an issue," he said, adding later he feared it would remain fodder for talk shows.

Gingrich's spokesman, Tony Blankley, played down Dole's remarks.

"My response is after being badgered by a number of reporters he made a few comments that I took to be intended in an entirely friendly way," Blankley said.

His fellow Republicans have been generally silent on the book deal reached by Gingrich.

But Democrats immediately pounced on the revelation that Gingrich was to receive a \$4.5 million advance for writing two books for the publishing house owned by media giant Rupert Murdoch.



Dole Gingrich

They noted that Gingrich could have great influence over communications legislation that could affect Murdoch.

House Democratic Whip David Bonior, D-Mich., called it a "sweetheart" deal that "proves once again we need an independent, professional nonpartisan outside counsel to investigate the ethical cloud which has settled over the head of Newt Gingrich."

Gingrich already faces an ethics complaint in the House concerning tax-free donations to a college course he taught.

Dismissing Bonior's criticism as "lame," Dole said he had not talked to Gingrich about the book deal and was uncertain exactly how the speaker-to-be could put the matter behind him.

"I think it does raise some questions that need to be addressed," he said. Pressed to elaborate, Dole declined to be more specific.

"I don't know how you do it. I think that has to be something he has to address. I think we just need to lay it to rest because I don't want to see it hanging around so that every time an issue comes up we have talk about the book deal," he said.

Dole calls Gingrich deal questionable

By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE
N.Y. Times News Service

WASHINGTON — In his first public criticism of his fellow Republican leader, Sen. Bob Dole on Thursday questioned the propriety of the \$4.5 million book advance for incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich and suggested the deal could mar efforts by Republicans to get off to a strong start when they take over Congress on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Gingrich, responding to the growing bipartisan criticism, is expected to announce today that he will renounce a substantial portion of the payment he was

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Dole calls deal questionable

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to receive as part of the book deal struck earlier this month.

"He is rethinking it," said Allan Lipsett, a spokesman for the Georgia Republican, who was scheduled to hold a news conference in Atlanta this morning to reveal his intentions.

Sources familiar with the congressman's thinking said he wouldn't reject the advance but substantially reduce the amount, which has drawn fire because of its size.

While Dole, the Kansas Republican who will become the Senate majority leader, said he wasn't ready to pass judgment on the deal, the largest ever for a sitting member of Congress, he added that it raises questions and will have to be addressed.

"It's not too popular," Dole told six Washington reporters Thursday in a conference call while he was on vacation in Bal Harbour, Fla. "I can already see, when you start cutting programs that might affect low-income Americans, it might become an issue."

Since the Nov. 8 election, any qualms that either of the two new Republican leaders may have about each other have been held at bay as the Republicans prepare to take charge of Capitol Hill for the first time in 40 years.

Thursday's comments by the older, more cautious Dole, who has been majority leader before, were his first indication that he thinks Gingrich may have overreached, in his exuberance at taking power.

Democrats have pounced on the two-book deal, calling Gingrich a

hypocrite for posing as a white knight who is cleaning up Washington and yet signing a deal that exploits his public position for his own personal profit. Other political figures have received huge advances for books, but not while in office; others in office have received advances, but none nearly so big.

Gingrich has dismissed the criticism as silly and a case of "book envy." Of the amount of his advance, he has said, "Conservative books sell."

Gingrich, during an appearance in Smyrna, Ga., on Thursday night, declined to comment on Dole's remark but said he was sending his House Republican colleagues a letter concerning the book deal.

His spokesman, Tony Blankley, played down Dole's remarks.

"My response is after being badgered by a number of reporters he made a few comments that I took to be intended in an entirely friendly way," Blankley said.

Both of Gingrich's books will be published by HarperCollins Publishers. The first book, tentatively titled "To Renew America," is to be a series of essays by Gingrich on the GOP agenda. The second is to be a compendium of essays on government by historical figures, with commentary by Gingrich.

Republicans have been concerned that the deal provides an opening for their critics, but until Dole's comments Thursday, their concerns have been muted and offstage.

Dole said the matter kept recurring on call-in programs on talk radio and on C-SPAN, forums that have provided early warning signals for impending political fiascos, in-

cluding several of President Clinton's failed appointments.

"Every time we're on a talk show, I assume we'll be asked about the book deal," Dole said. "It is of some concern to a lot of people."

He added, "I've listened to a lot of these C-SPAN things and talk shows, and the public senses — \$4.5 million is a lot of money."

"We just need to lay it to rest because we don't need it to come up," he said, although it was unclear what action, if any, he might take. He said he hadn't discussed the matter with Gingrich.

Dole said Thursday that he and his wife, Elizabeth, had earned just \$100,000 as advance payment for their book, "The Doles: Unlimited Partners," published by Simon & Schuster in 1988. Four and a half million dollars, he repeated with a tone of some amazement, "is a lot of money."

Asked if the deal had hurt the party, Dole replied, "I don't know, but when Bob Novak expresses reservations, it means he's been picking it up out there, because he's not known to differ with Newt."

Dole was referring to the conservative columnist who wrote earlier this week that the deal was a blunder that played into the hands of Gingrich's enemies.

Dole has other reasons for wanting the public to think well of the Republican Congress. He said he would decide by next week whether to form an exploratory committee for a possible presidential candidacy, a move that many expect him to make.

The Associated Press, Los Angeles Times and Baltimore Sun contributed to this report.

Gingrich book deal fallout worries Dole

By Katharine Q. Seelye
New York Times News Service

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"It's not too popular," Dole told a half-dozen Washington reporters Thursday during a conference call while he was on vacation in Florida. "I

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Gingrich



Dole

GINGRICH

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Gingrich has dismissed the criticism as "silly" and a case of "book envy." Of the amount of his advance, he has said, "Conservative books sell." Attempts to reach Gingrich or his spokesman Thursday were unsuccessful.

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Dole said that the matter kept "popping up" on call-in programs on talk radio and on C-SPAN, forums that have provided early warning signals for impending political fiascos, including several of President Clinton's failed appointments.

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known to differ with Newt."

Dole was referring to the conservative columnist who wrote earlier this week that the deal was a blunder that played into the hands of Gingrich's enemies. He said Gingrich had been advised by friends to give some of the money to charity, but that he blew the opportunity by not doing so quickly.

The columnist suggested that Gingrich heed the advice of Jack Kemp, the former congressman and Gingrich ally, who has urged him to postpone any profit from his tenure

as speaker until he leaves office.

Novak also said that since the Republicans won control of the House in the Nov. 8 election, Gingrich had been seen as a "high-wire act." With the book deal, Novak wrote, Gingrich "fell off."

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