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### This document is from the collections at the Dole Archives, University of Kansas. Bob Dole the Last Survivor

By WALTER SHAPIRO<br/>April 1995 Esquireleadership. That's what Dole will<br/>peddling as a presidential candi-<br/>date and what, in a small way, be<br/>tay and the work after his<br/>trying to demonstrate today.my record."Torsider the case for Bob Dole<br/>as a classic lonely guy. His high<br/>cambridge for a meeting of the<br/>Harvard Board of Overseers on<br/>this Friday in early February. The<br/>Senate majority leader sits alone in<br/>their two-bedroom Washington<br/>apartment in the Watergate witho<br/>only his dog. Leader, for company.<br/>Sure, he's just flown back from tay<br/>ing the Letterman show in New<br/>York, But, nah, he's not going<br/>tell me what she thinks. Aw,<br/>Hell might as well stay to.<br/>The Tayear-old three-time presi-<br/>the 71-year-old three-time presi-<br/>to Dave. Letterman's. ... well ... and<br/>type: Letterman's... well ... and<br/>the start, clutching his staft<br/>type: Letterman's... well ... and<br/>the start, clutching his staft<br/>written Top Seven List in his group<br/>to let hand. Said on the show that herleadership. That's what Dole will<br/>a stard what, in a small way, he<br/>drawing the atter day Gary.<br/>That as the world well knows, has<br/>be trying to erase. Instead, Dole<br/>to something and we say we're going to<br/>somet, he says, he's going to<br/>to something and we say we're go<br/>to something and we say w

this? Dole and Phil Gramm are going to knock each other off? Aragh. It's like a scene out of an old Rodney Dangerfield routine. Here Dole's Letterman performance is quickly being likened to that of Bill Clinton reviving his 1992 campaign by blowing his own horn on Arsen no Hall. Both Newsweek and Time are running the identical picture of Bob and Dave pointing to their mock campaign button, Dole and Dumber. The Newsweek headline seems destined for a campaign

promptu press conference for about 15 Senate regulars. No big news. Just easy give-and-take with in the late 1960s with Dole the The majority leader stands with was the Republican hatchet man; as majority leader under Ronald Reagan, he emerged as a closet his hands clasped carefully in front of his body so that his good left hand shields his withered, warmoderate, his 1988 incarnation was damaged right one from prying eyes. The creases of age are etched as the self-made striver who presented George Bush's patrician ease; and now he is the old-shoe on his tanned face, his curiously jet-black hair beginning to turn white at the fringes. But his deep Senate leader upstaged by Newt's revolution. Does a grown man really change personality that often? Of course, a successful politician's public perbaritone voice, with its echoes of the wind sweeping across the Kan-sas prairie, and his bob-and-weave bantering style underline his role as the ranking adult in American sona is of his own making. But something is out of kilter when Dole's 35-year congressional career is remembered mostly for two outpolitical life. The nominal topic is President Clinton's ill-fated \$40 billion Clinton's ill-fated \$40 billion Mexican-peso bailout, which is go-ing down the tubes like there is no manana. But the subtext — and with Dole the message is always between the lines — is political

Dole sees that he was a bit nervous at the start, clutching his staff written Top Seven List in his good left hand. Said on the show that he was running for president. No se-cret there, can't be coy. Letterman made it into a big deal, hot news. Good publicity, no harm. Better call Elizabeth, just to be sure. She says I was great. Guess it was prety good, then. Now Dole's too revved up to sleep. Watches Conan O'Brien. Then he starts flicking channels. What's on C.Span? Bill Safire, bright guy. What's he saying about '96? It'll all be over in 70 days, from lowa to the California primary. Pete Wilson will jump in. What's this? Dole and Phil Gramm are go-ing to knock each other off? Ar-aragh.

work, I guess." Rudr Typical, funny, and self-depre-left."

cating. But not exactly the reflec-tive answer I had in mind. So I generation of political leaders lost, for the most part, by not serving in



BOB DOLE An Army Gunner At Camp Breckenridge in Kentucky 1944

overcome during his speech and began to sob. "I sort of saw Bush there," he says now, "and I not only saw somebody who lost, but Bob and Dave pointing to their mock campaign button, Dole and Dumber. The Newsweek headline seems destined for a campaign commercial: A HIP DOLE GETS OUT OF THE GATE. And what is Hipster Bob doing at 2 a.m. after his generations-spanning media glory? Staring at a tape of a columnist giving a speech on C-Span. Then, just when Dole's about to nod off with a sense of quiet satisfaction — whack! Here comes Safire out of the electronic ether to paint the latest scenario about how Dole can't win. Ever. In the hallway outside the Senar chamber, Dole is holding an impromptu press conference for more than the mater of the state that the talks to the state that the talks to the state that the talks to the state tage of a columnist giving a speech on C-Span. Then, just when Dole's tabe. The segues from the First Wave, I guess." These guys from the First Wave the hallway outside the Senare thamber, Dole is holding an impromptu press conference for the full to the talk two the full to the talk two tarks among the dominant political figures of the last two terms to full the full to the talk two terms and the talk two terms the talk to the talk two terms to the full to the talk two terms the talk to the talk two terms to the full to the talk to the talk to the talk the talk to the talk to the talk to the talk two terms to the talk two terms to the talk to t

The Hart Senate office building

"He had it all figured out," Dole says with a kind of awe. "He kept says with a kind of awe. "He kept saying, 'Your voice is strong. As long as your voice is strong age is long as your voice is strong, age is al for reinventing environmental,

Dole's resurrected presidential ambitions: The senator feared he was too old to run until Nixon -

## \$13 Billion Spending Cuts **To Bill Clinton**

By BOB DOLE WASHINGTON — President Clinton won big headlines on March 28 with his proposal to cut \$13 billion from four government agencies during the next five years. I've learned just recently maybe \$8 billion of that is already in the president's budget, so I'm not cer-tain what the figure really is. But we certainly welcome the presi-dent's interest in trimming govern-ment spending. The Washington Post even suggested recently that the president's interest may be re-lated to last November's election results. Certainly, we hope he's hearing the message. By BOB DOLE

hearing the message. Now, the president has a real op-portunity to get on the spending cuts bandwagon. The Senate will consider more than \$13 billion in spending cuts, and the American people won't have to wait five years to see the savings. These are cuts in this fiscal year — this is \$13 billion the government won't be able to spend during the next six months, not the next five years.

The American people want more than tinkering around the edges.

they want dramatic results, and they want better use of their tax dollars, starting now. The American people sent a loud and clear message to Washington last November: Rein in the federal government, reduce the size of government, and cut spending. Senate Republicans are prepared to pro-vide the leadership once again to turn that message into action.

### **Clinton Proposal Misses the Point**

By BOB DOLE

March 16, 1995 not a problem. You don't look old. You don't act old.'" at for reinvening curve on the food and drug regulations. I want to welcome President Clinton to the regulatory reform debate. Easing the burdens of compliance is a welcome first step, but misses the point that real reform means getting rid of unnecessary and over-

the ultimate authority figure for a Republican of Dole's generation -granted him permission. Notice fits After a week of trying to keep up with Dole, I do not doubt his stamina. But his health could be an is-sue. He was operated on for On the other, he sent his adminis-prostate cancer at the end of 1991. trator of EPA to Capitol Hill last The senator insists that there have week to denounce our common been no flare-ups and plans to re-lease his medical records. His level 20 years of environmental protecof candor about the operation has tion" and to reel off wild horror sto-

for the most part, by not serving in the military? "Hopefully, nothing," was Dole's immediate response, before adding a little more pensively, "but it is something you never forget." He ruminated for a moment on last year's D-Day anniversary — "Some of those kids learned more about their fathers or grandfathers about their fathers or grandfathers in a two-day trip than they ever had in their lives" — but then backed off, as if afraid of too much introspection.

"Senator, why should you be president?"

"I think I fit the job description," he said. "People want someone who's been tested. I'm still close to people in my home state, my home town. They hope I haven't lost my compass around here. Conservative. Right-wing conservative. But hopefully, sensitive to the needs of some people who are never going to make it."

There, in a few words — and al-most no verbs — is the political essence of Dole. No sweeping vision, no clarion call to a shining city on no clarion call to a shining city on the hill, no sounding the ideological trumpets. (Campaign slogan: "Bob Dole, a pretty good president"?) It's not exactly Bush redux, but lis-tening to Dole, I was struck by the generational pairing of these two Republicans. The dynamic of the '88 campaign stressed their social-class differences. Now I realize they could have been buddies in the same platoon — the preppy and the same platoon — the preppy and the farm kid — serving under John Wayne in a World War II movie. Wayne in a World War II movie. On a snowy Saturday morning, Capitol Hill was as empty as Dole's home town of Russell, Kan. Walk-ing past the Senate office buildings named in honor of Richard Rus-sell, Everett Dirksen, and Phil Hart, I realized that Dole had been in the Senate with all three of them. Dole is at a stage in life when he should be resting on his achievements, burnishing his legacy with a final stint as majorachievements, burnsning his legacy with a final stint as major-ity leader in hopes that someday his name, too, will be inscribed on buildings. Why does he want to spend his midseventies in the White House, wrestling with a job that has become a political Book of Ich?

It's hard to pinpoint the precise moment when Dole realized that it wasn't yet over for him. At a fare-well dinner for Bush, just before Clinton's inauguration, Dole was

was deserted. Dole, in an armchair, surrounded by nondescript scenes of Kansas fields that he can identify by county, began to talk

about the notion that, in light of his age, he might make a one-term pledge. "Some say 'You'll be a lame duck on day one'; others say it's courageous. I think if you had a strong vice president . . ." Then Dole, unprompted, brought up the most obvious trophy veep, Colin Powell. He makes a point of saying that while they haven't spoken on

the subject, Powell does have a "nice house." The conversation shifted to Richard Nixon. Dole was Republican chairman during Watergate ("It was my night off" is a joke he's been telling for 20 years), until Nix-on fired him for suspected disloyalthe young guys in your party are electing to spend more time with their families rather than face you, ty, replacing him with George Bush. Later Dole would describe Carter, Ford, and Nixon as "see no evil, hear no evil, and evil." But as

You don't have to delve too far into psychobiography to know that Dole yearned for Nixon's approval. "He always thought I'd be a good president," Dole says. Nixon, in fact, wrote Dole about the 1996 campaign shortly before he died. ish the job.

Russell

been remarkable, and in our inter- ries that are an obvious misreading view, Dole talked about the afteref- of what we are trying to do.

fects of the surgery, openly using the taboo "I-words": Impotence and incontinence. He confided, "I never had any incontinence. The impo-regulators "to go over every single tence thing takes a while. That's regulation and cut those regu-treatable. I think when they say lations which are obsolete." only 10 percent have that problem, President Clinton's proposal

they're not leveling with the doesn't meet that test — his pro-American male."

American male. His daughter, Robin, says that since the cancer, her dad has been more at peace. Even The New York Times has discovered the "mellow" Bob Dole. And this time around in the last humah

around — the last-hurrah cam-paign he never thought he'd wage — Dole, of all people, does seem ready to relax. And when most of that won't require fines for not checking the right box, regulations that don't define all farm ponds as wetlands and regulations that won't create significant burdens for small businesses and communi-

Americans are demanding that we get government off their backs we get government off their backs and the old Bob Dole always sur-faced to self-destruct. How mellow can Dole be when, like Bush in the back by eliminating unnecessary regu-lations and applying some common sense before enacting regulations can Dole be when, like Bush in 1988, he's haunted by that missing line on his resume? His hero, Ike, started the chain of World War II presidents, and 50 years after V-E Day, the last survivor wants to fin-to work with us to pass meaningful regulatory reform.

why not relax? Of course, there have been pura eulogist at Nixon's funeral last veyors of the new Bob Dole theory spring, Dole wept for his genera-tion a second time.

