

IF YOU'RE VACATIONING IN NEW Hampshire this week, be sure to stop at Lake Winnepesaukee. Its water is cool, its shore rustic. The wildlife is remarkable. If you're lucky, you even may catch a glimpse of a threatened species. He's migratory, hunts alone, stands six feet tall with dark brown eyes and an adder-sharp tongue: a Republican front runner. Approach cautiously. He's in a bad mood.

For Bob Dole, penance for not winning last week's Iowa straw poll is a "working vacation" in New Hampshire while pundits cluck about how his victory is no longer inevitable. Dole always knew that; he's had more than his share of disappointment in three losing national campaigns since 1976. But this was supposed to be a final week to luxuriate. Instead, he's losing altitude in national polls, and traipsing through a suddenly thickened schedule of picnics, coffees and boat rides while his wife, Elizabeth, tries in vain to guard his time.

Like a chill wind at the end of summer, the Iowa results were a harbinger of the harsh political winter to come. Next door to his Kansas home, Dole settled for an embarrassing first-place tie with Phil Gramm, with only 24 percent of the vote. TV talking-head Pat Buchanan ran a close third. The vote-buying free-for-all may have been cynical, but the messages were clear. Fervent conservatives control the grass roots—and Dole has trouble connecting with them. He is a cool legislative tactician with decades of seniority at a time when GOP voters want red-meat rhetoric, not résumés. He is garlanded with endorsements—he raced around the country last week to pick up more—at a time when voters aren't in a mood to take anybody's word for anything. At 72, Dole faces younger rivals who understand better than he does "message driven" campaigning, the messianic ardor of the new GOP faithful—and everyone's yearning for an outsider.

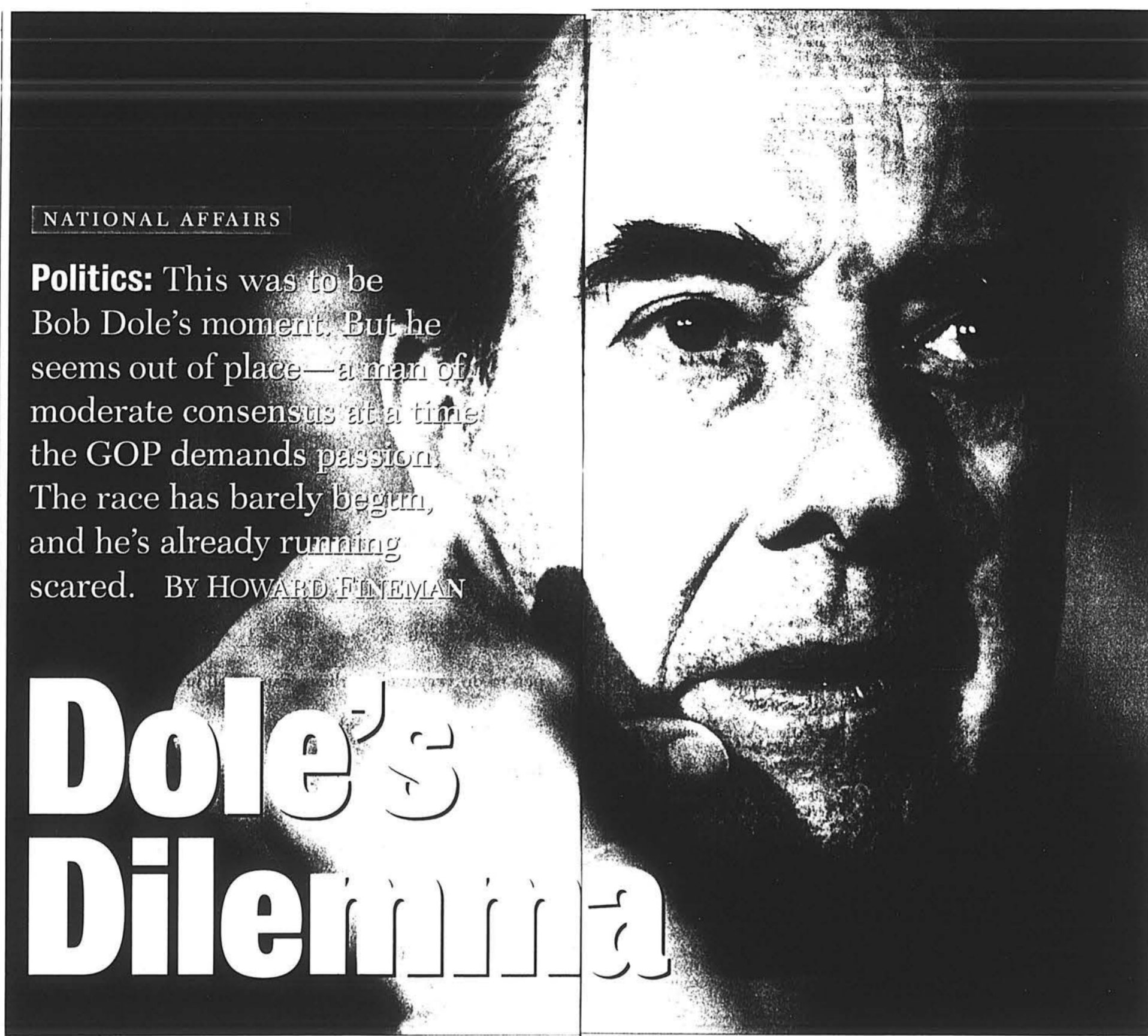
In recent weeks, Dole's campaign has stumbled whenever he's ventured beyond his familiar Senate lair. Speaking at a GOP national meeting in Philadelphia in July, he was all too candid. "I'm willing to be another Ronald Reagan," he said, adding, "if that's what you want." The line, startling to reporters and delegates alike, made beliefs sound like a suit of clothes. Then, at Ross Perot's gathering in Dallas in August, Dole bombed with a meandering, unfocused speech that sometimes sounded more like a legislative briefing than the call to arms the anti-Washington Perotians wanted to hear.

Dole's aides are churning out spin that must sound depressingly familiar to a boss with so much experience in national politics. In Philadelphia and Dallas, aides said,

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Politics: This was to be Bob Dole's moment. But he seems out of place—a man of moderate consensus at a time the GOP demands passion. The race has barely begun, and he's already running scared. BY HOWARD FINEMAN

Dole's Dilemma



Dole had not used a TelePrompTer. He would from now on. Iowa, they claimed, was a blessing because it lowered expectations—a classic spinmeister line. Campaign staff had been lazy: locals had let them down. No one had bunched Dole's supporters in the hall for maximum effect. There was even "wrong ink" spin. Every straw-poll voter's hand was supposed to have been marked with indelible ink. Washable markers were used instead. Delegates rubbed it off and voted twice—only for other candidates, of course.

None of this mollified Dole. When he left the stage after speaking to straw-poll voters in Ames, he was full of steely anger. "What's happening out there?" he snapped. "Where is everybody?" He grew even angrier, but remained tight-lipped, when aides gave him the bad news that he might not win. On TV the next morning, Dole was a model of avuncular self-control, having been warned by his advisers not to lapse into the bitter "Old Dole." But behind the scenes there were no smiles. At the Marriott in Des Moines, a solemn Dole held court in his suite as aides trooped in to offer their abject apologies. "It wasn't your fault," said one top campaign official. "The campaign let you down." The candidate raised his eyebrows in mock surprise. "You're right," he said curtly.

Private pleas: Now the Dole camp may be only one misstep away from the kind of shake-ups he has engineered in the past. So far, deputy campaign chairman Bill Lacy and campaign manager Scott Reed are safe. But skirmishes are breaking out. Some insiders blamed bad speeches on communications adviser Mari Maseng Will. She and her husband, columnist George Will, are longtime Dole friends. Other old allies, including former GOP chairman Rich Bond and Washington superlobbyist Tom Korologos, were weighing in with private pleas for a tighter operation. Conservative activist Don Devine, a friend frozen out of the campaign, used the Iowa results to argue for a shift to the right—and a role for himself.

But the trouble with Dole is Dole. He conveys the air of a man peeved at having to beg for a job he thinks he deserves—and at having to prove an ideological purity he believes no one can reasonably expect him to have. Through four different decades, Dole has worked his way to the pinnacle of Congress. His ideological record is necessarily mixed. He was conservative before conservative was cool, voting against the creation of Medicare, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Education. But as a GOP leader he brokered deals with Democrats on civil rights, food stamps and tax increases. So next week in Chicago Dole will propose a flat tax

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in an effort to beef up his "message" and capture supply-siders.

Dole has never liked to lay down fixed principles. His natural inclination is to shy away from divisive talk on issues such as abortion, affirmative action or immigration. His diffidence is rooted in his political upbringing in the '50s, a pre-ideological age of consensus. He became a Republican in his hometown, he says, only because the local party was conveniently lacking in talent at the time. He has an understandable aversion to sweeping visions and warlike rhetoric. Ideology can start wars, and can

kill—as he learned when he was wounded in World War II.

Dole faces a fundamental dilemma. If he doesn't tack right, he may lose Iowa next February—and the ball game. But if he does move right, he'll be less able to move legislation in the Senate, where Democrats can slow things down and make him look ineffectual. And even if Dole could somehow transform himself into an eloquent ideologue, he would jeopardize his mainstream appeal as a sober, tested leader for the general election. "I admire him, but he can't do it all," says Buchanan, rival and friend.

Nor can Dole play the outsider in an era when voters' yearning for one keeps increasing. After 35 years in Washington, he is comfortable in a world circumscribed by his Senate office, his Watergate apartment and a table in a back alcove of the Galileo restaurant on 21st Street. His real vacations are quick trips to The Sea View condominium in Bal Harbour, Fla., where he lounges around the pool with Washington cronies such as Robert Strauss, David Brinkley and Howard Baker. It's a long way from sunning at The Sea View to gladhanding at Lake Winnepesaukee—but for Bob Dole there is no turning back now. ■



In happier days: Bob Dole with his first wife, Phyllis, in 1968; Pete Wilson divorced with first spouse, Betty, in 1981



AP (LEFT), BARRY FITZSIMMONS—SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE

Divorce, Republican Style

SEE NORMAN ROCKWELL paintings everywhere in the fabric of our families and in our country." Sen. Phil Gramm declared in his speech at Ross Perot's Dallas convention in August. Everywhere, perhaps, but in the Republican presidential field. Gramm's first wife filed for divorce in 1969, citing "excesses and cruel treatment." California Gov. Pete Wilson, whose new TV spot calls family "the foundation of our society," split with his first spouse in 1981 and married the ex-wife of another San Diego lawyer. In 1971, Bob Dole, currently working on a welfare-reform bill to "strengthen families," left a teenage daughter and the wife who had nursed him through his grievous war wounds. Newt Gingrich, still flirting with a run, dumped his first wife in 1980—showing up to discuss the terms of divorce in

her hospital room as she recovered from cancer surgery. Are they hypocrites? Voices at both ends of the political spectrum think so. James Carville, a Clinton adviser, excuses Gramm and Wilson because they didn't leave children when they walked. But he's already test-marketing sound bites to answer Republicans who might revisit old infidelity allegations against Clinton. "It's the president's daughter who is growing up in a two-parent house," Carville says. The Wanderer, a conservative Catholic newspaper, charges that Dole's profamily message seems hollow. But the truth is that politicians get a pass from most voters on divorce. Despite growing evidence of its devastating effects (long-term emotional problems for children, a steep decline in living standards for many women), divorce re-

mains conspicuously absent from the presidential family-values debate. One reason is that it's too close to too many homes: divorce rates more than doubled between 1960 and 1982. One of every two marriages now fails. This has made a once daunting campaign obstacle ("Can a Divorced Man Be Elected President?") Look magazine asked about Adlai Stevenson in 1952) a nonissue, except on the fringes—or if a candidate with a past gets holier-than-thou. That's why Republicans try to follow Ronald Reagan's example. His second wife became First Lady in 1980, and Reagan rarely lectured the middle class on its family values. The Reaganesque solution is to take on social ills that most of the mainstream still regards as comfortably distant (and nonwhite), like out-of-wedlock births. One leading

conservative who raised divorce in the past is backing away as the election nears. William Bennett, who told the Christian Coalition in 1994 that divorce was an enormous threat to children—far greater, Bennett said, than even the gay-rights movement—declined last week to discuss broken homes, saying he preferred to focus on rap music. Don't look for Clinton to deny high divorce rates. Women's groups key to the Democratic Party's base backed passage of no-fault divorce laws in the 1960s and '70s. They also regard divorce as one important avenue of escape from abusive relationships. And Clinton has his own problems. Biographer David Maraniss describes a 1981 scene where the future president sings an odd lullaby to 1-year-old Chelsea: "I want a div-or-or-or-orce." Even a lot of marriages that stay together aren't exactly Rockwellian. BILL TURQUE

Dole to fight for English, 'good' history

By The Associated Press
INDIANAPOLIS — Declaring that the government must "end its war on traditional American values," Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole told the American Legion convention Monday that English must be recognized as the country's official language.

Opening his fall presidential campaign, Dole promoted a constitutional amendment banning the desecration of the U.S. flag, and he protested proposed national history standards that he said belittle Western culture. Dole declared that the language, history and

values that hold the country together "are under attack from our government and from intellectual elites who seem embarrassed by America."

Dole said insisting that all citizens are fluent in English is an act of inclusion and would combat divisive forces in the country.

Later, in Ottumwa, Iowa, Dole previewed a speech he plans to give Tuesday on taxes, pledging to "get rid of the IRS as we know it."

"We're going to have a flatter, fairer and simpler tax," he said.

Dole warned, however, that proposals for a flat tax could shift the burden to the middle class and urged his audience to "take a hard look at those things that sound so good."

Campaigning in GOP presidential rival Sen.

Dick Lugar's home state of Indiana, Dole: Declared that "Western tradition and American greatness must be taught in our schools. And the federal government must end its war on traditional American values."

Assailed affirmative action, saying, "Instead of making things better, it has made things worse." He pledged to keep pressing for legislation to bar the government "from ever using quotas, set asides or other race-based preferences in any form."

Blamed liberal, academic elites for a proposed Smithsonian Institution exhibit on dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima at the end of World War II. "Somehow the Japanese were painted not as the aggressors, but as the victims of World War II," he said.



Dole