

THE LOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL Tuesday, September 5, 1995 / 3-A

Dole attacks 'embarrassed-about-America-crowd'

By ANTHONY JEWELL
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 American 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 be 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 today 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. "It's time we get rid of the present tax code."

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

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Sen. Bob Dole, R. Kan.

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. Calling the exhibit a "debacle," Dole said it was time for the "embarrassed-about-America-crowd to get the message too: We're proud of our country."

■ Vowed to bring before the Senate this fall a proposed constitutional amendment to ban desecration of the flag. The Senate hasn't considered the measure. But the House overwhelmingly approved an amendment in June to overcome Supreme Court rulings that said flag burning can be a protected form of political expression.

Dole said proposed national history standards, initially developed under the Bush administration to improve educational performance,

slight George Washington, Thomas Edison and the Constitution.

"The first time the Constitution is mentioned, it is blamed for sidetracking the movement to end slavery," he said. "If you're a student after years of that, would you love America?"

The history standards, drafted by a panel at the University of California-Los Angeles, met with extensive criticism when released last year. In January, the Senate approved 99-1 a resolution asking government agencies to reject the proposed guidelines because they portrayed Western culture in an unflattering light.

The guidelines are being reviewed and revised by an independent panel. The Education Department has said whatever criterion is established will be voluntary and it will be up to states to set their own standards.

A2 Thursday, September 7, 1995 The Salina Journal



House Speaker Newt Gingrich (right) huddles with House Majority Leader Dick Armey (second from right) and Senate Majority Whip Trent Lott during Wednesday during a Capitol Hill news conference that included Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole.

GOP leaders say public on their side

Protecting Medicare, budget top priorities

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Asserting that the people are on their side, Republican congressional leaders pledged Wednesday to pursue their balanced-budget, tax-cut agenda and defied President Clinton to oppose them.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas and House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, joined by other top Republicans, listed their party's premier priorities for the fall as balancing the budget in seven years, protecting Medicare from the bankruptcy its trustees have predicted, revamping welfare and providing tax cuts for families and business. For each, they told reporters, polls show overwhelming public support.

Dole said Clinton can either be a "roadblock" or "seize the opportunity to join the American people and the Republican Congress in steering our government in sort of a revolutionary direction."

"I'm going to stick with my position," Clinton fired back, telling re-

porters that it would be the GOP's fault if a clash over priorities resulted in an autumn shutdown of nonessential government services. Clinton has proposed balancing the budget in nine years with smaller reductions in Medicare, Medicaid and other programs than Republicans have proposed, and less generous tax cuts.

The rhetorical exchange marked the beginning of what is likely to be a long, contentious autumn of budget conflict between Republicans and Clinton. Republicans are eager to deliver on promises of a smaller government that can balance its books, while Clinton wants to be seen as fiscally responsible yet compassionate.

The one area where GOP leaders offered an olive branch was on Medicare, which provides health insurance for the elderly and disabled.

Dole and Gingrich said Clinton should join them quickly in seeking a bipartisan accord for shrinking the program's projected growth.

"We are open at any point the president would like to sit down and talk about saving Medicare to having that conversation," Gingrich said.

The remarks came as lawmakers resumed work after an August recess, with the House debating a bill financing Congress' own operations and the Senate approving legislation mapping defense programs for next year.

Members of both parties spent the time off seeking public support for their competing positions on Medicare reductions.

Although most Republicans said their constituents supported their position, the plea by Gingrich and Dole for bipartisan work on Medicare suggested that the GOP fears voter retaliation if it is blamed for trimming the program too deeply. Gingrich attributed that reaction to the Democrats' "Medicare" public relations campaign.

Republicans have proposed cutting \$270 billion from the expected growth of Medicare over the next seven years, but have yet to unveil legislation showing how they would do it. They say they want to save the program from the insolvency its trustees say would otherwise occur in 2002; Democrats say the cuts are designed to provide money for GOP tax reductions for the rich and business.

With so many issues in play,

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said it was "not an unreasonable prediction" that the budget clash could last until Christmas. He said Clinton would rather keep the government running with short-term, temporary spending measures than sign GOP spending bills, many of which would shrink programs Clinton favors.

On Wednesday, the House debated a measure providing \$2.2 billion for the legislative branch for next year, \$200 million less than this year.

The bill cuts 2,600 congressional staff positions, eliminates the Office of Technology Assessment and moves to privatize such services as the House barber shop and beauty parlor.

It must be approved by the Senate before being sent to Clinton, who has threatened to veto it because he says lawmakers should not be paid when much of the government faces a shutdown.

The Senate voted 64-34 for a measure allowing \$265 billion in defense programs next year, \$7 billion more than Clinton wants. House-Senate bargainers must now reach a compromise on the bill.

A4 Thursday, September 7, 1995 The Salina Journal

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Editorial Opinion

Dole Suck-up Watch 12

America doesn't need an 'official' language

In a different era, in a nation dominated by a different mood, Bob Dole's embrace of the movement to make English the "official" language of the United States might be a good idea.

As the senator — and presidential candidate — rightly says, the ability to speak English is an important tool, maybe the most important, in every immigrant's push to make it in American society. And that is what the vast majority of them want. Otherwise, they wouldn't have come.

A common language is a binding thing that allows us all to communicate in the public sphere, hopefully in civil tones, no matter what other languages we may speak at home.

But this is not a different era, or a different mood. This is a nation that is increasingly and ominously forgetting its roots as a nation of immigrants and making far too many noises to blame the newcomers for our home-grown problems.

Dole, following the advice of the late Richard Nixon to the letter, is peddling as fast as he can to the right of the Republican Party — which is awfully far right these days — in order to win its presidential nomination.

One way to suck up to the right wing these days is to be nasty to immigrants. It is the basis of Pat Buchanan's campaign, and California Gov. Pete Wilson has built his platform on an anti-immigration foundation that pretends it will be easy to sort the legal immigrants from the illegal ones.



Dole

This is politics, not policy.

Not only has the prime strength of America always been its ability to attract hard-working, up-and-coming people from all over the world, the fact is that immigrants today are responsible for very little of what is wrong with America.

If it were possible to seal off our nation's borders tonight, to exclude every energetic Korean or desperate Mexican, even to instantly transport every illegal immigrant and his family back to the country of their origin, we would not have solved one major problem.

Besides, it is simply too late. America is already a nation of nations, and everyone who is here must be allowed, encouraged, to participate, even if it means translating official documents into a Tower of Babel.

There was a day when people could function in our culture by pointing, grunting and putting their backs into manual labor. No more. Things are too complicated. There are too many forms to fill out.

In the San Francisco Bay area, for example, volunteers are sought for a program that helps immigrants fill out their income tax forms. They need people who speak Spanish, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Shanghaiese, Japanese, Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, Polish, Italian and Tagalog (a language spoken in Indonesia and the Philippines.)

Confusing? Yes. But would we rather excuse all these people from paying taxes?

America needs a leader who will pull us together, not split us apart. Today, that means avoiding any appearance of trying to exclude any group of immigrants by excluding something as basic to every human being as their language.

Dole's bravery goes up in smoke

You can't say that Bob Dole doesn't inhale.

It wasn't that long ago that Dole won a lot of attention, and not a little admiration, by traveling into the heart of darkness to condemn Hollywood for all the blood, sex and nastiness that flows from its movie and recording studios.

But when Dole visited the heart of tobacco country the other day, that into-the-belly-of-the-beast bravery went up in a puff of smoke.

Making a campaign appearance at a South Carolina stock car track, Dole spoke out against the Clinton administration's proposals to limit cigarette advertising. He got a big hand.

That is a hot-button issue at the Southern 500 and elsewhere around the South because cigarette pushers are the prime sponsors of racing events, tours and teams. Any seri-

ous limitations on cigarette advertising at sporting events — where they are doubtless aimed at recruiting new smokers among young sports fans — would hit the auto racing culture the hardest.

One might think that Dole, as concerned as he is about the pollution of young minds by the entertainment industry, would be as concerned about the pollution of young bodies by the tobacco industry.

Nope. Dole knows that bashing Hollywood fits his kowtow to the right agenda while really affecting only a few people. Bashing cigarettes would hit too many people where they live.

After all, to point out that a major industry that provides thousands of jobs and counts millions of addicts is bad for us takes something called leadership.

At least on this issue, that is something Bill Clinton displays and Bob Dole does not.