



Sen. Bob Dole and his wife, Elizabeth, greet supporters during a visit to the Kansas State Fair on Sunday.

The Associated Press

## Dole: Powell open to scrutiny

### Gingrich won't run, senator says

By LEW FERGUSON  
The Associated Press

HUTCHINSON — Sen. Bob Dole said Sunday retired Gen. Colin Powell "obviously would be a worthy opponent" in the Republican presidential race, but indicated he thinks Powell may have difficulty deciding to enter politics.

Dole also dismissed a suggestion that House Speaker Newt Gingrich would mount a formidable challenge for the GOP nomination if he decided to run.

"He's not going to run, anyway," Dole said of Gingrich.

Dole, the Senate Majority Leader, told reporters during a news conference at the Kansas State Fair he considers Powell "an outstanding person."

"I think he really has to make

a decision whether he really wants to get into politics. It's a little different than being in the Army. You don't give orders in politics; you take a lot of questions.

"It's a different life and you have to be committed and you have to understand where you are on the issues because whatever happens ... as soon as he announces, if he's a Republican, people who are Democrats won't like him; if he's a Democrat, people who are Republicans won't like him."

Dole also said that as soon as Powell reveals his positions on such issues as abortion and agriculture "he'll lose people."

"I imagine he's heard of target practice but not (agriculture) target prices," Dole said. "So it's his decision to make."

Dole also rejected a call by Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, one of his rivals for the Republican nomination, to sign an anti-

abortion pledge put forth by the Christian Coalition, which most of the GOP candidates addressed during a convention in Washington over the weekend.

"I'll make my own decisions on issues and they'll not be dictated by Phyllis Schlafly, who is a Gramm supporter, or Mr. Gramm himself."

Asked whether he had a timetable for deciding whether he would sign the pledge to support a GOP platform plank calling for a constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion, Dole replied, "I don't think it's even relevant. I've got a good record. If people can't rely on that, then signing a pledge wouldn't make any difference."

Dole became irritated with reporters who pressed him on the issue of returning a \$1,000 contribution to the Log Cabin Club, an organization of gay Republicans, when he has not returned some contributions from

entertainment companies he has criticized for financing violent movies, television programs and rap music.

"They have a specific agenda which I do not subscribe to," Dole said of the Log Cabin Club. "I don't know who all contributes to my campaign. But if it's somebody with a special agenda we're not going to accept their money."

He said some of the money coming from Hollywood dated to 1972 and noted his foundation had returned \$50,000 to Time Warner, one of the main targets of Dole's criticism.

"I don't believe in discrimination in any form, whether it's lifestyle, disability, race, ethnic background or gender," Dole said. "But they (Log Cabin) have a different agenda; we don't agree with them."

When a reporter tried to press the issue further, Dole would take no more questions on it.

## DOLE IS HITTING CLINTON WHERE IT DOESN'T HURT

The warning lights are flashing, the Presidential candidate intones grimly. American economic growth is slowing; the leading indicators are falling. Worse, wages have dropped—"the worst performance in eight years." And the incumbent President seems only too willing to tolerate slow growth, conceding, according to the challenger, that "America's economy has hit a glass ceiling."

Walter Mondale, trying to unseat Ronald Reagan in 1984? Or maybe Michael S. Dukakis in 1992, struggling to beat George Bush?

**ODD MESSAGE.** No. Those dire warnings come from Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole in the first major economic speech of his Presidential campaign. Addressing the Economic Club of Chicago on Sept. 5, front-runner Dole found himself on unfamiliar ground. A Republican traditionalist who has always backed fiscal austerity, Dole was now attacking a Democratic President for accepting subpar economic growth. It was an unlikely message coming from Dole, but one that is likely to be repeated often in the months ahead.

Dole's broadside illuminates the key strategic task facing the GOP: How can the opposition party out an incumbent President when the economy is growing and inflation appears vanquished? Despite the second-quarter pause, gross domestic

product has grown at a 3.3% annual rate under Clinton—topping even President Reagan's eight-year average of 2.8%. "Dole blames Clinton for a mediocre recovery," notes former Reagan adviser William A. Niskanen Jr., "but the mediocre part was on Bush's watch." With most forecasters predicting resumed growth, Repu-



**TOUGH SELL:** Economic discontent may be rare come Election Day

cans may have a tough time finding pockets of economic discontent on Election Day.

GOP candidates hope to stir the pot by charging that Democrats are stifling growth. In a GOP Administration, Dole declares, "3% growth should be a floor, not a ceiling."

The candidate promises to unleash the nation's entrepreneurs by slashing regulation, balancing the budget, and requiring that future tax increases receive a three-fifths "supermajority" in Congress. Dole also offers a vow to scrap "the whole twisted wreck of federal tax law" in favor of a flat-tax system.

Not to be outdone, Dole's competitors are vying for the mantle of Entrepreneur-in-Chief. Senator Phil Gramm (R-Tex.) promises that he will spell out his flat-tax proposal in detail, including capital-gains and inheritance-tax relief, when he delivers his economic manifesto on Sept. 11 in Detroit. America Firster Pat Buchanan proposes stiff tariffs on Japanese and Chinese goods in order to bolster American manufacturing. And California Governor Pete Wilson says that he will cut taxes and spending so that "America's entrepreneurs will bring our nation roaring into the 21st Century."

**NO TEFLON.** But the GOP candidates are playing with fire. The "glass ceiling" that Dole decries is imposed not by Clinton econoids but by productivity growth. The U.S. can't grow much faster for long, most economists believe, without igniting inflation. One of the most influential enforcers of that view: Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, a GOP stalwart who owes his likely reappointment next year to pressure from Dole's Senate Republicans. The only safe way to boost long-term growth is to raise workers' efficiency. But the GOP hasn't yet found the philosophers' stone to make gold out of a 20-year history of slow productivity growth.

Clinton's economic record isn't Teflon-coated. Wages have slumped in the past two years, while mergers and downsizing have undermined job security for the middle class. That could be enough to make voters receptive to GOP rhetoric. But to exploit that opening, Republican candidates will have to offer more economic details—and hope the numbers don't keep going against them.

By Mike McNamee in Washington

## Dole's confidence is bad — and that doesn't look good

By JOHN SEARS  
Special to the Los Angeles Times

For those other Republican candidates for president, the recent performance of Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas must have provided a ray of hope.

Inside the Beltway, it is difficult to find anyone who doesn't believe that Dole has the nomination wrapped up. After his recent actions, however, it is obvious he doesn't think so. As long as he exhibits a lack of confidence on this, there are plenty of ways for him to lose.

Several weeks ago, Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas tied Dole in a straw ballot in Iowa. The whippers in Washington were that Gramm probably won narrowly, but with the vast majority of influential Republicans in the state



Sen. Bob Dole

aligned behind Dole, those counting the votes called it a tie.

Straw ballots don't mean anything in the real world. In this one, everyone paid \$25 to vote, and people from out of state were allowed to participate, so any sane reading of the results would have indicated to Dole there was no cause for alarm.

But Dole's fear of the Christian Coalition knows no bounds. Earlier this year, he and his wife changed their church affiliation to a more fundamentalist congregation; more recently, Dole denounced Time Warner for the ungodly nature of some records it produced.

So none of us should have been surprised when, reflecting on the results of the straw poll, he returned a contribution he had received from a gay political action committee, declared himself an advocate of making English the official language of the United States and switched from deficit hawk to supply-side booster.

The "third senator from Iowa," as he likes to be referred to, doesn't seem convinced he is well-regarded there.

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Sears, a political analyst, served as campaign manager for Ronald Reagan in 1976 and 1980.

The Kansas City Star J-5

## DOLE

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None of this would matter much except that now that summer has past, voters in the primary states will begin to get serious about what they should do next year. Dole has gone out of his way to tell them they should at least take a look at the others in the race.

Perceptions are more important than facts in politics, and the perception Dole created was that he overreacts. This is not a helpful perception about a possible president because we want our presidents to be strong men who see a clear picture and are not distracted by minutiae.

Dole, in a magazine article early this year, claimed it was Richard M. Nixon who taught him his talent for handling issues. "Run to the right until you are nominated," Nixon presumably had said, "and then move to the center." Not bad advice in its day, but if Dole thinks he is implementing this advice by what he is doing, he's crazy.

What Nixon meant (and what he did) was to emphasize during the nomination process those issues he and conservatives agreed on; then, as the election unfolded, move to those on which there was disagreement.

Then there were those matters on which he did not have strong feelings; those could be used to fine-tune his position in the center, or right of center, of the political spectrum. Nixon used to refer to these issues as the "paint our backsides white and run with the antelopes" issues.

But everything Nixon said was something he was willing to stand behind. He was for dealing from strength with the Russians, against the busing of children to achieve racial equality, for putting more conservative judges on the U.S. Supreme Court. He was also for open housing, for black capitalism, for creating a new agency to deal with the environment.

Dole flits back and forth about what he's for until the conclusion is hard to escape that he doesn't know what he's for.

Earlier this year, at a GOP gathering, Dole said, "I'll be anything you want me to be; I'll be Ronald Reagan if that's what you want." He may have wished he could be Dwight D. Eisenhower, but he also knew he'd just have to be himself.

Reagan, incidentally, never had any of these problems. He was for you, or against you, and you could count on it. But even if he was against you, he found ways to make you feel comfortable.

Certainly no advocate of the gay agenda in the late 1970s, he campaigned against an initiative on the California ballot that would have denied gays and lesbians the right to teach in the California education system.

Certainly no advocate of organized labor's agenda, he received the votes of millions of working-class Democrats who felt he cared about them.

Certainly no fan of the Soviet Union, Reagan politely accepted its surrender.

Reagan never gave back any contributions or apologized for any support. It was always, "They're supporting me, I'm not supporting them" as far as Reagan was concerned. And this was true.

The Constitution doesn't put it this way, but the real power of the presidency is that the president is the representative of all the people. He is the only governmental leader that everyone gets to vote for. He is individual "numero uno" in the land of individuals.

We want our president to have strong beliefs, but we want him to care about all of us. We want him to have preferences, but we don't want him to play favorites. We want him to fight hard, but remain above the battle, as we expect him to make the whole thing work. We want him to be a better human being than we are, someone from whom we can gain confidence. And we want him to set goals for us, goals that come from his mind and experience, not something he read in a poll or decided in an attempt to emulate someone else.

I don't mean to be tough on Dole; he is a man who has given greatly to his country and to the U.S. Congress. He is a decent man who means well and is sympathetic to people in need.

But if he is to be president, he will have to start showing his better side. Nixon used to say, "They don't have to like you if they respect you." Reagan demonstrated that the people would trust you if they like you, even if you weren't on top of all the issues.

It would be nice if we could both like and respect our next president, but looking at all the Republicans running, and at President Clinton, I wonder whether we can expect either.