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Dole ceases efforts to out-Gingrich, out-Gramm his rivals

By JILL LAWRENCE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bob Dole is taking a break from the hell-raiser competition that has dominated both Capitol Hill and the Republican presidential contest. The race to out-Gingrich and out-Gramm his rivals is off.

In the past couple of weeks the Senate majority leader has diverged from the party's hard-liners by offering qualified support for the U.S. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and reassuring federal workers their holidays would not be disrupted by another government shutdown.

Dole chalked up his decision on President Clinton's Bosnia mission to the need for responsible governing. With GOP budget negotiators and presidential candidates still threatening a government shutdown, the

Kansas Republican backed away from his Dec. 2 promise that "it's not going to happen." But the remark revealed his personal and political instincts.

For months Dole and the Senate operated in the shadow of House Speaker Newt Gingrich and his aggressive new Republican majority. Within the Senate itself, Texas Sen. Phil Gramm positioned himself as a Gingrich clone and challenged Dole to match his conservative zeal on issues from abortion to affirmative action to tax cuts.

But Gingrich — once a potential presidential rival — now is so controversial that he can't lower his profile fast enough for some fellow Republicans. His negative ratings are in the 50 to 60 percent range. When an NBC-Wall Street Journal poll asked this month who came to mind as the Republican Party's most

important leader or spokesperson, 33 percent volunteered Dole; 22 percent named Gingrich.

Meanwhile Gramm, whom Dole recently compared to a bug that won't be squashed, dropped from 18 percent to 9 percent support early this month in Iowa, site of the first caucuses. In New Hampshire he is clumped with other contenders in or near the single digits. Dole is well ahead of the field nationally and in both kickoff states.

The majority leader is using the breathing room to set himself apart. His approach may not endear him to conservative GOP primary voters, but it could broaden his appeal to moderates in both parties. His own performance ratings are less than stellar, and polls routinely show him losing to Clinton in a general election.

"The most serious threat to his nomination is the perception that he

can't beat the president," said Steve Wayne, a government professor at Georgetown University. "Why appeal to middle America? To close the gap with the president and make it look like you're electable against him."

Perhaps with that in mind, Dole is already running against Clinton. He declared it a two-man race Friday and went on the air in New Hampshire with an ad that attacks Clinton and doesn't mention his primary opponents.

Dole went soft on the government shutdown during a visit to Greenville, S.C. "Around the holidays isn't the time to be closing down the federal government," he said.

Rich Bond, a senior adviser to the Dole campaign, said Dole isn't the type of person or politician "who wants to spread fear and be divisive. ... It is not his style to go out there and scream about shutdowns and make

people feel afraid or uncomfortable before Christmas."

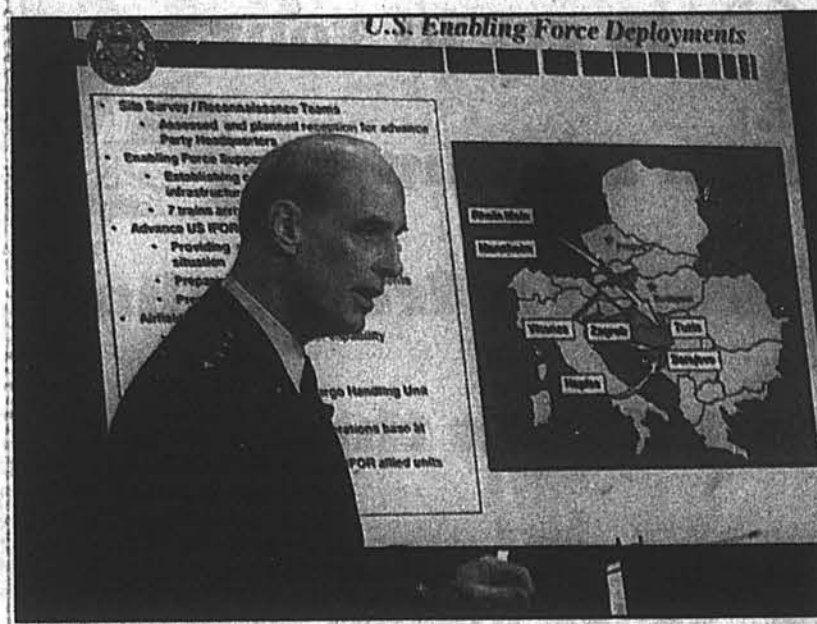
Nor is Dole unaware of the political consequences if Clinton and the Republican Congress can't agree by Friday, their next deadline, on a seven-year balanced budget or a temporary plan to keep the government running.

Clinton's job approval rating was 51 percent in the NBC-Wall Street Journal poll last week; Congress' was only 32 percent. Last month, the Republican Congress got most of the blame for the partial shutdown that idled up to 800,000 people.

Salina, Kansas

December 13, 1995

50 cents



Lt. Gen. Howell Estes, operation directorate of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meets reporters at the Pentagon Tuesday.

Congress debates military's role

Dole wants U.S. to have 'exit strategy'

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With the signing of a Bosnia peace treaty just two days away, Congress opened debate Tuesday on U.S. military involvement and appeared moving toward approval of resolutions backing the troops but condemning the policy.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., predicted lawmakers would reject a House bill denying funding for the deployment and then approve a resolution saying Congress "opposes" President Clinton's decision to deploy U.S.

peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.

Even so, Dole said the Senate was likely to approve a separate resolution he and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., have drafted giving grudging support to the deployment and committing the United States to arm and train the Bosnian military.

Dole said arming and training was the "exit strategy" that would enable U.S. forces to leave Bosnia after one year, as Clinton has promised.

"We don't support the president's decision, but we do support the troops," said Dole. "My view is you have to have an exit strategy."

Senate votes on the resolutions were scheduled for today. The House, which already has twice

STILL OPPOSED

After touring the region, Rep. Todd Tiahrt is against the U.S. mission in the Balkans
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voted against the deployment, was awaiting Senate action before taking up the matter.

Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., urged senators to back the House bill barring use of Defense Department funds for the deployment without approval of Congress.

"I can't believe that when the time for the counting comes, the Congress won't support our troops

in this mission," Clinton said.

Clinton was flying to Paris Wednesday to attend Thursday's signing of the peace agreement negotiated in Dayton, Ohio. The key to implementing the agreement ending nearly four years of ethnic warfare is deployment of 60,000 NATO troops, including 20,000 Americans, as peacekeepers.

Clinton has said the U.S. forces will serve no more than one year and will give the Bosnians, Serbs and Croats a cooling off period and enable peace to take hold.

An advance guard of U.S. troops already is on the ground in Bosnia, and Dole and others have conceded that Congress doesn't have the power to block deployment if Clinton is determined to go ahead.

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BUDGET

Clinton, Dole set 'serious' talks

By DAVID ESPO
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After more than two weeks of false starts, congressional Republicans said Wednesday night that "serious negotiations" toward a balanced budget will begin Friday with the White House and continue uninterrupted through the weekend.

"We have a long way to go, and they have a long way to go," Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, said after a day of discussions that included two telephone conversations between President Clinton and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan.

At the White House, spokesman Barry Toiv said, "we expect serious negotiations on Friday. This is what the president has wanted."

Officials said numerous details remain to be worked out before the talks resume, and the two sides offered differing interpretations.

Several Republicans, speaking on condition of anonymity, said both sides were expected to come to

Friday's session armed with new plans for eliminating annual deficits using Congressional Budget Office forecasts.

"My own view is that on the 22nd, it looks like something is going to happen."

— Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan.

these issues remained to be resolved in preliminary discussions slated for Thursday.

Beyond the procedural concerns, the two sides remain divided by enormous differences over taxes, Medicare, Medicaid and numerous other issues.

Even so, the announcement represented progress, and Republicans, at least, seemed optimistic they were

moving closer to their year-long goal of producing a seven-year balanced budget.

"My own view is that on the 22nd, it looks like something is going to happen," said Dole, referring to a date scarcely more than a week away.

In an additional sign of movement, Clinton met during the day with a bipartisan group of governors for a discussion of Medicaid. Republicans, backed by GOP governors, want to turn the program over to the states with few federal mandates. The president, supported by Democratic governors, favors retaining the current guarantee to health care enjoyed by the poor, disabled and other groups.

Officials said the governors would begin talks among themselves in hopes of finding a way out of the stalemate.

After months of tumult, House Speaker Newt Gingrich said the extended budget battle was nearing its end game. "We owe the American people a balanced budget in the next nine or 10 days, period," the Georgia Republican said. "I don't think the problems are that difficult."

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Two Bosnians make their way through heavy snow Wednesday in Sarajevo.

Hutchinson News Friday, December 15, 1995 Page 9

Dole, McCain rallied support

By Katharine Q. Seelye

WASHINGTON — When Bob Dole argued on the Senate floor 25 years ago against cutting off funding for the Vietnam War, he was wearing a bracelet bearing the name of a U.S. prisoner of war.

On Wednesday night, when Dole, now the majority leader, was arguing on the Senate floor for the need to deploy U.S. troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he announced that the name on his POW bracelet was, by marvelous coincidence, that of John McCain, for the last few weeks his closest senatorial ally on the Bosnian peacekeeping mission.

Dole did not know McCain 25 years ago. And McCain, a Navy fighter pilot held captive from 1967 to 1973, said he learned about the bracelet for the first time Wednesday night.

Dole, for whom memories of war run deep and close to the nerves, was linked to John McCain during an unpopular war 25 years ago, and linked to him again Wednesday in another unpopular cause.

But many admirers in the divided Senate saw their union as a powerful alliance that carried an

unusual degree of moral authority and allowed them to push through support for an unpopular cause.

Dole was once a dirt-poor Army grunt whose right arm was crippled by wounds he suffered in Italy in World War II; McCain is a graduate of Annapolis and the son and grandson of navy admirals.

Between them they built a coalition of fewer than half the Republicans and almost all the Democrats, and put the Senate on record backing deployment of troops ordered, without the consent of the Congress, by the com-

mander in chief.

"The most impressive thing was the World War II-Vietnam link," said Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Nebr., who lost part of a leg in Vietnam and won the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"It's the father-son link. It's coming in and saying, 'We're the ones who were on the side of defending an unpopular war because it is right, and we'll defend an unpopular military effort now because we believe it's right,' and it's hard to beat that."

New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — Only hours before President Clinton departed for the signing of the Bosnian peace agreement in Paris, Sen. Bob Dole sought to ease his mission. He reached back 25 years in history and recalled the furious Senate debates over the Vietnam War and the issue of supporting U.S. troops and their commander in chief.

The Kansas Republican and Senate majority leader presented one of the more arresting moments in the inevitable overlap of foreign policy and domestic politics: Dole, the scarred war hero, considered the front-runner to challenge Clinton in 1996, offering wary backing to a president regularly dogged for not serving in Vietnam.

"Long debates, rancorous debates, heated debates," Dole said Wednesday, recalling Vietnam on a spirited day of dispute over Bosnia. Crafting clauses, sizing up votes, the senator was intent on delivering a qualified Senate blessing to the president's Bosnian initiative. At the same time, he was holding off a significant

bloc of members who were as vocal as the critics in the old Vietnam days in wanting no part of putting 20,000 U.S. troops at risk as peacekeepers in Bosnia.

"We had one debate that lasted seven weeks," he told a chamber that had little more than 12 hours to come to terms with the president's action on Bosnia. "And I was the leader of the effort not to cut off funds because we had people like John McCain in prison," Dole said of the Vietnam war hero and current senator from Arizona. The nation's military, he cautioned in retrospect, should never bear the brunt of unpopular political decisions.

"It was wrong during Vietnam, and it's wrong now," Dole insisted, nudging the Senate toward approval of the Dole-McCain resolution, which would support the president's Bosnian effort but try to reshape it in the name of better protecting the troops and insuring peace by fully arming the Bosnian faction.

The conflict of proposals for and against going to Bosnia presented as much a test of Dole's leadership as the president's. Only weeks from the

formal start of campaigning for 1996, the rivals were, briefly at least, on oddly parallel tracks in a debate that reflected the full range of the public's doubt about the mission.

If nothing else, the debate laid bare the multi-edged domestic politics of the Bosnian issue. Dole carefully drew distinctions with Clinton, saying his Senate resolution insures not just the arms for Bosnia that he had long sought over the president's opposition, but also a more "timely and safe withdrawal" of the troops than Clinton planned.

"Let's be clear: a date is not an exit strategy," Dole declared, even as his primary Republican rival, Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, was setting his sights on Dole.

"I am concerned about the Dole amendment," Gramm said, arguing that arming the Bosnians would only shred U.S. neutrality.

Dole paid no heed. "I've just been on the phone to the president," he told the chamber, trying to hurry the long debate forward and deliver some qualified words of support to Clinton before he reached Paris.