

# Senator Brands Conduct as 'Immoral'; G.O.P. Leader in House Is Also Critical

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WASHINGTON, May 7—Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican leader in the Senate, said today that the transcripts of White House conversations on Watergate portrayed "deplorable, disgusting, shabby, immoral performances" by all who had participated in the conversations.

He did not exclude President Nixon in his evaluation.

Mr. Scott's counterpart in the House, Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, said of the Senator's characterization, "I wouldn't quarrel with it."

He added that while he had not yet seen anything "definitely impeachable" in the thick book of Presidential conversations, "I can see some areas in here where, if you really wanted to do it, you could say this adds up to [an impeachable offense], but I haven't done it myself."

The comments of the Republican Congressional leaders ap-



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Senator Hugh Scott after he discussed the tapes.

peared to signal a retreat from their party's defense of the President and an effort to raise a Republican standard of "moral indignation," in Senator Scott's phrase, against their leader in the White House.

Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois, a liberal Republican,

said, "and I'd add 'shocking' to Mr. Scott's adjectives."

Yet most Republicans distinguished their condemnation of the tone of the White House transcripts from the formal judgment they expect to render on questions of Mr. Nixon's impeachment and removal from office.

Senator John G. Tower of Texas, a conservative Republican, said that the transcripts "show there is a lot of cynicism in the White House, that the President did delegate away a lot of authority—inordinate— and that he was not aware of all that was going on."

Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, said that the transcripts—he said that he had read three-quarters of the more than 1,200 pages—were "very clearly marked by no basic concern with the public's business." But he emphasized that as "one of 100 judges" on any impeachment bill that

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the House might send to the Senate, he was keeping his opinions on the legal issues to himself.

Senator Scott, too, called for a "suspension of judgment" as the impeachment debate continues. But in his brief remarks to reporters, and then on the Senate floor at the start of business this morning, he also implied that such a suspension would mean an end of the broadly supportive role he had played for the Republican President.

"I am not going to take any position supporting any action which involved any form of immorality or criminality as the transcripts indicate," Mr. Scott told the Senate. "I hope that all of us will assume the presumption of innocence, and that we will all withhold our judgment as to specific individuals, pending the operation of our great constitutional system."

In his daily 10 o'clock news conference this morning, Mr. Scott declined to say by whom, specifically, "immoral performances" had been given.

"I mean, by each of those persons according to what he said," the Pennsylvania moderate explained. "The transcripts will have to speak for themselves. They do of me."

Mr. Scott's statement marked

an abrupt change of direction for him. He had previously deplored the Watergate incident, but stoutly reasserted his confidence in Mr. Nixon's innocence. At the same time he pressed the White House all the while to answer its critics by releasing more information.

In January, Mr. Scott declared that the White House had evidence that would make a liar out of John W. Dean 3d, the former White House counsel who accused Mr. Nixon of a knowing role in the Watergate cover-up. Mr. Scott added at the time that the White House had evidence that would "exculpate" the President from key charges and from there on he urged the White House to publish all the information it had.

Today he said, "I am at least relieved that it is out." Yet his aides said that the transcripts sustained the President against Mr. Dean on only one major point: the March 21, 1973, date of the meeting in which Mr. Dean recounted the cover-up details to the President. Robert E. Hetherington, Mr. Scott's press secretary, said that the Senator no longer asserted that the transcripts "exculpate" anybody.

At the White House, Gerald L. Warren, the deputy press

Known in Washington as a nimble master of ambiguity in politics, (SFC 8 May 74 [NYT])

secretary, made no direct rejoinder to Mr. Scott but said:

"I don't feel it's fair to judge the President on 33 hours of conversation dealing with this very difficult subject. We feel he will be judged on the foreign and domestic achievements of this Administration."

Republicans elsewhere were beginning today to react to the large volume of transcripts that the White House released last Tuesday — a volume that few political leaders have read in its entirety and that some officials say they do not intend to read at all.

Gov. Winfield Dunn of Tennessee, chairman of the Republican Governor's Conference, said in Nashville that he was "disappointed in much of the dialogue" but added "they're going to have to show me some more" to prove a violation of the law.