



# How White House 'Toughs It Out'

Joseph Alsop

**W**HAT THE White House means by "toughing it out" is quite simple. Toughing it out is waiting and hoping for a vote against a bill of impeachment in the House of Representatives. And if the House nonetheless votes the bill, it is relying on the Senate not to impeach.

This is far from being unrealistic, moreover, so long as the President does not mind putting the country through the grinder of an attempted impeachment proceeding, with all its attendant risks of many kinds. In fact, there are strong reasons to believe that toughing it out will work for the President — barring the explosion of another fearfully damaging bombshell.

★ ★ ★

**T**O SEE WHY, it is well to begin with a recent, highly significant meeting between the two Republican leaders of Congress, Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and Representative John Rhodes of Arizona. Their topic was the politics of Watergate, as the politics of Watergate now appear in Congress after the senators and representatives have tested the feeling at the grassroots during the recess.

The Scott-Rhodes conclusions were later summed up by the Senate minority leader in his public statement that "history was never kind to regicides." More pri-

vately and in a more down-to-earth manner, Senator Scott has explained his view as follows:

"Most of us on the Republican side agree among ourselves that any Republican casting an anti-Nixon vote in an impeachment proceeding will make permanent enemies of about 30 per cent of his constituents. Except in very few states, that's the pro-Nixon hard core. They will never forgive. They will always want vengeance.

"So a Republican who has earned the enmity of the pro-Nixon hard core will have to look for future majorities among the other 70 per cent of his constituents. And at least five out of seven of them will be pretty partisan Democrats."

★ ★ ★

**T**HESE REMARKS in turn explain the most interesting, least noticed feature of the President's message on the State of the Union. This feature was the remarkable show of solidarity and enthusiasm by the great majority of Republicans in the House chamber.

This meant, as Senator Scott later put it, that "the Democrats are going to have to ask themselves whether they really want an Andrew Johnson-type impeachment, which will look like a straight partisan maneuver to an awful lot of people."