

Disgust Sen. Scott

The Transcripts



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HUGH SCOTT
'Immoral performances'

From Page 1

Scott's phrase, against their beleaguered leader in the White House.

Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois, a liberal Republican, said he would add the term "shocking" to Scott's litany of adjectives.

Yet most Republican 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 possible impeachment and removal from office.

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

Senator Jacob K. Javits (Rep-N.Y.) observed that the transcripts — he said he has now read three-quarters of the more than 1200 pages — were "very clearly marked by no basic concern with the public's business."

But Javits emphasized

Washington

Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania said yesterday that the transcripts of White House conversations on Watergate portrayed "deplorable, disgusting, shabby, immoral performances" by all who participated.

He did not exclude President Nixon.

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

The comments of the Republican Congressional leaders appeared to signal a broad retreat from their party's defense of the President and an effort to raise a Republican standard of "moral indignation," in

Back Page Col. 6

that as "one of 100 judges" on any impeachment bill the House might send to the Senate, he is keeping his opinions on the legal issues to himself.

Scott called for a "suspension of judgment" as the impeachment debate continues.

But in his brief remarks to reporters, and then in remarks on the Senate floor at the start of business yesterday, Scott implied that such a suspension would mean an end of the broadly supportive role he has 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," 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 news conference yesterday, Scott declined to say by whom, specifically, "immoral perform-

ances" had been given.

"I mean, by each of those persons according to what he said," Scott said.

"The transcripts will have to speak for themselves. They do to me," he said.

Scott's remarks marked an abrupt change of direction for him.

Known in Washington as a nimble master of ambiguity in politics, he had heretofore deplored the Watergate incident, but had stoutly reasserted his confidence in Mr. Nixon's innocence — pressing the White House all the while to answer its critics by

releasing more information.

In January, Scott declared that the White House had evidence that would make a "liar" out of John W. Dean III, the former White House counsel, who has accused Mr. Nixon of a role in the Watergate coverup.

Scott said at that time that the White House had evidence that would "exculpate" the President from key charges. From then on Scott had persisted by urging the White House to publish all the information it had.

Yesterday, he said, "I am at least relieved that it is out."

Yet the senator's aides noted that the transcripts sustained the President against Dean on only one major point: the March 21, 1973, date of the meeting in which Dean elaborated the coverup details to the President.

Robert E. Hetherington, Scott's press secretary, said the senator no longer asserts that the transcripts "exculpate" anybody.

At the White House, Gerald L. Warren, the deputy press secretary, made no direct rejoinder to 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."

New York Times, LYDON