Unhappily Yoked?
Hugh Scott and Richard Nixon

According to John D. Ehrlichman, President Nixon’s domestic policy chief, “Hugh Scott and Richard Nixon were unhappily yoked.” That assessment contains some truth. Nixon and Senate Minority Leader Hugh D. Scott, Jr., Republican of Pennsylvania, sometimes disagreed, occasionally sparred, and could hardly be described as confidants. Relations between the White House and the GOP’s top senator seemed strained, with Ehrlichman dismissing Scott as “a rotund, owlish Pennsylvania machine politician.” “I saw more of this hack than I wanted to,” he whined, overlooking Scott’s aristocratic, cultivated background.1 The antipathy was mutual. “They had basically, I think, a disrespect for Congress,” Scott said of Nixon’s staff in 1976.2 According to the senator, their treatment of Congress as “a necessary appendage” became pronounced following the president’s reelection in 1972.3

There is more to this story than Ehrlichman and Scott let on. Watergate’s shadow, darkened by self-serving accounts of participants such as Ehrlichman and on-lookers like Scott, has long obscured our understanding of Nixon’s relations with Congress during the years that preceded it.4

For their insightful comments, the author thanks the journal’s anonymous referees as well as Charles C. Alexander, Dean J. Fafoutis, Gregory C. Ference, Alonzo L. Hamby, and Katherine Jellison. For grants-in-aid of research, he thanks the Caterpillar Foundation, Everett McKinley Dirksen Center, Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation, and Gerald R. Ford Foundation. In preparing this article, he also received assistance from the interlibrary loan staff at Blackwell Library, Salisbury University, and from Kenneth Hafeli, of the Gerald R. Ford Library, who located the photographs.

4 Nixon’s relationship with Congress has not yet received a sound, archivally-based, scholarly treatment, but helpful works include Rowland Evans, Jr., and Robert D. Novak, Nixon in the White

THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
CXXV, No. 3 (July 2001)
written after the scandal portray an administration engaged in an undeclared war with the legislative branch. \textsuperscript{5} "The President won some of these skirmishes and lost others," the historian Stanley I. Kutler contended, "but by 1972, he and Congress viewed each other with mutual animosity." \textsuperscript{6} Recent studies show another Nixon, cooperating with a Democrat-controlled Congress to pass legislation in such areas as civil rights, Indian affairs, social welfare, occupational health and safety, revenue sharing, postal reform, consumer protection, cancer research, mass transit, clean air, and public parks. \textsuperscript{7} Accordingly, the details of Nixon’s relations with Congress, especially its leaders, have assumed greater importance.

Relations between presidents and Senate leaders historically have involved a delicate balance. Presidents prefer to work with leaders of their own party, forgetting that such leaders must tend to constituent pressures and often resent executive-branch encroachments. Senate leaders pick their issues carefully, "usually siding with the[ir] president, but sometimes opposing his programs or seeking modifications." \textsuperscript{8} In 1944, Senator Alben W. Barkley, Democrat of Kentucky, briefly resigned as majority leader after President Franklin D. Roosevelt vetoed a tax bill that Barkley supported. Overall, the FDR-Barkley partnership ran smoothly, as did that of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Senate Majority Leader Robert A. Taft, Republican of


Ohio. Minority Leader Everett McKinley Dirksen, Republican of Illinois, ironically enjoyed friendly relations with Democratic Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson while Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana, did not want senators “simply to become functionaries of the New Frontier.”

Give and take has been the rule in dealings between the White House and Senate leadership.

The relationship between Nixon and Scott, in which a few high-profile disagreements masked large areas of agreement, proved no exception. The two men, occupying the center and left of the Republican Party’s spectrum, cooperated and compromised on such issues as welfare reform and voting rights. Scott generally backed the president’s foreign policy initiatives, including his handling of the Vietnam War. Yet they clashed over Supreme Court nominations, civil rights, and the GOP’s political agenda. Nixon deemed Scott too independent, and the senator at times found the White House heavy-handed. Nevertheless, during the Watergate affair, Scott proved a good soldier, keeping his misgivings about Nixon’s conduct private while defending the president in public.

The Nixon-Scott relationship brought together two men of the same party, but with different public personas, political interests, and institutional duties. The result was both tension and dependency. Although Nixon and Scott were politically yoked, their stances on domestic and foreign issues showed that it was not always an unhappy tethering.

Nixon and Scott forged an uneasy partnership. Politically, Nixon’s constituency, which included conservative white southerners as well as northern liberals, was national, requiring symbolic and policy gestures to both the right and left. Scott’s base, in urban, industrialized Pennsylvania, proved narrower and more inclined to favor federal-inspired programs. The two men remained personally distant, a fact accentuated by Nixon’s approach to congressional liaison and Scott’s conception of his duties as minority leader.

Nixon and Scott had similar backgrounds. They both served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, both men were cold warriors, and both took

---

hawkish positions on Vietnam. Both graduated from modest undergraduate colleges and went on to well-respected law schools (Nixon from Whittier College in California and the law school at Duke University; Scott from Randolph-Macon College in Virginia and the law school of the University of Virginia). Each man seemed well-read. Every year, Nixon consumed “a few good books” as “brain food.” The senator, a Sinophile, collected Asian art, a subject on which he wrote several books, and was familiar with both Greek history and modern philosophy. After a 1969 meeting, Patrick J. Buchanan, a conservative Nixon aide, described Scott as “impressive” and listed his attributes as “soft-spoken, eloquent, reasonable, persuasive.” (One can almost picture the portly Scott, seated, pipe in mouth, with his trademark pencil mustache, thinning hair parted in the middle, and resistance to fashion, e.g. sideburns). Lastly, each man left politics under the cloud of scandal; Nixon endured Watergate while Scott faced charges of accepting illicit contributions from the Gulf Oil Company. Unlike Nixon, however, Scott received official exoneration when the Senate Ethics Committee cleared him of any wrongdoing.

Nixon and Scott wrestled with a divided Republican party. Eastern liberals, such as Scott and Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York, clamored for federal action on such issues as civil rights, public housing, and urban renewal. On the other hand, the party’s right wing, which stressed private initiative and diminished application of federal power, was gaining influence under the leadership of Senator Barry M. Goldwater of Arizona and Governor Ronald Reagan of California. Throughout the GOP’s fractious debates, Nixon preferred to play “the role of party unifier, centrist

moderate, and 'needed voice of sanity.'

Nixon and Scott worried about the growing influence of the GOP’s right wing. Nixon, if less likely than Scott to seek statist solutions, had endorsed federal aid to education and cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security recipients during the fifties and sixties. “Remember John,” Nixon lectured an aide in 1965, “the far right kooks are just like the nuts on the left; they’re door bell ringers and balloon blowers but they turn out to vote. There is only one thing as bad as a far left liberal and that’s a damn right wing conservative.” There was room for cooperation between these two moderate Republicans.

Both Nixon and Scott pursued multilayered agendas. In domestic affairs, the president’s rhetoric tilted to the right more than his policies, making for a schizophrenic course that conservative and liberal purists found hard to follow. He courted southern and suburban whites by, among other things, denouncing “forced integration” of schools. But he also, in response to civil rights advocates, espoused economic gains for blacks via affirmative action and minority business set-asides. His programs fell within the tradition of moderate Republicanism, which saw the small producer as the bedrock of society and used state power—selectively—to enhance equal opportunity and social mobility. Nixon also sought the middle ground knowing that his GOP could not become the nation’s majority party “if either [its] liberal or conservative wings were sliced off.”

If there were many Nixons, there were also many Scotts. The senator’s liberalism was obvious; he endorsed federal efforts to improve the lives of working people and racial minorities, key constituencies in Pennsylvania. Scott had backed such Great Society measures as rent supplements and aid

---

15 Hoff, Nixon Reconsidered, 78.
to model cities and, during 1968, the American Federation of Labor-
Congress of Industrial Organizations graded his support at 100 percent. 20
Between 1948 and 1968, Scott consistently favored the most liberal aspirants
of the GOP presidential nomination. Tepidly backing the 1964 standard-
bearer, Goldwater, he later denounced “the radical rightists who attached
themselves to our party” and cost the GOP “millions of potential
members.” 21 “Let’s be honest, Hugh…” Goldwater protested, “am I the one
you want to get out of the Republican Party? Am I an extremist?” 22 Scott
had to weigh the demands of constituency and conscience against loyalty to
the GOP’s ever-changing leadership.

Conservatives could appreciate another side of the Scott rubric, his acid-
tongued partisanship. A life-long politician, who entitled his memoir I’ve
Been to the Party, Scott won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in
1940. 23 Pennsylvanians elevated him to the Senate in 1958, then narrowly
reelected him in 1964 despite Lyndon Johnson’s landslide margin in the
state. “I hear that you wired my opponent after Election Day that you were
‘praying for a miracle,’” a triumphant Scott wrote LBJ. “May I respectfully
suggest that it has already occurred.” As a member of the GOP’s so-called
Truth Squad he stumped for Nixon in 1960 and 1968 (fig. 1). In 1968, Scott
blasted the segregationist presidential candidate George C. Wallace as “a
menace to everyone,” adding “If he bit himself, he’d die of blood
poisoning.” 24 In 1976, he urged President Ford to peel Democrat Jimmy
Carter “like an onion down to the garlicky inner core.” 25 If less venomous
and more witty than Nixon, Scott too was a political warrior.

As party leader Scott was both ambitious and amiable. Aided by GOP
liberals, who had gained strength in the Senate in 1968, he won the post of
minority whip in 1969, defeating Roman L. Hruska of Nebraska. In so
doing, Scott defied Minority Leader Dirksen, who preferred Hruska, a

20 Mike Manatos to Lyndon B. Johnson, Sept. 19, 1967, White House Central File (WHCF), Name
File: Hugh Scott (Sen.), Lyndon B. Johnson Library (LBJL), Austin, Tex.; “The New Party Whips in
21 UPI Wire Report, Feb. 23, 1965, WHCF, Name File: Hugh Scott (Sen), LBJL.
Additional Papers (#10,200), Scott Papers.
4, 1969, 18.
25 Scott to Robert T. Hartmann, Aug. 9, 1976, folder: Hugh Scott, box 50, Robert T. Hartmann
Files, GRFL.

fellow conservative. Following Dirksen’s death ten months later, GOP senators elected Scott minority leader over Howard H. Baker, Jr., of Tennessee, Dirksen’s son-in-law. Then, in a gesture of unity, Scott accepted from Dirksen’s family a portrait of his predecessor.26 Over time, GOP

senators of all stripes grew to respect Scott as the "affable tiger." Affable was not a term applied to Nixon. There were limits to how amiable Scott and Nixon could be toward each other. Both were politically vulnerable and looked after their own interests first. The president, having received only forty-three percent of the popular vote in the election of 1968, hunted for votes in the white South, telling aides: "That's where the ducks are." Nixon sought support in the Northeast, Midwest, and West as well. Scott's political fate would of course be determined in Pennsylvania, where the unpopularity of Republican Governor Raymond P. Shafer jeopardized the senator's reelection in 1970. Yet at the same time in Washington Scott, aware of his slender triumphs in the Senate as minority whip and leader, by margins of 24 to 20 and 24 to 19, respectively, could not ignore the possibility of a right-wing revolt.

The president, moreover, wanted his programs passed. Scott needed to achieve an acrobatic political performance of Olympian dimensions, bending far enough to the left to appease his black and working-class constituents, pulling close enough to the center to please Republican senators, and demonstrating sufficient loyalty to satisfy Nixon.

Since the president and senator were not confidants, each failed to understand the other's predicament. Nixon marked a 1955 letter to Scott "personal," but it read like boiler-plate, reminding the GOP faithful that "we all have to do our part." In 1968, Scott preferred liberal governors George W. Romney of Michigan and Nelson Rockefeller of New York to Nixon for the presidential nod. The Pennsylvanian distrusted Nixon. "He has the knowledge," Scott told Martin G. Hamberger, an aide, in 1968. "The question is: does he have the wisdom?" The accuracy of that comment, recalled during the unfolding of Watergate, is open to dispute. Yet it helps

explain the divide separating the two men.

Nixon's approach to Congress widened that gulf. Unlike Scott, he had spent just six years in the House and Senate and never became a legislative tactician. At the outset of his presidency Nixon invited Dirksen and House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan to select congressional participants for White House meetings and vowed not to "ride hard" on Republican members to support every administration program. Preoccupied with ending the Vietnam War, Nixon hesitantly entered frays in 1969 over tax reform, the anti-ballistic missile (ABM), and Supreme Court appointments. This laissez-faire stance tempted lawmakers to vote as they wished. In 1971 the president fumed that "we never have these people whom we suck around with all the time," meaning liberals of both parties. Not eager to cajole lawmakers, Nixon told Haldeman that if substantive talks "will do the trick, let's have the substantive talks and to hell with the social events." To enact the president's agenda of liberal and conservative initiatives, congressional liaison chief Bryce N. Harlow followed a "floating coalition" strategy, rallying either Democrats or Republicans according to the issue. But without firm leadership by Nixon those coalitions sometimes drifted away from his preferences.

The president's tactics often proved counterproductive and contradictory. His disavowal of "arm-twisting" did not preclude enlisting White House staffers to press members of Congress. Ehrlichman informed Scott that if a Republican senator refused to vote with the president, Scott should "hit him in the face." Nixon considered fiscal issues to be tests of party loyalty; Republicans who sided with the opposition too often became marked for punishment. In 1970, William E. Timmons, Harlow's successor, reported

33 Robert T. Hartmann, Notes of Meeting with Congressional Leaders, Dec. 16, 1968, and Diary of White House Leadership Meetings—91st Congress, March 11, 1969, box 106, Robert T. Hartmann Papers, GRFL.
34 Nixon to H. R. Haldeman, Nov. 12, 1971, folder: P Memos 1971, box 231, H. R. Haldeman Files, White House Special Files (WHSF), Richard Nixon Presidential Materials (NPM), National Archives (NA), College Park, Md.
36 Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 85-86; Graham, Civil Rights Era, 360-65.
38 Scott Oral History, Oct. 15, 1976, 57, LC; Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 2, GRFL.
that liberal Senator Charles M. Mathias of Maryland had been receiving "deep freeze" treatment, including "no meetings, one line acknowledgment to letters, failure to return calls, etc. in an effort to show him we disapprove of his anti-RN votes." These methods could not be used to the same degree against the minority leader.

Scott's relations with the liaison office mirrored his dealings with the administration: periods of harmony punctured by fleeting complaints. Harlow, who learned the art of executive-legislative branch relations during Eisenhower's administration, met with GOP senators every Tuesday in Scott's office. Correspondence between the two men seemed chatty, even chummy. The minority leader considered Timmons a "friend" and described their relations as "pleasant." Scott's critique of White House-GOP leadership meetings and the White House personnel office involved minor matters. He reminded Nixon to keep his stated schedule of meeting with lawmakers every other Tuesday, and urged "increased dialogue" between the "personnel staff and Hill people" before the president announced his appointments. At the same time, Scott defended his own turf. He objected when the White House tapped other senators to introduce legislation.

In an unpublished paper on Senate leadership, Scott ranked voting his conscience as his highest priority. Serving the Keystone State came second, leading Republican senators third, and pushing administration programs last.

"I cannot subordinate my own conscience nor the welfare of Pennsylvania for what some feel is the tradition of complete, unbending support for the executive department's viewpoints," Scott asserted. By trying to sound like...
Edmund Burke, whom he admired, the minority leader exaggerated his own independence. Scott remembered times when he would vote against the administration on a bill, then vote the other way to sustain Nixon’s veto of the same measure. Overall, however, the senator seemed serious about his duties and realistic concerning his relations with the president.

The president, also a realist, had to cooperate with his Senate leader. Nixon at first welcomed the change from Dirksen to Scott since the former had opposed some of his choices to head federal agencies. White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman found an early meeting with Scott and Ford “productive.” The president thought that the Pennsylvanian would make an “an effective leader” who “can bring the liberals along, where[as] Baker could not have, and we can hold the conservatives ourselves.” Nixon wanted Scott to succeed. The president told Haldeman, in 1970, that the senator should have “a bundle [of bills] to cargo” to help him “protect” his leadership “spot” if Scott won reelection. But Nixon grew dissatisfied with Scott’s independent streak. “The White House always felt that Hugh Scott should be its leader in the Senate,” recalled Eugene Cowen, a one-time Scott aide who worked for Nixon’s congressional liaison staff. In June 1970, H. R. Haldeman noted, Nixon dreamed of gaining three Senate seats “so we can win a vote without sweating it out to the last second” and then “overthrow Scott and maybe get some leadership.” “The present situation really frustrates [Nixon],” he growled, “understandable.” A year later, the president complained that he had received more support from House Minority Leader Ford than from Scott (fig. 2). Nixon and Haldeman failed to understand that power among Senate Republicans was dispersed among several committees, hindering the emergence of a powerful majority or minority leader.

Given his weak leadership position and an uneasy relationship with the

49 Scott to Norman Richardson, April 10, 1974, folder: 1974 Jan.–May Nixon Resignation, box 1, Additional Papers, Scott Papers.
50 Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 3, GRFL.
53 Eugene Cowen, interview by A. James Reichley, Oct. 5, 1977, 5, Reichley Interview Transcripts, GRFL.
54 Quotations come from Haldeman Diary, June 11 and May 18, 1971.
Fig. 2. Hugh Scott and House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford meet with President Richard Nixon in the Cabinet Room, 1971. (Photo, Courtesy Gerald R. Ford Library.)

president, Scott pried few rewards for Pennsylvania from Nixon's White House. The senator's greatest success came in 1969, when the president named one of Scott's protégés, William H. Brown III, an African American lawyer from Philadelphia, to chair the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Yet a year later, Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe "slammed the coffin lid" on a proposed expansion of Highway 219, the north-south artery that bisects central Pennsylvania, which sent the minority leader's staff reeling. The Johnson administration, they seethed,

had spent little to upgrade the commonwealth’s other roadways, making the Pennsylvania Turnpike “the most expensive and obsolete major highway in the country.” With Scott facing a tough reelection race in 1970, the White House might have been more sympathetic to Pennsylvania’s needs.

In a larger sense, Nixon and Scott were groping with the problems inherent in the separation of executive and legislative powers set out in the U.S. Constitution. The notion, associated with Woodrow Wilson, of the president as prime minister, using his party to lead Congress, proved the exception, not the rule. Harlow informed Scott that “despite our most cordial efforts” sporadic “discomfort” would develop between the two branches. Beginning in 1933, equipped with larger staffs, “modern” presidents acquired greater formal and informal powers, which they often exercised without reference to Congress. Facing a Democrat-controlled House and Senate, Nixon often made policy via administrative action. But as Hannah Arendt has argued, the presidency remains both the strongest and weakest office on earth; U.S. presidents enjoy leeway in foreign affairs, while the House controls fiscal matters and the Senate considers treaties and nominations. Nixon could not ignore Congress—and vice versa.

On policy questions, Nixon and Scott either jousted, compromised, or forged a united front. Their greatest differences occurred over the president’s Supreme Court nominations. Regarding civil rights, the two men either found common ground or agreed to disagree. On foreign policy, Scott proved a staunch Nixonian. In general, discord over a few high profile issues clouded significant accord between the president and senator.

The president’s early choices for the Supreme Court troubled Scott. In line with the southern strategy, which centered around symbolic gestures, Nixon named Judge Clement F. Haynsworth, Jr., of South Carolina to the high court in 1969. Senate liberals, upset over Haynsworth’s conservative rulings on labor issues and school desegregation, accused the judge of conflict of interest, participating in cases where he stood to gain financially.

The charges, however thin, resonated among GOP moderates. "I just can't vote for him," Scott told Nixon. "His record indicates he will be a vote against civil rights positions on the court." The minority leader joined GOP Senators Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania, William Saxbe of Ohio, and Minority Whip Robert Griffin of Michigan in voting down the nomination. "I have kept my counsel," he privately affirmed, "and voted my conscience." Although Scott recalled White House pressure to back the judge, Nixon understood his "dilemma" and granted Scott "leave" to vote against Haynsworth.

In nominating Haynsworth, Nixon appeared more attuned to the concerns of southern whites than those of blacks and Republican moderates. "Northern senators feel that the administration doesn't care much about them," Schweiker observed, adding that "there wasn't a Haynsworth vote north of D.C." According to Cowen, Scott's one-time aide, GOP liberals such as Schweiker having run ahead of Nixon in 1968 "felt little sense of allegiance" to him and appealed to a "different constituency." Hamberger, another Scott aide, read a news clipping entitled "'Southern Strategy' Is Alive and Well" and lamented that it represented "2/3rds of the thinking within the White House." Haldeman, in turn, considered independent-minded Republicans "a pretty despicable group," although Scott seemed "not so bad." During a December 1969 meeting, moderate Republican senators "made [the] point that they're worried mainly about 'Southern Strategy' and that we have to be concerned with the big states and big cities, where the people are." Nixon, in a foul mood, dubbed the whole encounter "useless" and Haldeman agreed.

Scott did not relish opposing Nixon's high court nominees. When Senator Phillip A. Hart, Democrat of Michigan, invited him to recommend

---

62 Scott Oral History, Oct. 16, 1976, 61, LC.
63 Kotlowski, "Trial By Error," 75–83.
64 Scott Handwritten Note, no date, folder: Papers Re Clement Haynsworth's Nomination to the Supreme Court, box 32, Scott Papers.
66 Tom Lias to Kevin Phillips, Oct. 16, 1969, folder: Haynsworth 3, box 6, Harry S. Dent, Jr., Files, WHSF, NPM.
67 Cowen, interview by Reichley, Oct. 5, 1977, 5, GRFL.
a probe of Haynsworth’s finances, the Pennsylvanian, like any loyal Republican, balked. But the White House never saw this side of Scott. After the Senate rejected the judge, Nixon excluded Scott and Griffin from a meeting on chemical weapons.70 “Problem with Congress, especially Republican senators, deepens daily,” Haldeman wrote late in 1969. “Scott seems to go out of his way to take on the White House at every opportunity. P is determined to hold to his line of the cold shoulder for those who don’t stick with us.”71

The senator got the message. To “lock himself” into supporting the president, Scott quickly endorsed Nixon’s next nominee, Judge G. Harrold Carswell of Florida.72 Attorney General John Mitchell assured the senator that Carswell was moderate and would garner wide support, for the Senate had voted three times to confirm him to lower offices.73 Although the judge’s intellectual mediocrity and segregationist past ultimately sank his nomination, Scott swallowed hard and voted “yes” on Carswell.74 Scott later described his vote for Carswell as his “worst mistake”; Nixon later admitted that he had nominated Carswell out of anger over the Senate’s rejection of Haynsworth.75

On voting rights, both men showed greater flexibility. Nixon at first sought to appease southern conservatives who hated the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for singling out Dixie for federal oversight. Rather than renew the act, set to expire in 1970, Nixon and Mitchell proposed a substitute which abolished literacy tests nationwide and repealed pre-clearance, the section requiring southern states to clear their voting laws with the Justice Department.76 But the president did not want to thwart minority voting rights and did not make the abolition of pre-clearance a priority. He had supported voting rights legislation as vice president and had endorsed the 1965 act. In 1969, Nixon jotted down his thoughts on that law: “(1) it has

70 SHC on Hamberger to Scott, Sept. 4, 1969, folder: Judiciary Committee—Carswell Nomination, box 68, Scott Papers; Haldeman Meeting Notes, Nov. 21, 1969, PNWH: 5, fiche 12.
72 Cowen, interview by Reichley, Oct. 5, 1977, 4, GRFL.
73 Scott Oral History, Oct. 16, 1976, 63, LC.
74 Cowen, interview by Reichley, Oct. 5, 1977, 4, GRFL; Scott Oral History, Oct. 16, 1976, 64, LC.
75 Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 3, GRFL (quotation); Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered*, 46.
worked for South, (2) I want no retreat, (3) it should be national—uniform residence requirements. Any bill that accomplishes that will have my approval." The president ordered his team to hang tough on the sections of Mitchell's bill that covered the "whole country," that is, ending all literacy tests and establishing uniform residence requirements for voting. As for the rest, including pre-clearance, he voiced "no obj. to compromise."77

Civil rights liberals and GOP moderates, led by Scott, made compromise possible. Before the president's substitute bill passed the House late in 1969, Scott huddled with Phil Hart, the Michigan Democrat, to plot how to propel a revised voting rights measure through the Senate.78 Scott and Hart took the toughest enforcement provisions of Mitchell's bill—a national ban on literacy tests and uniform residency requirements—and joined them to the existing law. Their version retained pre-clearance, as liberals wanted, and applied it to nonsouthern states where less than fifty percent of eligible minority citizens had voted in 1968, another "national" proviso for Nixon.80

In March 1970, Scott-Hart breezed through the upper chamber, 64 to 12, with eleven of the dissenters coming from Dixie.81

The president opposed only one part of Scott-Hart, an amendment attached by Senate liberals to lower the voting age to eighteen. Assuming that most young people voted Democratic, Nixon told aides they "must defeat" the eighteen-year-old vote.82 But he also professed a belief in "ballots, not bullets," that dissenters should express themselves in voting booths rather than in the streets. After weighing the pluses and minuses of vetoing the revised Voting Rights Act, Nixon deemed the price of stifling the eighteen-year-old vote too costly. A veto would alienate minority groups

77 Nixon Handwritten Comment (NHC) on Bradley H. Patterson, Jr., to Ehrlichman, Dec. 8, 1969, PNWH: Part 6, Series A, Documents Annotated by the President, fiche 49.
80 This addition was the so-called Cooper Amendment sponsored by Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, a moderate Republican. See "Statement Explaining the Cooper Amendment," no date, folder: Voting Rights Act—1969-70, box 510, John Sherman Cooper Papers, Margaret I. King Library, University of Kentucky.
and divide the country at a time when citizens were protesting the president's military incursion into Cambodia and the shootings of anti-war demonstrators at Kent State University. In the end, Nixon signed the 1970 act to prevent the "goddamn country" from "blowing up."  

In fashioning the compromise, Scott acted from two considerations. The first was his strong belief in civil rights. Throughout his career, Scott had supported nearly every bill or amendment to advance racial equality. He co-sponsored the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and proposed a holiday to honor the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr.  

Clarence Mitchell, chief lobbyist for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, called Scott "the opponent that Dixie segregationists wish to avoid." Second, Scott's political compass led him to back voting rights, for both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh had sizeable African American populations. After the senator endorsed renewal of the Voting Rights Act in 1969, his staff asked Clarence Mitchell to spread the word among black voters. When the senator faced reelection in 1970, Scott's aides advised him to play down the president's support of the compromise bill. "It might be considered to dilute your role in the passage of the extension," they said. Scott, no less a politician than Nixon, backed civil rights more vigorously and, at times, in a more calculated way.  

Scott's independent streak set him against Nixon's other racial policies. The senator urged a presidential message on race "to allay the widespread fear that this administration does not list this concern among its highest priorities. I know otherwise." In 1972 he shelved a bill to outlaw busing to integrate schools. The measure, backed by Nixon and passed by the House,
called into question all court-ordered desegregation. Scott and Majority Leader Mansfield agreed to consider the anti-busing bill at the close of the session. Scott then advised the Senate to await a ruling by the Supreme Court on the measure's constitutionality, even though it never passed the Senate. He also voted against ending a filibuster of the anti-busing bill. "This is not the time," Scott told Nixon, "for the Senate to vote on an issue which affects the fundamental requirements of our Constitution and the future of millions of our citizens."

Nixon and Scott were not always in disagreement over civil rights. The senator backed the president's Philadelphia Plan, to set minority hiring goals for construction trades, quietly "so as not to stir up" unrest among blue-collar white workers in his state. Nixon, for his part, was no enemy of civil rights. To appease white southerners, he had amplified his opposition to busing while muffling his efforts to desegregate Dixie's schools. In 1972 the president privately remarked that "legally segregated education is inferior education" and rejected "any solution that would, in effect, 'turn back the clock.'" Since opposing busing was not among Nixon's policy priorities, it did not cause a rift between him and the minority leader.

During 1970, with Scott up for reelection, he could not afford to stray from the president. Sixty-two percent of Pennsylvanians approved of Nixon's job performance. Timmons observed that Scott was "constantly looking over his shoulder at the ambitions of Bob Griffin, Howard Baker, and Bob Dole" and was "particularly interested in having the image of the 'President's man.'" Scott's staff compiled figures in 1970 showing him ahead of Baker, Dole, and Hruska in supporting the president. He voted the administration's way 78 percent of the time in 1969, endorsing 72 percent of Nixon's
domestic programs and 95 percent of his foreign policy initiatives. Scott told one White House staffer that he could recall "no major instance (except Supreme Court nomination Number One) where I have been at odds with Nixon Administration policy." After the columnist Richard Wilson noted Scott's independence on "critical" issues, the senator pointed to a record that "shows me third in the Nation in support for the President on domestic affairs and the highest on foreign affairs." Nixon campaigned for Scott who defeated William G. Sesler, a Democratic state senator from Erie, by a mere 200,000 votes to retain his U.S. Senate seat.

Several factors contributed to Scott's narrow margin of victory. He had always faced stiff challenges in this Democratic-leaning state, and 1970 was a tough year for the GOP, since the party controlling the White House usually loses congressional seats in midterm elections. Shafer, the outgoing governor who had proposed an income tax to overcome the state's budget deficits, dragged down the Republican vote; for the first time since 1936, Democrats won control of Pennsylvania's executive and legislative branches. Within this setting, the forty-two-year-old Sesler campaigned vigorously against the sixty-eight-year-old incumbent. To Scott's claim of being "the most powerful Senator Pennsylvania ever had," Sesler replied that Scott was not even powerful enough to guarantee his own reelection as minority leader in 1971. Sesler portrayed the senator as indecisive for voting in favor of Carswell and then denouncing the Floridian as a racist, and for backtracking on a 1968 gun-control law which Scott had supported. Since conservatives were upset with Scott's vote against Haynsworth, the senator's base of support within Pennsylvania already had shrunk. Nevertheless, Scott

ran well in midstate, respectfully in Philadelphia, and gained the largest majority of any Republican senator in the nation, fifty-two percent of the vote, becoming the first Pennsylvanian to win three consecutive terms in the U.S. Senate.\(^\text{104}\)

Following the midterm elections, Nixon became entangled in an effort to remove Scott as minority leader. Late in 1970 the president advised Baker not to seek the minority leader’s post, fearing it would divide the GOP.\(^\text{105}\) But Nixon escalated tensions when he named Dole, an up-and-coming conservative, to chair the Republican National Committee (RNC).\(^\text{106}\) Scott lambasted Dole’s appointment as “intolerable in my leadership position,” and White House staffers found the senator “red hot” and “climbing the wall over Dole.”\(^\text{107}\) A freshman senator, Dole had annoyed the minority leader by supporting the president vocally and solicitously.\(^\text{108}\) Scott’s umbrage said a good deal about his tenuous hold on the leadership, for Dole could not have challenged him openly from the RNC post. After Scott urged GOP senators to oppose Dole, Nixon, in a clumsy fashion, encouraged a revolt. Vice President Agnew urged Senate Minority Whip Griffin to seek Scott’s job, and Griffin expressed interest, if he did not have to lead the fight himself. Haldeman cryptically jotted that Harlow was seeing Senator John J. Williams of Delaware “re overthrow [of] Scott.”\(^\text{109}\)

Nixon, like Griffin, shied away from open warfare against the minority leader. According to Haldeman, the president had moved against Scott only to strengthen his own hand and force the Pennsylvanian to accept Dole.\(^\text{110}\) When Scott complained of White House officials campaigning against him, Nixon vowed to fire “by nightfall” any staffer found meddling in the leadership fight.\(^\text{111}\) In 1971, Scott hung on to his leadership post, defeating


\(^\text{110}\) Haldeman Diary, Jan. 7, 1971.

\(^\text{111}\) Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 5, GRFL.
Baker 24 to 19.\textsuperscript{112} Nixon and Scott remained unhappily yoked.

Or were they? Scott supported much of Nixon's domestic agenda. The senator, like the president, espoused aid to minority-owned businesses.\textsuperscript{113} He endorsed Nixon's extension of the tax surcharge, then "really raised hell" in a "highly partisan exchange" with Mansfield over the issue. Scott professed the "grtst admiration" for Treasury Secretary John Connally, a presidential favorite, and encouraged Nixon's use of wage and price controls to arrest inflation.\textsuperscript{114} He unsuccessfully fought to pass the president's welfare reform bill, the Family Assistance Plan.\textsuperscript{115} In assisting Nixon, Scott displayed guile. When Senate liberals pressed Scott to oppose the president on ABM, Cowen advised the senator, who favored ABM, to change the subject and discuss instead his stand on behalf of voting rights.\textsuperscript{116} After Scott prodded labor unions to back the president's wage and price controls, Nixon scrawled: "Tell him RN appreciated his good statement."\textsuperscript{117} After Scott helped sustain the president's veto of a clean water bill, Nixon commended him for "a great job."\textsuperscript{118}

Scott applauded Nixon's conduct of foreign affairs from the sidelines. A Sinophile, he favored changing U.S. policy toward the People's Republic of China, likening improved relations to a pearl and China to an oyster in desperate need of opening. He called Nixon's visit to China an "important step in producing world peace."\textsuperscript{119} On arms control, he privately affirmed: "Mr. President, your course is right."\textsuperscript{120} Yet neither Scott nor Nixon backed unilateral concessions to the Soviet Union. In 1972 the senator rejected both

---


\textsuperscript{115} Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 6, GRFL.


\textsuperscript{120} Clark MacGregor, Memorandum for the President's File, May 20, 1971, 3, \textit{PNWH}: 2, fiche 71-5-71.
the “folly of unilateral disarmament” and the Mansfield Amendment to reduce U.S. troop levels in Europe. Nixon agreed: “Why jeopardize what may be going on with [Soviet President] Podgorny or in China?” Perhaps indicative of his trust in Scott, the president deferred to his “good judgment” on how to thwart Mansfield’s proposal. More likely, Nixon’s concern over the amendment, which Congress had rejected in 1969 and 1971, had diminished by 1972.

Scott backed Nixon’s Vietnam policy. By 1969 both men had soured on the Indochinese war and sought “peace with honor.” The president’s policy blended escalation, negotiation, and Vietnamization, in which indigenous troops replaced U.S. forces on the battlefield. Scott initially had backed LBJ’s escalation of the war, then endorsed Johnson’s decision in 1968 to begin peace talks. After traveling to twenty Pennsylvania counties, Scott reported that “the people want to get out of Vietnam, but without disgrace.” At first the senator saw Vietnamization as a viable option. Following the fall of Saigon in 1975, his views changed and he called the effort “a little ridiculous.” In the interim, a familiar story unfolded with Scott balancing his conscience and loyalty to the president against the wishes of constituents and GOP moderates, who were turning against the war.

Scott’s own desire for peace flashed from time to time. In May 1969 he suggested that removing some U.S. troops might “flush out” North Vietnam’s intentions at the bargaining table. Five months later, Nixon ordered Harlow and National Security Adviser Henry A. Kissinger to “take Scott into the woodshed and make sure he stops his talk on [a unilateral] cease-fire.” Scott, along with Mansfield, sponsored a resolution in November 1969 supporting a mutual cease-fire, free elections in South

---

121 “Notes from HS’s Conversation with the President,” June 20, 1972, folder: 1955–1974 Richard Nixon (2), box 4, Additional Papers, Scott Papers.
122 Hoff, Nixon Reconsidered, 193.
126 Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 5, GRFL.
Vietnam, and the Paris Peace Talks—all in line with White House policy.¹²⁹ The declining discipline among U.S. soldiers in Vietnam troubled the senator, who advised Kissinger that the problem might require “accelerating the rate of withdrawal.”¹³⁰ In general, however, Scott backed administration policy.¹³¹ In 1971 the senator privately praised “the president’s splendid handling of the war in Vietnam.”¹³²

Scott applauded the president’s invasion of Cambodia as “courageous and remarkable,” and voted against the Cooper-Church Amendment requiring the removal of U.S. forces from Cambodia by July 1, 1970.¹³³ Not wanting to tie Nixon’s hands, Scott opposed the McGovern-Hatfield Amendment setting a deadline for U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. He also accused Democratic critics of “crying the same line as Moscow, Peking and Hanoi” and goaded anti-war protestors to “demonstrate against Hanoi.”¹³⁴ Scott dubbed South Vietnam’s incursion into Laos a success, which it was not, and he praised the president’s decision to review the case of Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., the officer held responsible for the massacre of civilians at My Lai.¹³⁵ Scott defended Nixon’s war with the gusto of a battle-scarred partisan, and, he later claimed, it hurt him politically.¹³⁶

That recollection was gratuitous and self-serving; turning “dove” would have enhanced neither Scott’s political position nor the effort to exit Vietnam. The withdrawal of most U.S. troops, the senator privately conceded, had removed Vietnam as a front-burner issue for the presidential election of 1972.¹³⁷ Public opinion, in fact, swung Nixon’s way on sending bombers to halt North Vietnam’s 1972 offensive; two-thirds of

¹³⁶ Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 5, GRFL.
Pennsylvanians who wrote the White House endorsed the president's stand. Scott offered no fresh ideas for ending the conflict. His suggestion that some U.S. troops remain in South Vietnam following a peace settlement, as in Korea, was "unrealistic," for Vietnam and Korea were not parallel cases. Had Scott advanced a plan to end the war, Nixon probably would have ignored it. The president did not consult the senator prior to the Cambodian operation, and Scott's advice that Nixon explain the Christmas 1972 bombing of North Vietnam in a televised address went unheeded. Locked into party loyalty, the minority leader lacked the leverage and vision to influence the president's posture on Vietnam.

Scott's support on Vietnam paid one dividend: the senator amassed sufficient political capital to defend Republican doves. In 1970, for example, James L. Buckley of the Conservative Party ran for the Senate seat held by Charles E. Goodell, Republican of New York. Nixon preferred Buckley to Goodell, the sponsor of an amendment to remove all U.S. troops from Vietnam by the end of 1970. Agnew, playing the part of attack dog, denounced Goodell as a turncoat, the "Christine Jorgensen of the Republican party," a reference to an early sex-change operation. Scott campaigned for his Senate colleague and chided Agnew's campaigning: "When the president is away, there are those who like to play."

Yet the vice president distinguished Scott's sporadic independence from Goodell's habitual disloyalty. Nixon privately conceded that Scott could not endorse Buckley. In the end, of course, the president was the one celebrating, when Buckley overcame Goodell.

By 1972, there was cause for Republican smiles. The Voting Rights Act had been renewed; the economy was about to boom; the battle over the Supreme Court, with four Nixon appointees, had subsided; the war in Vietnam was winding down; and the president prepared for historic journeys to China and Russia. Yet the best results did not always emerge from the

138 MacGregor to Scott, May 18, 1972, ibid.
141 Greene, Limits of Power, 59.
143 Ibid.
decisions made by the president and the senator. Both had failed to overcome resistance to the Family Assistance Plan by Senate conservatives. The ill-effects of wage and price controls would be felt by 1973. Vietnamization prolonged the U.S. intervention in Indochina, killing an additional twenty thousand Americans over four years.\textsuperscript{145} And less than two years after Nixon’s 1972 electoral triumph, he would resign in disgrace.

The Watergate scandal represented the nadir of political judgment for both Nixon and Scott. By trying to thwart the disclosure of his reelection campaign’s burglary at the Democratic National Committee’s headquarters, Nixon provoked a constitutional crisis that shattered his administration. In contrast to his attitude toward Vietnam policy, Scott privately expressed doubt about the president’s handling of Watergate. In public, however, he almost always defended Nixon’s innocence.

Why such sustained support? It was mostly an expression of Scott’s sense of duty as a party leader. During the presidential campaign of 1972, the senator supported Nixon by attacking his dovish opponent. Scott voiced shock over the “callous indifference” toward the “destiny” of South Vietnam shown by Senator George S. McGovern of South Dakota, the Democratic standard-bearer.\textsuperscript{146} He labeled McGovern a back-bencher and, in a bit of red-baiting, joked that if the Senate were a philatelic convention, “George would be selling Albanian stamps behind a pillar.”\textsuperscript{147} Along with other Republicans, Scott even charged McGovern with waging a “defamatory campaign” against Nixon.\textsuperscript{148}

Scott’s fealty stemmed in part from presidential bullying and cajoling. Following Nixon’s landslide reelection, the White House became more confrontational in its dealings with Congress. After Scott and Ford had secured a White House meeting in March 1973 to discuss upcoming legislation, congressional liaison chief Timmons advised Nixon to demand party unity on budgetary matters and “strong leadership on early vetoes to ‘sober up’ Congress.”\textsuperscript{149} When Ford and Scott recommended additional

\textsuperscript{145} Scott, interview by Reichley, Dec. 6, 1977, 6, GRFL; Small, Presidential of Richard Nixon, 210–12; Hoff, Nixon Reconsidered, 209.
\textsuperscript{147} President’s News Summary, Nov. 1, 1972, PNWH, 6:B, fiche 185.
\textsuperscript{149} Timmons to Nixon, March 5, 1973, PNWH: 3, fiche 61.
meetings to elevate the GOP’s esprit de corps, Nixon reminded them that the House, more than the Senate, had sustained his vetoes. In a swat at Scott, Nixon described the Senate’s morale as “universally low” with ceaseless “bitching” and “whining,” and he rebuked the chamber for “irresp. on spending.” The president resolved to look to the House to uphold future vetoes because, he claimed, the “country thinks the Senate is a bunch of assholes anyway Hugh.” Everyone present,” Haldeman recorded at the time, “felt that this is going to have quite a substantial effect and probably a very salutary one on Scott, as it shapes him up.” In fact, the rebuke, if less stinging than Ehrlichman recalled later in his 1982 memoir, did have the effect of making the minority leader more malleable.

A dose of presidential goodwill had as much impact, for Scott’s tender ego welcomed a firm massage. In 1965 the senator had gushed when LBJ aide Jack Valenti telephoned to applaud Scott’s statement of support on Vietnam; the Pennsylvanian remarked that no other White House had shown him such courtesy. Following the skirmish with Nixon in 1973, Scott worked to sustain a presidential veto. Nixon telephoned and the blarney flowed free and easy: “a great job”; “a marvelous job”; “you fooled us”; “this vote will help the country.” “When you said at the last meeting, ‘we can’t count on the Senate,’” Scott responded, “that’s when I decided to bust a gut.” Nixon agreed that he had done just that. The senator, who kept notes of all presidential telephone calls and words of praise, clearly relished the approval of powerful men.

As Scott’s support on Watergate showed, flattery can indeed get one somewhere. Two weeks after the senator’s clash with the president, Nixon conferred with GOP congressional leaders denying White House participation in a cover-up of Watergate. When Scott volunteered, on his authority, to relay this denial to the press, Nixon replied: “Hell no. You can say it on my authority.” Over the next two months, the minority leader blamed Watergate on the president’s campaign staff who, he observed, were

---

150 Ehrlichman Meeting Notes, Mar. 6, 1973, ibid.
151 Haldeman Diary, March 6, 1973.
152 Ehrlichman, Witness to Power, 198–99.
153 Douglas MacArthur II to Jack Valenti, March 2, 1965, WHCF, Name File: Hugh Scott (Sen.), LBJL.
neither party officials nor professional politicians. Scott commended Nixon for accepting the resignations of Haldeman and Ehrlichman, affirmed his "full confidence" in the president's innocence, and denounced former White House Counsel John W. Dean III as a "little rat" who had sought to save his own hide by implicating Nixon in efforts to obstruct justice.\(^{156}\) The senator bristled at the disclosure of a hidden White House taping system, reckoning (correctly) that prior administrations had engaged in similar eavesdropping.\(^{157}\)

Yet Scott harbored doubts. "Someone is not telling the truth," he wrote Hamberger, "is it H and E? Dean? Or, God forbid, higher up?" The senator alluded to "the dilemma I face" as "party leader" and promised not to "prejudge this horrible situation, until all the facts are out."\(^{158}\) Since no Senate leader could have broken with his president at this point, Scott implored Nixon to defend himself publicly. He even told Kissinger that the president must exhibit "moral indignation."\(^{159}\) Nixon replied with further denials of "wrongdoing" and vows to come out "fighting" in defense of his actions.\(^{160}\) The events of autumn 1973—Agnew's resignation over bribery charges, Nixon's firing of the first special prosecutor, and news of a gap on one White House tape—reduced Scott to further pleading for full White House disclosure.\(^{161}\)

Since his March 1973 showdown with Nixon, Scott had worked hard to show tough, effective leadership and loyalty to the president. In September, he reminded Nixon that "I don't run under fire." The president then congratulated "Hugh" ("ol' boy") on sustaining another veto. Scott responded with verbal bouquets of his own: "My heart goes out to you and the vice president. It's so tragic." "Well . . . Well . . . Thank you, Hugh,"


Nixon muttered.\textsuperscript{162} Partisanship and praise tied, then cemented, the minority leader to the administration during this constitutional crisis.

Scott’s greatest leap of faith occurred early in 1974. In December 1973, White House chief of staff Alexander M. Haig, Jr., showed Scott transcripts of Nixon’s still-secret conversation with Dean on March 21, 1973.\textsuperscript{163} A month later, during a private meeting, Scott listened to House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes of Arizona and RNC chair George Bush complain about “lacking enough facts” on Watergate.\textsuperscript{164} The senator responded by informing the press that he had seen evidence that would exonerate the president. But to Scott’s chagrin no such material existed; Haig had shown him misleading excerpts from the March conservation.\textsuperscript{165}

Scott’s misstep placed him on the defensive. The \textit{New York Times} warned that the senator was heading toward a credibility gap as wide as Nixon’s.\textsuperscript{166} “I’m afraid,” one anonymous GOP senator remarked, “Hugh has gone out on a limb and... he’s going to be cut off.”\textsuperscript{167} “Tell Hugh Scott to put up or shut up,” fumed one Pennsylvanian. “Does he not realize that he is going down with the president?” asked another.\textsuperscript{168} The \textit{Philadelphia Bulletin} agreed: “Loyal through Adversity: Scott Is Nixon Spokesman.”\textsuperscript{169}

Scott’s comments provoked such revulsion within Pennsylvania that Earl L. Lentz, chair of the Clinton County Republican Committee, advised the senator not to tarnish his reputation “carrying the banner for Richard Nixon.”\textsuperscript{170}

Such words proved sobering. Scott promised Lentz that he would not “be a patsy to a situation where carrying the banner only results in my friends...”\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{163} “Scott Shown Partial Data,” \textit{Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot}, May 4, 1974, 1.
\textsuperscript{164} Scott to Hamberger, March 30, 1974, folder: 1974 Jan.–May Nixon Resignation, box 1, Additional Papers, Scott Papers.
\textsuperscript{168} Quoted in “Kitty” to “Martin,” Feb. 1, 1974, folder: July 1973–April 1974 Correspondence and Papers Re: Watergate, box 32, Scott Papers.
\textsuperscript{169} News Clipping, no date, folder: July 1973–April 1974 Correspondence and Papers Re: Watergate, box 32, Scott Papers.
\textsuperscript{170} Earl L. Lentz, Jr., to Scott, Jan. 22, 1974, folder: 1974 Jan.–May Nixon Resignation, box 1, Additional Papers, Scott Papers.
regarding me as an apologist for a sorry performance."171 "I hope I'm not being used," he confided to former Senator Margaret Chase Smith. "I don't think so, but, of course, I'll be more chary hereafter. After all, the tapes have the answer."172 When Nixon ignored Scott's plea to release the remaining tapes, Hamberger warned of a "steadily declining situation."173 The senator should have known that the president often lied. Regarding Agnew's successor, Nixon had assured Scott that it would "not be you or Jerry."174 Then, he tapped Ford!

Scott's public support of the president cannot be dismissed as naïveté. It was another phase in the Pennsylvanian's pendulum-like loyalty; having swung against the president on Haynsworth and civil rights, he oscillated back on Vietnam and Watergate. On another level, Scott felt a private anguish over the scandal separate from the pressures facing a Senate leader when his president stares at impeachment. In March 1974, Scott turned down an invitation to join Democratic Senators Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and James O. Eastland of Mississippi in proposing a study of impeachment procedures. His acceptance would have irked pro-Nixon Republicans, encouraged anti-Nixon lawmakers, and alarmed the White House.175 Partisan considerations prevailed over constitutional duty, and Scott's alternative, the shibboleth of "full disclosure," was an attempt to pass the buck. The tapes did indeed hold the answer.

The contents of the tapes initially shocked Scott. In April he had warned one constituent against making "moral judgments" on Nixon's conduct without a "presumption of innocence."176 Then, on May 7, after reading an eight-hundred-page transcript released by the White House, Scott openly deplored the "disgusting, shabby, immoral performance" of the president and his team.177 The New York Times read his critique as evidence of the GOP "disengaging" from Nixon; the Chicago Tribune, a Republican organ, cited

171 Scott to Lentz, Jan. 22, 1974, ibid.
172 Scott to Margaret Chase Smith, Feb. 5, 1974, ibid.
175 Ken Davis to Scott, March 21, 1974, ibid.
176 Scott to Richardson, April 10, 1974, ibid.
it in urging Nixon's resignation. Yet the minority leader would not go that far and, on the advice of staffers, he declined to attack the president further. Scott deleted all references to his May 7 remarks in a draft letter to Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton. The President looks to me for support (I had a most friendly meeting with him today)," he wrote one Pennsylvanian. On May 13, Scott told the Dauphin County Republican Party that he did not favor Nixon's resignation. He then reminded reporters that the due process clause of the Constitution applied to the president as well. Party and personal loyalties had pulled the senator back to Nixon.

Other Republicans had less difficulty breaking with the president. In February 1974, House Minority Leader Rhodes backed a Judiciary Committee resolution to begin impeachment proceedings against the president; following the release of the White House transcripts, Rhodes openly urged Nixon to consider resigning. In May, while Scott attended a White House leadership breakfast and found the president "cordial" despite his harsh stance on the transcripts, Rhodes, expressing his "great unhappiness," skipped the meeting altogether. Only after RNC chair Bush pleaded for Scott to handle the "situation" in a way "best for the country" did the senator begin consulting with Mansfield on rules for a trial. "Jerry," Scott told Ford, "there's a better than 50-50 chance you will be president before long."

Division among Pennsylvanians over whether the president should leave office fed Scott's caution. In May 1974, Senator Schweiker called on Nixon to resign and arrest the "now obvious moral corrosion destroying and debasing the presidency." Shortly thereafter, the Greensburg (Pa.)
Tribune-Review, owned by the Pittsburgh multimillionaire Richard M. Scaife, a contributor to the president's reelection campaign, exhorted the House to impeach Nixon. At the same time, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, while critical of the president's conduct, dismissed Schweiker's motion and urged Nixon to see the impeachment process to its conclusion. Other Pennsylvanians read their junior senator's call as political, an attempt to enhance his own reelection bid; constituent mail ran two to one against Schweiker's call for Nixon's resignation. Nationwide, not one of the GOP's state chairs favored the president's resignation.

On the issue of Nixon's resignation, Scott was more follower than leader. In May the senator agreed with Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, a Republican member of the Judiciary Committee, that sending a delegation to advise the president to resign was premature. Then, after the House had voted three articles of impeachment, Scott and Goldwater met on August 2 and predicted Nixon's removal by the Senate. "The president is gone," sighed Goldwater, a much fiercer Nixon critic; "The vice president is our only hope for unifying the country." Three days later, on August 5, Nixon surrendered to Congress additional tapes, including a recording of the June 23, 1972, conversation in which he first ordered subordinates to obstruct the Watergate inquiry. Among GOP senators, the president's support quickly dissolved.

Scott's low-key approach allowed Republicans to debate the merits of sending emissaries to encourage Nixon's resignation. As late as August 2, Goldwater had vetoed such a mission, saying: "Hell, he wouldn't see us.

Four days later, the Senate Republican Policy Committee, minus Scott, who was attending a funeral, reached a different judgment. "We can be lied to so

---

189 "Nixon Shouldn't Resign," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, May 18, 1974, 8.
191 Scott Notes on May 9th Meetings, folder: 1974 May-June Nixon's Resignation, box 2, Additional Papers, Scott Papers.
many times,” Goldwater barked, “best [thing] he can do is to get out of WH this afternoon.” New Hampshire’s Norris Cotton recommended going to the president “to convey the danger of his position,” while Colorado’s Peter J. Dominick found Nixon’s case “unsupportable.” John G. Tower of Texas then reminded the group that they had “not yet gone to WH.” After returning to Washington, Scott called a second meeting to implement the committee’s will. By that point, Nixon already had sent for Rhodes, Scott, and Goldwater.196

Nixon’s final meetings with congressional leaders were among the most awkward in the history of the presidency. Rhodes, Scott, and Goldwater found Nixon with his feet propped upon a desk, an “old habit,” Scott recalled, and an effort “to avoid showing any stress.” Goldwater put the president’s support in the Senate at eighteen votes; Scott estimated fifteen. Nixon, having decided to resign, acknowledged his lack of options.198 The next day, August 8, the president told a bipartisan delegation that he had “one more speech to give,” that Watergate had been hard on everyone, and that he would not serve as a part-time president with a part-time Congress. Nixon joked, clumsily, about his ill-fitting suit, then lauded the group as “my good friends,” a wild exaggeration. “God bless you,” they replied as strains of “God Bless America” emanated from on-lookers outside.199

Scott’s support for Nixon, before August 1974, cuts against the popular view that “the system worked” during Watergate. When, in 1969, the minority leader ranked his responsibilities to state, party, and president, the constitution had not entered into the equation. As the journalist Jules Witcover observed, Watergate left Scott, who claimed the evidence would exonerate Nixon, with “egg on his face.” The senator, in contrast to Rhodes and Goldwater, placed greater stress on his duty to the president. There was, to be certain, plenty of blame to go around. A Democratic Congress inched toward impeachment, and a bipartisan

---

196 Handwritten Meeting Notes, Aug. 8, 1974, ibid.
197 “Hugh Scott Interviewed on CBS’s Face the Nation,” Aug. 11, 1974, 5–6, folder: Scott, Hugh, box 98, James B. Schuman Files, GRFL.
201 Witcover, “Hugh Scott—Pussycat on a Hot Tin Roof,” Washington Post, no date, folder: Scott, Hugh—General, box 11, O’Donnell and Jenckes Files, GRFL.
consensus favoring either removal or resignation emerged only after eighteen months of probes, disclosures, and popular outrage. Scott's statements of confidence in Nixon's innocence and his reluctance to consider rules for a trial did nothing to expedite matters.

Yet the minority leader performed a few commendable tasks. His stinging critique of Nixon's private machinations heartened the president's foes. Scott conducted himself with dignity during the last months of Nixon's presidency, working with Goldwater, a one-time bête noir. And he dished out some choice advice, telling Ford to cease making speeches in support of the president which "would make it harder to unite the country." Yet the minority leader performed a few commendable tasks. His stinging critique of Nixon's private machinations heartened the president's foes. Scott conducted himself with dignity during the last months of Nixon's presidency, working with Goldwater, a one-time bête noir. And he dished out some choice advice, telling Ford to cease making speeches in support of the president which "would make it harder to unite the country." I urge that you conduct a completely open presidency," Scott counseled. "Hugh," Ford replied, "for me there can be no other way." In Scott's opinion, the new president was true to his word. Like Nixon, Ford would not twist congressional arms. In 1964, as House minority leader, Ford had vented against "LBJ pressure" over a foreign aid bill. Unlike Nixon, the new president was a twenty-five-year veteran of Congress who enjoyed a friendly rapport with legislative leaders. Ford consulted with Scott and even sent him on a goodwill mission to the People's Republic of China. On the matter of dispensing patronage through either Mayor Frank Rizzo of Philadelphia or Pennsylvania's senior senator, Ford's preference was clear: "protect Scott." Scott endorsed Ford's presidential bid, and the president saluted his old friend when Scott retired from the Senate in 1976. Years later Scott recalled, "Of all the presidents I have known, Ford had the best understanding of the legislative process."
The back-hand slap at Nixon could not erase the senator’s complicated relationship with the former president. Three weeks following his resignation, Nixon telephoned Scott to express regret “that so many difficulties had arisen” for the party. “I hope they won’t harass the old man,” he added, referring to himself. Nixon had no reason to fret, for Scott endorsed Ford’s pardon of the former president. Nixon, in search of emotional support, even telephoned the minority leader on New Year’s Eve 1974. The former president admitted to having a “rough time,” though he claimed his life was “better.” “It’s been hard for you,” Scott empathized, after bidding his “love” to “Pat.”

That curtain-closing scene, however poignant or pathetic, underscored the many-layered bond between Nixon and Scott. Brought together by circumstance, not choice, these two Republicans occupied separate spheres, charted different courses, and banded together throughout the twin traumas of Vietnam and Watergate. Their relationship, like that of other presidents and Senate leaders, defies clever catch-phrases. They were something less than friends but something more than “unhappily yoked.”

Otherwise, the Scott-Nixon association is notable for two reasons. It confirms what scholars have been saying about the president’s hot and cold relations with Congress; the Nixon years saw the passage of progressive domestic legislation as well as acrimonious debates over the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. Even so, sparring between moderate Republicans like Scott and Nixon was becoming a thing of the past. By the 1970s, the GOP’s demographic base had shifted from the East and Midwest to the South and West, where many voters were skeptical of federal-inspired programs. As proponents of limited government, Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush steered the party away from the ideas of Scott and Nixon, down a more conservative path.

Salisbury University

DEAN J. KOTLOWSKI