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Vice President Ford in Phoenix, Ariz., with John J. Rhodes, left, House minority leader.

Ford Flies to Phoenix, Appeals To Republicans to Assist Party

By MARJORIE HUNTER

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PHOENIX, Ariz., March 1— Vice President Ford flew into Phoenix today to implore fellow Republicans to retain their faith in their party and halt a threatened Congressional sweep by liberal Democrats.

His appeal came just hours after the Republican party received a possibly damaging blow from the indictment of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and six other former Nixon associates on charges of conspiring to impede Watergate investigations.

Word of the indictments in Washington reached the Vice President aboard the 707 jetliner bringing him here for a three-day weekend of Republican campaigning and outings on the golf course.

Minutes after landing, he

cautioned against prejudgment of the indicted men. "Anyone accused of a crime is presumed innocent unless proven guilty," he said.

Mr. Ford's comments were echoed by Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who accompanied him, along with other Arizona Republican leaders, on the flight from Washington.

"The party's not involved," Senator Goldwater said.

The Vice President's appeal for party loyalty came at a fund-raising dinner sponsored by Trunk 'N Tusk, a statewide Republican organization. The party's leaders have agreed to give \$50,000 of the dinner's proceeds to Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the new House minority leader, to finance his campaign for reelection to Congress this fall.