



Miami News Staff Photo by BILL REINKE

Torch of Friendship is tilted against truck

JFK torch smashed by Latins

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Three Latin men smashed down the John F. Kennedy Tower of Friendship with a rented truck this morning, in an apparently staged act of vandalism for a Cuban liberation organization.

Miami police arrested three unidentified men and are looking for three other Latins who were standing

by taking pictures of the incident.

Besides toppling the monument, the vandals used red spray paint to plaster slogans of "Cuba Will Be Free," "Accion Sindical," and "ASI" (Independent Labor Union Action) on the concrete background of the eternal flame, a monument to the martyred President.

Police Sergeant John Lake said he would not

speculate on what group may have been involved, but is investigating a group of Cubans currently staying in the Columbus Hotel. The group is thought to be promoting the cause of a free Cuba.

The vandals rented a truck at about 9:30 this morning and less than half an hour later used it to back into the monument.

Lake said charges of ag-

gravated assault with a motor vehicle may be added to the pending vandalism charges, since the three men nearly ran over a bystander in their assault on the torch.

Before they actually backed the truck into the Torch of Friendship, the vandals placed a "death wreath" on the nearby statue of Jose Cecilio Del Valle.

"Accion Sindical Independente" is an organization headed by Conrado Rodriguez, active in the sugar labor movement since the times of pre-Castro Cuba. Rodriguez and his group are still considered active anti-Castro revolutionaries here. The group has been vocal in opposing improved relations with Cuba.