

CASE NO: 4-213
3-81

DATE: September 12, 1975

Continuing investigation into acts of violence and threats of future violence resulting from the Bahamian lobster fishing ban.

SYNOPSIS:

On Thursday, September 11, 1975, a press conference was held by the Cuban / Lobster Fishermen's Association to announce a \$6 million Federal grant commitment which had been received by the association that day.

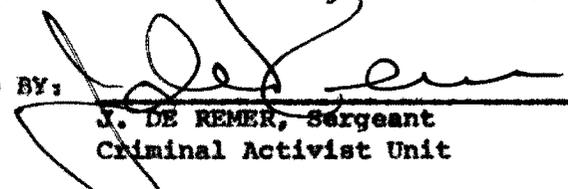
DETAILS:

On Thursday, September 11, 1975 at 8:00 p.m. this writer and Dets. D. Benitez and I. Vazquez attended a press conference at the Little Havana Activity Center, 819 S. W. 12 Avenue, which was called by the Cuban Lobster Fishermen's Association to announce the receipt of a \$6 million Federal grant to assist those Miami based lobster fishermen who have been left without employment or income as a result of the Bahamian lobster ban. The conference was given by Mr. JOSE PUJOL, Mr. RAFAEL VILLAVARDE, Mr. MANUEL FRANCO (president of the association), and several other leaders of the organization and was attended by approximately 100 persons.

It was announced that these monies would be administered by the City of Miami and would be utilized to give temporary financial support, retraining, and for the purchase of new equipment to assist the lobster fishermen in developing new sources of income, however, it would take approximately 90 days for the required paperwork, etc. before any of these funds reached the lobster fishermen. In general, this announcement was well received and appeared to have somewhat of a calming effect on members of the audience.

The press conference was orderly, with the exception of Mr. FRANCO, who, near the end of the press conference, leaped on the stage and began shouting at the audience that the money means nothing and they all must arm themselves and proceed to Bahamian waters and take "their" lobsters back with whatever violence was necessary. This is the same proviolence stand that Mr. FRANCO has been taking for several weeks, apparently in an attempt to agitate and incite the lobster fishermen into an armed confrontation with the Bahamas. Although FRANCO received some applause for his outburst, it appeared that the majority of the members of the audience were interested in taking a more rational and constructive course of action. Mr. FRANCO has applied for and been granted a parade permit to demonstrate at Dodge Island on the 12th, 13th and 15th of September and to picket the Bahamian cruise ships that will be loading and unloading passengers there. Members of the Criminal Activist Unit will cover this demonstration to assure that Mr. FRANCO does not incite the demonstrators into committing acts of violence.

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