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Antiwar Vets: Why Subpenas?

By JAY LEVIN

N. Y. Post Correspondent

MIAMI BEACH — The Democratic National Convention Rules Committee today was to consider a resolution condemning President Nixon for "interfering" with the convention by subpoenaing 24 members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War to appear in Tallahassee today before a federal grand jury.

"We regard the timing of this as a direct attempt to intimidate us and to stop the demonstration we have planned at both the Democratic and Republican Conventions," said Barry Romo, national coordinator for the VVAW.

"Our lawyers have drawn up a resolution and submitted it to the Rules Committee, and we hear that a number of people, including the New Democratic Coal-

tion, are preparing to make a floor fight over it."

Dan Collins, chairman of the NDC and a member of the Rules Committee, said: "I'm not sure the committee will vote it out, but I know there's interest among some members of the committee. And I'm strongly in favor of it."

Collins said he opposed both "the use of the grand jury in this manner" and the timing of the subpoenas—an issue to which the Democrats are expected to be sympathetic since they have been working hard to avoid a repetition of the 1968 Chicago violence by giving protest groups a chance to be heard.

From the South

U. S. marshals began serving the subpoenas to the veterans last Friday and continued to do so over the weekend. Most of those summoned to Tallahassee are

from the South and all have been active in planning for the conventions.

But the Justice Dept. has insisted that the grand jury investigations has no connection whatever with the VVAW's planned demonstrations at either convention. This had led to speculation that the grand jury might be looking into drug use by the vets or a weapons conspiracy.

"Most of the veterans do smoke dope," coordinator Rusty Bronaugh said, "but no one's dealing it." The vets also denied any involvement with weapons.

In a related development, one of the subpoenaed vets, Alton Foss, the Miami coordinator, charged that two local undercover cops tried to recruit him "to set some of the guys up" on weapons charges.

Meet With Agent

The pair, who work for the Dade County Public Safety Dept. and have close ties with the FBI, had infiltrated the local VVAW and had been present at almost all VVAW meetings for the past six months. They were discovered on Saturday.

According to Foss, after

the two were exposed as cops, they met with him and threatened to arrest him on drug charges unless he agreed to turn informer. They then ordered him to meet with an FBI agent he knew, Foss said.

Foss, who is 25, explained that he had become addicted to heroin in Vietnam, had been arrested last year and was now on probation. "I've been off hard drugs for a year now," he said. "But I smoke grass and they could bust me with the probation officer for that."

A spokesman for the Dade County Public Safety Dept. confirmed that two of its agents had contacted Foss as part of a "criminal" investigation. He refused to disclose details.

According to the vets, instead of keeping his appointment with the FBI man, Foss hired an attorney to intervene and prevent any arrest on drug-related charges. Meanwhile, Foss was in Tallahassee today with the others subpoenaed in answer to the grand jury call.

"We talked it all over and we think we'll be okay," Romo said. "There's nothing we did they can get us for."