

Castro Claims Spy Confession by Seized Ship Captain

Examiner News Services

MIAMI — The skipper of a Miami-based cargo ship seized by Cuba last week has confessed to espionage activities and will be tried by a Cuban court, Premier Fidel Castro has said.

"Capt. Jose Villa will be handed over to the jurisdiction of the Cuban authorities for the very numerous acts committed against our country as an agent of the CIA," Castro said in a Havana radio-television broadcast monitored in Miami yesterday.

The United States and Cuba both announced they were alerting air and naval units after Cuba bluntly rejected President Nixon's request that Villa be returned to this country.

To Release Crews

Castro said he would release 28 crewmen of two ships seized by Cuban authorities, but he also has vowed to continue a hard line toward what he calls "pirate ships."

He attacked President Nixon for his "policy of intimidation" and alleged support of Cuban exile attacks

against the Communist island and vowed, "There will be no concessions made to the government of the United States."

Castro called on Nixon to halt "pirate attacks."

"Then there will be no problems in the Caribbean," he said.

Ship Captured

"The Cuban revolution does not threaten any right of free navigation," Castro added. "It offers guarantees to any ship from any country which sails these seas peacefully."

Although born in Cuba, Villa is a naturalized U.S. citizen. He was captured when a Cuban gunboat seized the Panamanian registered freighter Johnny Express Dec. 15 about 120 miles northeast of Cuba. On Dec. 5 Cuba seized a sister ship, the Layla Express. Each ship has 14 crewmen.

Castro said Villa was only slightly wounded in the incident and accused him of "staging drama" by radioing his home office in Miami that he was dying and the decks

were covered with blood.

None of the remaining 13 crewmen on the Johnny Express was hurt, Castro said. Villa, 55, is the only U.S. citizen among the 28 crewmen of both ships.

Castro said an investigation would be repatriated.

Land Infiltrators

Castro said both the Layla Express and Johnny Express, owned by the Cuban exile Babun brothers in Miami, had landed infiltrators and arms on Cuba's coast in 1968 and 1969.

Castro admitted neither ship was involved in the latest attack on Cuba, a commando raid Oct. 12 that left two dead and three wounded at the village of Sama in Oriente Province.

Villa's confession was made after talking to his brother, "a militiaman and revolutionary," Castro said. He then read portions of the alleged confession, which said Villa had fled Cuba in 1960 and been recruited in Florida in 1964 by a CIA agent known as "Mr. Jones."

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**Castro Says
Ship Captain
CIA Agent**
SF Chronicle

Miami

Cuban Premier Fidel Castro declared yesterday that the captain of a Miami-based freighter captured last week by Cuban navy gunboats has confessed to being an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency and would be submitted to "revolutionary justice."

Castro said most of the crewmen of that and a sister ship captured earlier — each with a crew of 14 men — would be released.

Captain Jose Villa Diaz of the Johnny Express has a long history of participating in "pirate attacks" and CIA incursions against Cuba, Castro declared in a radio-television speech monitored in Miami.

The premier said Villa has admitted his role in these attacks over a period of several years to a brother of his who is a Cuban militiaman. He did not identify the brother.

"There will be no return of the ships under the demands" made by President Nixon, Castro said.

In attempting to justify Cuba's capture of the Johnny Express and Lyla Express, freighters belonging to a Miami firm operated under a Panamanian flag by a family of prominent Cuban refugees, Castro detailed a long list of what he said were CIA-directed attacks against the island.

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