

Soviet Crewman Fails In Bid to Defect at Sea

NEW BEDFORD, Mass., Nov. 24 (AP)—Three fishing industry men said today that officers of the Coast Guard cutter Vigilant refused to grant political asylum to a radio operator from a Soviet fishing ship off the Massachusetts coast.

The three said the crewman, an unidentified Lithuanian, jumped aboard the Vigilant about 4 P.M. yesterday and appealed for asylum, but, after negotiations that con-

tinued to nearly midnight, was returned to the Soviet ship by force.

The incident occurred as the Vigilant and the Soviet ship, identified only as a mother ship to a fishing fleet, were tied up alongside each other off Martha's Vineyard for a conference on fishing rights in the North Atlantic.

In Washington, State Department officials said privately that they considered the incident to be "unfortunate."