

Peru Says It Is Confiscating Seized Onassis Whalers

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LIMA, Peru, Nov. 17 (AP) — Peru today said it had confiscated six whaling ships of the Onassis fleet seized in Peruvian waters.

ships of the Onassis whaling fleet seized in Peruvian waters will be confiscated and incorporated in the Peruvian Navy, government officials said today.

Six ships, including the fleet's

have been brought to Peruvian ports so far by this country's air and navy forces. Their crews, several hundred men of various nationalities, will be released after questioning, officials said.

Those Onassis whalers still at large are being pursued by Peruvian bombers, flying boats and destroyers, the officials added. They said most of them would have to surrender as soon as their fuel stocks are exhausted because they no longer have the factory ship to refuel them.

Capture of the Olympic Challenger provided fresh evidence that the Onassis fleet had been hunting whales in defiance of a joint declaration by Chile, Ecuador and Peru banning fishing by foreign ships within 200 miles of their shores, the officials said.

[In New York Mr. Onassis said the Peruvian charge was "too fantastic to comment on." He said Peru had no legal right to extend its territorial zone to 200 miles offshore. Nevertheless, he said, his ships were abiding by the 200-mile limit. He said the whalers were 400 miles off the Peruvian coast. A spokesman said the whaling fleet comprised seventeen to nineteen vessels and all were unarmed.]

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