

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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Japan's Vote-Buying Scandal Brings on Japanese Government Inquiry

The growing international criticism of the millions of dollars of fisheries aid sent by Japan each year to a handful of small Caribbean nations in return for support at the IWC, CITES and other international fora has touched off an investigation by Japan's Board on Comprehensive ODA Strategy, an arm of the Foreign Ministry. ODA is Official Development Assistance, Japan's primary foreign aid office.

The inquiry was instigated by an authoritative report, *Socio-Economic and Political Aspects of Japanese Aid: Japan and the Caribbean*, produced last year by the leading regional conservation NGO, the Eastern Caribbean Coalition for Environmental Awareness (ECCEA). A prominent Caribbean economist,

Bernard Petitjean Roget of Martinique, authored the year-long study of Japan's fisheries aid program.

More than US\$160 million in Japanese fisheries aid was pumped into Antigua-Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent-Grenadines between 1987 and 2000, most of it in recent years, according to the statistics of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Last year alone, Japanese fisheries aid to Dominica exceeded US\$13

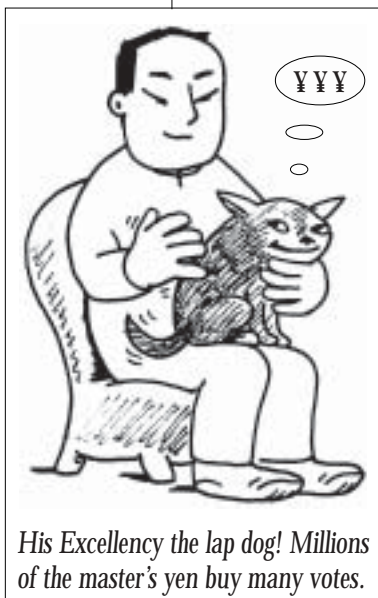
million and to Grenada US\$11 million.

The issue of Japan's blatant vote-buying exploded at the 2001 IWC meeting. Both New Zealand's prime

minister and minister of environment denounced Japan's corruption of small nations' independence after the Japanese deputy whaling commissioner, Masayuki Komatsu, stated in an interview that there is "nothing wrong" when questioned about reports of Japanese foreign aid to buy votes at the IWC.

In an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation broadcast in July 2001, Komatsu stated that, "Japan does not have a military power. Unlike U.S. and Australia, you may dispatch your military power to East Timor. That is not the case of Japan. Japanese means is simply diplomatic communication and ODAs. So, in order to get appreciation of Japan's position, of course you know that is natural that we must do, result on those two major truths. So, I think there is nothing wrong."

Helen Clark, the New Zealand prime minister, issued an official statement condemning Japan's vote-buying that led to the defeat of the
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His Excellency the lap dog! Millions of the master's yen buy many votes.

Large-Type Whaling for Small-Type Minds

For years, Japan has ignored near-universal condemnation and scientific scorn for its commercial whaling operation under the guise of "research whaling."

More recently, Japan has pushed the dubious claim that whaling is of cultural importance to the Japanese people (despite the fact that whale

meat from the research whaling goes unsold on supermarket shelves in a very modern Japan). "Small-type coastal whaling" has been the title for Japan's proposal for reviving its coastal commercial whaling operations, clumsily trying to compare the industrial slaughter along Japan's modern coastline with

subsistence whaling in other nations.

But now comes a new twist: Japan is proposing to open up "large-type" whaling, again in the interest of reviving a payload of whale products for their markets, with thousands of yen expected to line the pockets of whaling promoters. Japan proposes to set up coastal whaling stations and begin killing an initial quota of 150
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Sanctuaries Fall Short

Falling short of the 3/4 majority vote needed, both the South Pacific and the South Atlantic proposed Whale Sanctuaries nonetheless garnered solid majorities at yesterday's IWC. In the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand have developed amazing support, putting fully one-half of the proposed sanctuary under national protection by local coastal countries. Argentina and Brazil also

expanded support for their South Atlantic Sanctuary proposal. But Japan and Norway, backed by their supporting nations, adamantly opposed the sanctuaries and blocked passage.

Brazil summed up the feelings of the Sanctuary proponents, noting

that they would not give up their proposal. They further chastised the whaling nations, urging them to consider whales as something more than an object to kill.

ECO salutes Brazil, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia and their supporters for keeping up the promise of whale sanctuaries.



ECO

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Japan Rebuffed Again

Japan pushed hard for a vote on their proposed amendment to remove protection from whales in sanctuaries "unless there is clear advice from the Scientific Committee that it is required for conservation purposes."

Nice try, Japan, but a majority of IWC members voted against the proposal, 26 to 17 (Japan would have needed a 3/4 vote of the IWC to succeed).

Of course, Japan does not refrain from claiming whales are damaging

fisheries and the economic health of fishing nations, despite the complete lack of scientific evidence, much less "clear advice" from scientists, that depleted whale populations indeed harm any fish stocks.

Similarly, Japan continues to kill whales under the guise of "scientific research" despite the lack of "clear advice" from the Scientific Committee that their research serves any useful purpose, except to make money for Japanese whale meat purveyors.

Whaling, concluded from page one

Bryde's whales per year beginning next year. Operations will be using two "large-type" whaling vessels to harpoon and tow the hapless victims into port for flensing.

Japan has also not abandoned their plans for "small-type" coastal whaling for minke whales (also asking a quota of 150 minke per year from the Okhotsk Sea and Western Pacific for later this year through 2007), despite the proposal's repeated defeat in past IWC sessions.

It should be noted that these quotas are ON TOP OF existing killing by Japan's "research whaling" operations in both the Antarctic and the North Pacific.

And did we mention that besides the "cultural" needs of the "poor" Japanese, these quotas will help protect all the fish that the whales are expected to eat up, too?

As before, the IWC is expected to soundly reject this self-serving attempt by Japan to expand their already lucrative whale killing industry, in direct violation of the moratorium on commercial whaling.

So far, Japan gets the award for coming up with the most excuses for continuing their commercial whaling activities. No matter how you slice their arguments, though, the result still comes up baloney, with a hint of baleen.

Votes, concluded from page one

South Pacific Whale Sanctuary proposal: "New Zealand and other countries opposed to whaling have long suspected that Japan was using overseas development aid money to persuade poorer nations, without any direct interest in whaling, to support Japan's pro-whaling stance at the International Whaling Commission."

"Japan must surely be embarrassed by today's revelation from one of its own senior officials. For some time now, Japan has been under suspicion of effectively buying support of poorer countries ... When put alongside Japan's longstanding but spurious assertion that it is taking large numbers of whales for purely 'scientific' and 'research' purposes, this confirmation of Japan's tactics shows the desperate lengths it will go to in order to maintain whaling. If Japan is indeed indulging in the sort of behavior alluded to by Mr. Komatsu, it can only underline the bankruptcy of its stance on whaling," prime minister Clark concluded.

New Zealand's conservation minister, Sandra Lee, castigated the Japanese government on the opening day of the 2001 IWC meeting: "We recently received the transcript of an interview with a prominent member of the Japanese delegation. During that interview it was stated that there is 'nothing wrong' with his country using its Official Development Assistance Programme 'in order to get appreciation of Japan's position' on whaling issues."

"My Prime Minister and Government view the proposition of vote-buying as outrageous and have publicly said so. Taking advantage of the poverty or vulnerability of developing countries and small island states to buy their votes can only be regarded as a serious misuse of power and influence by a wealthy nation," she continued. "New Zealand fails to see how tied aid or vote buying

promotes good faith, transparency or basic respect for independent governments."

New Zealand's open condemnation of Japan's vote-buying touched off a diplomatic storm between the two Pacific nations that still resonates today. Other conservation-minded nations should join the courageous Kiwis in denouncing Japan's corrupting tactics. Japan's foreign ministry, which has been increasingly concerned about the heavy-handed tactics of their own fisheries ministry, should prohibit "tied aid."

Looking at the role of the local governments and politicians, the ECCEA study examines the "corruption mechanism," often a significant problem when a foreign government selects one of its own nation's companies to build a fisheries facility on a small Caribbean island. Because there is no public accounting for the funds, it is "easy for this company," at the direction of the donor government, to divert some of the funds "to local political parties or to local politicians."

Lesley Suttly, head of operations of the ECCEA, which has 25 groups in nine nations and territories in the eastern Caribbean, released an updated version of the coalition's vote-buying study this week. She commented that "Japanese officials have acknowledged the links between Japan's fisheries aid policy and the support Japan expects in return for such aid: the recipient must sign fishing agreements with Japan and, through its representatives to international organizations, support Japan's stance favoring the commercial exploitation of marine biodiversity."

"Records show that this initiative was first launched by Japan at the IWC, then at CITES, corresponding in each case to a time-frame and a first transfer of aid from Japan to the

country in question. In many cases, island support for Japan's agenda represents a radical departure from national policies, providing Japan with a blocking minority at the negotiating table," explained Suttly.

The report concluded that the fisheries aid, which has largely supported shore facilities, has done little to help the traditional fishermen, and that the investments "cannot exceed the break-even point" unless there are very large increases in production and increased capital. "The Japanese aid program does not take this into account."

The vote-buying by Japan has extended far beyond the Caribbean in recent years. Three newer puppet states at the IWC received large fisheries aid packages in 2002: Panama got US\$3.8 million; Morocco got US\$4.3 million; and Republic of Guinea got US\$6.5 million.

And Japan has recently launched a new effort in the Caribbean to promote its whaling policies. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is doing a five-year study in the Lesser Antilles, funded with 8 million Euros (US\$10 million) supplied by the Japanese government, to study ecosystem-based management of the eastern Caribbean seas, with an emphasis on "interactions with marine mammals and other top predators." That means blaming whales and dolphins for eating the fast-disappearing fish stocks, not the industrial fishing fleets owned by you-know-who. And guess who heads FAO's Committee on Fisheries?

The Japanese government is facing a growing scandal of flagrant influence-buying, the corruption of poor nations and the subversion of democracy by ruthless fishing interests and government officials allied with them. The Foreign Ministry must put an end to this dirty, corrupt business.

Whalers Run Aground

The first day of the IWC meeting did not degenerate into the normal chaos caused by the defiant whaling nations and their well-paid puppets. Instead, a large majority of nations from every corner of the globe overcame ineffective obstacles from the whaling camp to create the Conservation Committee, a major new internal body that will focus on protecting whales and dolphins from growing environmental threats and direct human impacts such as noise, shipstrikes and bycatch in fisheries.

Coming on the heels of last year's disastrous IWC meeting in Japan, where the antics of Japan's deputy commissioner, Masayuki Komatsu, paralyzed the agenda and touched off heated diplomatic protests by many nations, Monday's successful opening session was surprising to everyone. Although Komatsu attempted to disrupt and delay several agenda items, it was clear that the chastising he received last year from his own government had tied his tongue. The presence of senior Japanese officials on the delegation was a calming factor, as well.

Komatsu's antagonist from last year, Andres Rozental, the brilliant Mexican commissioner, demolished Japan's bitter critiques of the Berlin

Initiative. The Japanese commissioner, Minoru Morimoto, had launched an inflammatory attack on the initiative in an opening statement to the commission that for some strange reason was not distributed over the weekend. But a copy fell into Rozental's hands. Morimoto soon regretted writing the grossly inaccurate statement.

Morimoto denounced the 20-nation proposal as a "Trojan Horse" designed to "transform the purpose of the IWC to one of providing total protection of all whales irrespective of the conservation status." He claimed the resolution was contrary to "all customary international law relating to the interpretation of treaties."

"Adoption of the 'Berlin Initiative' would be the final blow to the already polarized and dysfunctional IWC. It would destroy IWC's *raison d'être*," declared the Morimoto statement in inflammatory terms usually employed by Japan's Caribbean lap dogs.

In his rebuttal, Rozental reminded the commission of the abject failure of the IWC to preserve whale stocks for future generations, one of the basic goals set forth when the IWC was created in 1946. An appropriate remedy, he said, is creation of a broad Conservation Committee to protect endangered

species from pollution, climate change, loss of habitat and food, and other growing threats.

It is "unacceptable" that some nations prefer to maintain a "dysfunctional" commission, Rozental exclaimed. The IWC has adopted more than 100 resolutions dealing with non-whaling threats to the whales; the Conservation Committee will be charged with prioritizing them and working with the Scientific Committee to counter those threats, he explained.

Norway and Iceland launched legalistic and procedural attacks on the initiative, but it was the same, old, tired complaints of bureaucrats who have quietly presided over the plundering of the oceans for decades. Several Caribbean nations launched into their regular – and tiresome – attacks orchestrated by Japan and the "Unwise Use" gang. They even ranted that the proponents were "vomiting bile" and the initiative was "tantamount to looting, hijacking," the IWC. It all fell on deaf ears. The tide at IWC 55 has decisively turned against the whale-killers.

The whales, it seems, have many more human friends coming to their aid at the IWC.

(Morimoto quietly released his opening statement for distribution on Tuesday).

Dead or Still Alive?

A new report by the Humane Society of the US (HSUS) and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) challenges the views of whaling nations that lethal whale hunts are conducted in a humane manner.

In the report, *Hunted Dead or Still Alive*, WDCS and HSUS note that the current measure used by the IWC for determining 'humane' killing is the time until death, from the

moment the whale is first wounded until the time the whale dies.

However, this measure of time does not take into account other important parameters of humane considerations: the length of time a whale is chased, the extent of wounding of a whale, and the stress on a whale caused by inadequate weapons.

Greenland reported one whale took 300 minutes (5 hours!) to die. Japan, by contrast, refused to submit any data at all on times to death for

sperm whales hunted in their so-called "research" whaling in the North Pacific. Indeed, during discussion in yesterday's IWC session on the Whale Killing Methods Workshop, it was revealed that Japan hunts five species of whales but provided information to the Workshop on only one species.

Additional concern has been expressed about whales that are struck by harpoons, being severely wounded, but escape capture, only to suffer an agonizing death later.