

ECO

International Whaling Commission Annual Meeting

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Japan Denies Vote-Buying, But Vote-Sellers Say Yes

The growing scandal about Japan's blatant vote-buying at the International Whaling Commission has touched a raw nerve in Tokyo. The Japanese government is now issuing forceful denials and demanding that the IWC censure conservation groups and their publications for reporting on Japan's aid-for-votes strategy.

But more than a dozen impoverished nations, desperate for foreign aid, have eagerly jumped on the pro-whaling bandwagon in the last 15 years, accepting tens of millions of dollars in "fisheries aid" from Japan in return.

On Tuesday, ECO documented Japan's "vote consolidation" strategy by quoting Japanese officials' statements going back as far as 1987. Today, ECO documents Japan's vote-buying from the vote-sellers' perspective, quoting officials from the small, vulnerable nations that have sold their IWC votes for Japanese aid.

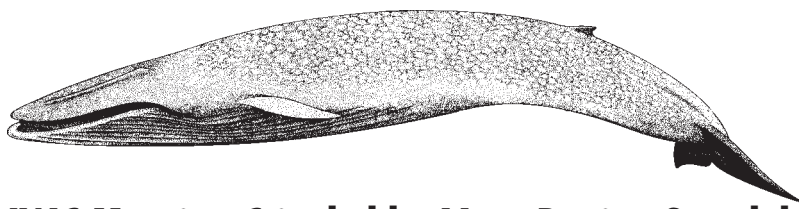
Lester Bird, the prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, stated in a news interview in 2001 regarding his nation's pro-whaling votes at the IWC: "Quite frankly, I make no bones about it...if we are able to support the Japanese and the quid pro quo is that they are going to give us assistance, I am not going to be a hypocrite; that is part of why we do so."

Later in 2001, the official newsletter of the Antigua and Barbuda government published an article entitled "Antigua

Government Getting Returns." It cited a US \$17 million fisheries grant from Japan as having come "as a direct result of its pro-whaling stance." Planning Minister Gaston Browne, when asked if Antigua's vote at the IWC was a factor in the grant, stated that, "If we were to antagonize them, I imagine that they would not be so anxious to assist us."

Also in 2001, St. Kitts and Nevis declared its obedience to Japan's pro-

whaling policy at a signing ceremony for a US \$10 million fisheries complex to be built by Japan in East Basseterre. With Japanese ambassador Yoshio Yamagishi at his side, Prime Minister Denzil Douglas stated to the press that, "The view of the government at the moment is that we will continue to support whaling in our area. The project is in fact the fulfillment of a longstanding
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IWC Meeting Crippled by Vote-Buying Scandal

More than six hours of the commission's valuable time has been consumed over the past three days by rancorous debates behind closed doors as the commissioners from Japan and Caribbean countries beat their breasts and raised their voices over growing charges of vote-buying and vote-selling.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) is the target of the pro-whaling forces. On Monday, IFAW issued a press release with the title, "Statement on Vote Buying and the IWC." It was distributed at a press conference and in the press room at the Sorrento Hilton. The pro-whalers are demanding that IFAW be ejected from the IWC meeting.

The IFAW press release stated that, "Despite the strong legal, ethical, political environmental and other concerns and objections that have been raised, for years, against the Japanese practice of vote buying at the International Whaling Commission, an unmoved Japan perseveres in taking advantage of the poverty and need of the smallest countries in the international community to get, with money, what it cannot obtain with the force of sound legal arguments and with the support of the best available scientific data and evidence."

After two lengthy special commissioners' meetings Monday and Tuesday, the commission served a
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Vote Buying, concluded from page 1 relationship between the Government of Japan and St. Kitts and Nevis.”

In 2000, the Government of Dominica was thrown into crisis when the Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries, Atherton Martin, resigned in protest over the decision by Prime Minister Roosevelt Douglas to override a Cabinet decision to abstain on the IWC vote on creating a South Pacific whale sanctuary.

“They (Japan) announced that if they couldn’t get Dominica to come along with them, they would have to place Dominican projects under review,” Martin stated on BBC’s *Newsnight* program. “If that is not extortion by the Japanese government, I don’t know what it is. They are saying ‘You either go with us or we pull the aid...’

“One can look at the years in which Japanese aid began to flow. In our case, the fisheries complex goes back six or seven years. It was at that time the pattern of voting of Dominica began to be almost 100% in sync with the wishes of the Japanese,” explained Martin.

Martin’s letter of resignation from his ministerial post explicitly described Japan’s vote-buying strategy: “Today I submitted my resignation as Minister of Government to the Prime Minister. I am ...alarmed that the Japanese seem to be using the SAME promise of aid that held the James Administration ransom to manipulate this Government’s voting at the IWC. This is undignified and unacceptable and must be resisted. There is

absolutely no reason for us to be held ransom by Japan in return for promises of aid.”

The Times (London) reported on 14 August 2000 that, “Mr. Martin said Japanese officials had visited the Prime Minister and had threatened to withdraw aid for a new fisheries complex if Dominica abstained on the critical sanctuary issue. Japan had given Dominica, which has a population of 70,000, about 4.5 million pounds for fisheries facilities since joining the IWC, and Japan paid its registration fees at the commission, he said. He said five other islands – Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis – had also ‘succumbed to the same extortionary tactics of Japan. They (also) actually buy off with cash the chief fisheries advisers to the governments, and fly them to Japan throughout the year.’ ”

The U.K.’s *Observer* newspaper reported in a 13 May 2001 story (“Save the Whales? Not if Japan’s Bribes Pay Off”): “Japan also pays Dominica’s 45,000 pounds annual IWC membership fee. Japan denies it, but a Dominican Minister confirmed: ‘Put it like this, we make no allocation for it in our national budget.’ ”

“Martin said the Japanese threat was explicit: ‘They make it clear, that if you don’t vote for them, they will have to reconsider the aid. They use money crudely to buy influence,’ ” the *Observer* continued.

“At the IWC meetings, Japan follows through its tactics by chaperoning the island’s officials. ‘They do not allow them free for a moment—not even at cocktail parties. It’s disgusting, it’s appalling. It’s beyond colonial,’ said Martin. During the meetings, the Japanese pass notes to the Caribbean officials, and prompt them to speak.”

Martin, the former Environment and Fisheries Minister of Dominica,

commented to the *Observer* that, “Small nations are enormously vulnerable to offers of aid. Through extortion with aid, Japan has been able to get many island nations to join the International Whaling Commission and vote its way.”

Daven Joseph, until recently Antigua’s commissioner to the IWC, paid a visit to Dominica in May 2001 to help Japan pressure that government. According to an Associated Press story (“Dominica’s Leader Under Pressure to Reject Whale Sanctuary”), Joseph warned that “Dominica will lose an opportunity for development if you go there and vote for that sanctuary or sit on the fence.”

The CANA News Agency reported (“Dominica: Local Lobby Opposes South Pacific Whale Sanctuary”) that, “Antigua and Barbuda’s IWC Commissioner, Daven Joseph, said it was right for Dominica to support Japan on the sustainable use of natural resources. He said Antigua has been benefiting since 1996 from major Japan-funded projects, including a fisheries complex and a bus terminal. However, he claimed that Dominica’s problem in receiving Japanese aid stemmed from the wavering position of successive governments.”

Daven Joseph lost his parliamentary seat, his IWC commissionership and his ambassadorship to Japan in March when the people of Antigua and Barbuda rose up and voted out of office the notoriously corrupt government run by the Bird family for three decades. The new prime minister, Baldwin Spencer, has hired an leading international forensic accountant, Citigate, to track down the tens of millions of dollars that disappeared from government coffers during the Bird regime. Accounting for all the Japanese “fisheries aid” should be quite revealing.

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Divers Boycott Palau

The website for scuba divers, Cyber Divers News Network, is urging a boycott of Palau because “while Palau deliberately and methodically promotes itself as an eco-friendly dive destination committed to the protection of marine wildlife, including dugongs, dolphins and whales, behind the scenes it colludes with Japan to block the establishment of whale

sanctuaries and reverse the ban on commercial whaling.”

Divers are urged to sign an online letter to Palau stating that they refuse to visit the country as long as Palau continues to support the pro-whaling position in the IWC. Palau is world-renowned as a dive location; tourism could be seriously hurt by a boycott from divers.

The website can be reached at http://cdnn.i-planet.org/act-now/boycott_palau/boycott_palau.html

Aussie Enviro Minister: Whaling Must End

According to press reports, Ian Campbell, the Federal Environmental Minister of Australia, has accused Japan and Iceland of slaughtering whales in the name of bad science.

“Killing whales in the name of science is an affront to science,” Campbell told Reuters on Wednesday. “It is not science—it is commercial slaughter.”

Campbell noted that under the

guise of “science”, 850 whales would be killed next year, if Japan and Iceland follow through with their stated plans. Australia closed down its own whaling industry 25 years ago, after a unique federal review of whaling conducted by a judge, who recommended an end to whaling.

Campbell urged Japan and Iceland to abandon the killing of whales for so-called “science.”



Iwate Coast, Japan, © Pierre Gleizes/Environmental Investigative Agency

Too Many Dall's Die

Japanese coastal fishermen continue to kill thousands of Dall's porpoises and other species off the coast of Japan annually. It is estimated that 30,000 Dall's have been harpooned each year since 2002.

While IWC reports from the Scientific Committee indicate 11,000 to 18,000 porpoises died on average from 1997 to 2001, the Committee notes these figures do not include struck-and-lost statistics, indicating the overall kill is much higher.

Andy Ottaway of Campaign Whale notes that not only has Japan refused to suspend the hunt pending assessment of the status of the Dall's porpoise stocks off Japan, but the government refused to supply up-to-date figures on the numbers being killed to the IWC Scientific Committee.



Dead Whale Afloat Off IWC

Whalewatchers with a World Wildlife Fund boat discovered a dead 15-meter fin whale floating in the Ligurian Whale Sanctuary off Italy, spurring concerns for ship strikes and

other environmental threats to whales around the world. WWF called on the IWC to help speed up the overdue management plan for the sanctuary to avoid these hazards.

Victory for Whale Welfare as IWC Addresses “Inadequate” Safeguards

Despite opposition from Japan and Norway and their puppet countries, the IWC expressed concern on Wednesday that current whaling methods do not guarantee death of whales without pain, stress or distress. Environmental and animal

welfare groups have charged for years that whaling is inherently cruel and should be stopped.

IWC will reconvene the Working Group on Whale Killing Methods and Associated Welfare Issues next year to address the issues

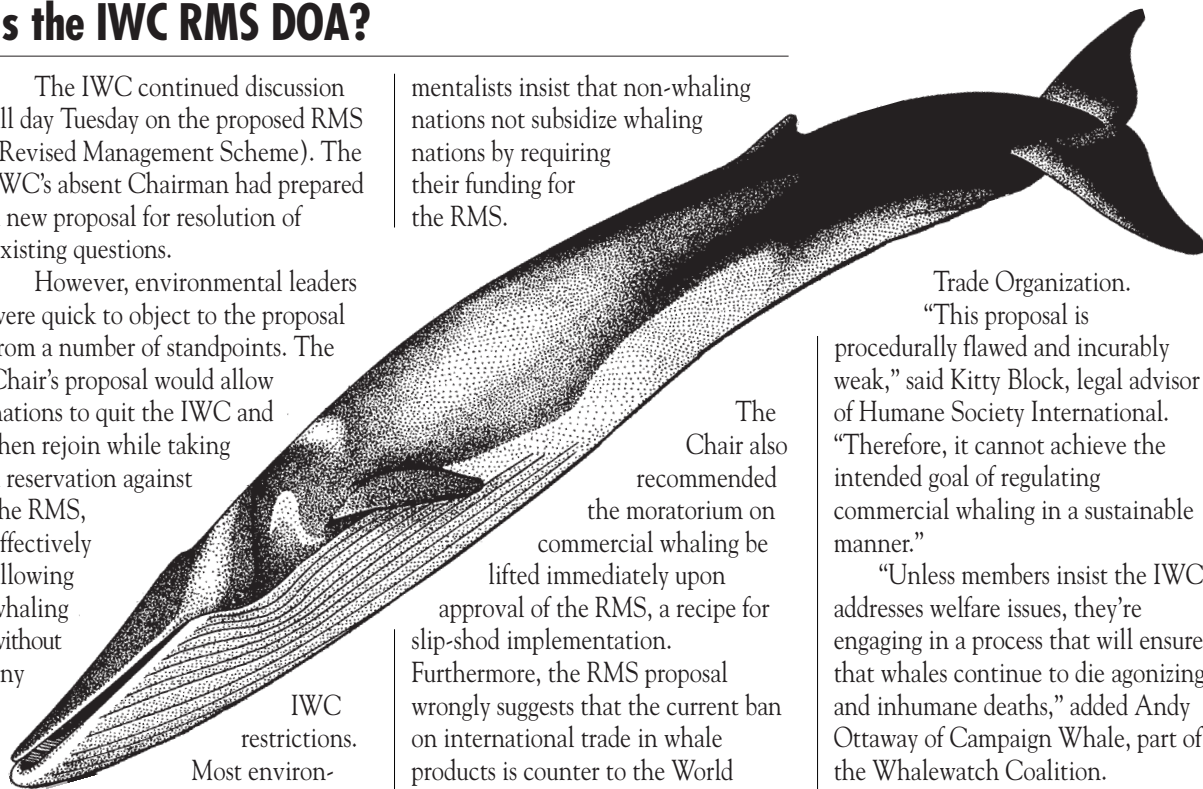
of cruelty in whaling.

The IWC recognized in the majority resolution that the means for determining whether whales were dead before butchering are “inadequate.”

Is the IWC RMS DOA?

The IWC continued discussion all day Tuesday on the proposed RMS (Revised Management Scheme). The IWC's absent Chairman had prepared a new proposal for resolution of existing questions.

However, environmental leaders were quick to object to the proposal from a number of standpoints. The Chair's proposal would allow nations to quit the IWC and then rejoin while taking a reservation against the RMS, effectively allowing whaling without any



IWC
restrictions.
Most environ-

mentalists insist that non-whaling nations not subsidize whaling nations by requiring their funding for the RMS.

The Chair also recommended the moratorium on commercial whaling be lifted immediately upon approval of the RMS, a recipe for slipshod implementation. Furthermore, the RMS proposal wrongly suggests that the current ban on international trade in whale products is counter to the World

Trade Organization.

"This proposal is procedurally flawed and incurably weak," said Kitty Block, legal advisor of Humane Society International. "Therefore, it cannot achieve the intended goal of regulating commercial whaling in a sustainable manner."

"Unless members insist the IWC addresses welfare issues, they're engaging in a process that will ensure that whales continue to die agonizing and inhumane deaths," added Andy Ottaway of Campaign Whale, part of the Whalewatch Coalition.

Scandal, concluded from page 1 demand letter upon IFAW Wednesday morning stating: "This document specifically contained the statement that 'Japanese practice of vote buying at the International Whaling Commission' which without substantiation has been found to be offensive and unacceptable particularly from a non-governmental organization that has been granted observer status at the meeting of the IWC. This was not an IWC recognized document."

The letter stated that commissioners "decided that the Acting Chairman and Acting Vice-Chairman should request IFAW to provide the factual basis for its allegation referred to above, and further information concerning the purpose of the document, its use and its distribution in order that Commissioners can determine what, if any, further action they may wish to take on this matter."

IFAW president Fred O'Regan

responded Wednesday with a letter to the commission stating: "As we stated in our meeting yesterday we are eager to engage in an open and transparent discussion on the issue of vote buying. However to clarify matters we again respectively request what, if any, infractions are being alleged and what process and procedure is intended. We believe that this is the fair minimum that should be granted to any organization about whom there is an allegation."

Despite the exchange of letters, Japan and its client states demanded yet another special commissioner's meeting Wednesday afternoon, further delaying the commission's regular business by two hours.

In a lengthy story Tuesday about the crisis ("Vote Row Overshadows Whaling Meeting"), Agence France Presse reported: "From outside the meeting, some commissioners were heard to say they were 'deeply insulted' by the allegations. They pressed the IWC chief to expel

IFAW."

"It's going to get very, very unpleasant. It will consist of Japan and the Caribbean states ranting on about an honest document outlining the facts," an official from an anti-whaling southern hemisphere state told AFP.

In an attempt to placate the pro-whaling states, the Commission will reportedly announce the formation of a new working group to address rules of conduct for NGOs. Several member nations will be appointed to the working group, which will meet over the next year and report to the 2005 annual meeting.

Whether the IWC will tackle the issue that caused this crisis—Japan's use of aid to purchase memberships and votes at the IWC—remains unanswered.

In spite of this bitter attack on free speech, conservation, environmental, and animal welfare groups will doubtlessly continue to expose the corruption of the IWC's integrity.