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OPEN LETTER TO GREENPEACE JAPAN

27 December 2005

Mr. Junichi Sato
Campaigns Director
Greenpeace Japan

Sir:

Greenpeace's intention to highlight environmental degradation of the seas with the aim of protecting the marine environment is in itself laudable. However, your organization's actual behavior is nothing but an opinionated display of self-righteousness.

Contrary to your organization's mission statement to carry out "non-violent protest", your boats pursue our research vessels; your crewmembers disregard the international law of the sea and repeatedly engage in the illegal and dangerous hindrance of our research activities in the Antarctic. I strongly request Greenpeace stops pursuing our research vessels immediately and refrains from coming any closer in future.

Since December 21, in spite of repeated warnings and requests to move away, your activists continue to approach the Nisshin-Maru and our other vessels. Your organization continues to put in danger the lives of your crews by trying to board our vessels. In short, these actions amount to piracy. While such actions put at risk the lives of your activists, which is your choice, it also puts at risk the lives of our crews as well.

I draw your attention to the fact that the crews of your Zodiac boats are coming in front of the harpoon. Though we pay prudent attention to ensure their safety, the explosive grenade harpoon, as well as the high-caliber rifle used as a secondary killing method, renders the situation an extremely dangerous one. There is also the risk of your crews' entanglement in the harpoon rope and, needless to say, once the harpoon has hit the whale, the area surrounding the vessel becomes very hazardous. The carelessness of your obstructive activities has the potential of provoking a serious accident. Once again, I strongly suggest that you immediately stop these stunts.

As you may be aware, an accident has already occurred. At the time of passing a whale carcass from a sampling/sighting vessel to the Nisshin-Maru, the crew of one of your Zodiac boats ignored our warnings, became entangled in the wire and capsized. Your boats and your obstructive activities are creating a situation where, sooner or later, an accident involving serious injury or worse may happen. If any other such accident happens as a result of your illegal disturbance, Greenpeace will be to blame: it is your organisation that is creating this risky situation. Any accident involving your activists will be your exclusive responsibility.

The captains of the Nisshin-Maru research fleet, which is registered in and operated under the laws of Japan, have the duty of ensuring the safety of our crew and vessels. Any trespassing onto these vessels by any member of your organization shall be dealt with in accordance with Japanese law. The data of Japanese Greenpeace activists engaged in the obstruction of Japan's whale research program will be submitted to the authorities as evidence for indictment and criminal prosecution. Furthermore, any escalation of Greenpeace's violent activities would correspond to piracy as defined by Article 101 of the United Nations' Law of the Sea.

Your websites show that Greenpeace is now co-operating closely with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society to further your activities in the Antarctic. The Sea Shepherd boat, the "Farley Mowat", has already foolhardily tried to approach the Nisshin-Maru and deployed a mooring line with the intent of entwining her propeller. These are extremely dangerous actions. It is widely known that Sea Shepherd has engaged in criminal and violent activity in the past, such as setting fire to and sinking whaling vessels in Iceland and Norway and fishing vessels in Spain and other countries.

Sea Shepherd is a terrorist organization – their members use threats of violence, sabotage and an open disregard for human life in furthering their cause. From your recent activity and acknowledgement on your websites, I can only conclude that Greenpeace is colluding and co-operating with Sea Shepherd; that you have recognized Sea Shepherd and are proclaiming to the international community that Greenpeace itself is kindred to the same violent and eco-terrorist approaches that Sea Shepherd is well-known to undertake.

Hiroshi Hatanaka
Director-General
The Institute of Cetacean Research

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