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Author denies responsibility for diplomatic incident

C. George Muller, marine biologist and author of the critically-acclaimed anti-whaling “eco-thriller” novel *Echoes in the Blue* has denied allegations his book is responsible for any diplomatic incident between New Zealand and Japan.

The allegations were made recently by the Japanese Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) – the government organisation responsible for carrying out Japan’s “scientific” whaling programme in the Antarctic. In a letter to publisher Koru Press the ICR attacked the book, saying, “This kind of anti-Japanese writing may hinder the friendly relationship between New Zealand and Japan that we have built over the years.”

A copy of their strongly-worded letter was also delivered to the New Zealand Ambassador in Tokyo, Japan.

However, Mr Muller rubbished suggestions he was responsible for any diplomatic rift, saying, “The Japanese government’s continued defiance of international treaties and world opinion does far more to damage international relations. I’m just drawing attention to what they’re doing out there!” He also accused the ICR of “telling tales”. Publisher Koru Press has previously blamed the ICR for initiating the diplomatic escalation, saying they had deliberately courted controversy by involving the New Zealand embassy in Tokyo.

In a recent letter to Mr Muller, New Zealand Conservation Minister Chris Carter agreed after reviewing *Echoes in the Blue* that the book could be “perceived as confrontational”. However, he refused to comment further on the matter – although he did wish the author well for his future writing career.

Moving to dispel the controversy, a spokesman for Koru Press’ legal department said, “These are serious allegations made against us, and we would like to see them resolved.” He confirmed the publisher had written to the ambassadors of both governments, but said that to date they had not received any indication that the alleged diplomatic incident was real “rather than a figment of the ICR’s imagination”.

The ICR had also claimed *Echoes in the Blue* “encourages further distrust and hatred towards Japanese and its research programs (sic)”, and accused the book and its publisher of promoting “terrorism”, going as far as likening the author to “Al Qaeda and its Holy War”.

C. George Muller has denied claims his book is anti-Japanese, maintaining it is against whaling, not Japan or the Japanese people.

Koru Press’ legal representative confirmed that the ICR had so far ignored all their attempts to seek a resolution. “Koru Press has also sought an apology for their more slanderous allegations, which unsurprisingly, has not been forthcoming either.”

However, he repeated the publisher’s offer to reconcile the issue, saying, “If the ICR has legitimate concerns we are happy to discuss these with them, however we consider their actions to date to be insulting and threatening towards us rather than seeking a resolution to any grievance they may have. Furthermore, we find the comparison of ourselves to terrorist organisations and accusations we promote terrorism and illegal behaviour to be particularly distressing and bordering on defamatory.”

Earlier this year *Echoes in the Blue* was short-listed as a Finalist in the 2007 Nautilus Book Award, which recognises international authors and titles that promote conscious living and positive social change, with the motto “Changing the World One Book at a Time”.

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Released by Koru Press. For more information please contact:

<http://www.cgeorgemuller.com/contact>

More news and press releases about C. George Muller and *Echoes in the Blue* can be found at:

<http://www.cgeorgemuller.com/presssarchive.htm>

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