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Author denies whalers' allegations he's a terrorist

C. George Muller, marine biologist and author of the critically-acclaimed anti-whaling "eco-thriller" novel *Echoes in the Blue* has hit back at Japanese whalers over their allegations his book promotes terrorism.

The Japanese Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) – the government organisation responsible for carrying out Japan's "scientific" whaling programme in the Antarctic – has attacked the book as "vicious fiction" and "disturbing propaganda".

In a strongly-worded letter to publisher Koru Press, the ICR claimed *Echoes in the Blue* is "anti-Japanese" and "encourages further distrust and hatred towards Japanese and its (sic) research programs". The letter also likened the author to "Al Qaeda and its Holy War".

Author C. George Muller dismissed the ICR's criticism of *Echoes in the Blue* as unbalanced, pointing out the factual novel has already received high praise from both the scientific and literary communities – including from a Scientific Advisor to New Zealand's International Whaling Commission (IWC) Commissioner, who described it as, "Very well researched including some extremely insightful observations about the nature of international politicking in the ongoing fight to protect whales." The New Zealand Herald described *Echoes in the Blue* as an "Uncanny real-life parallel" and a "Tense and compelling read".

Echoes in the Blue has also been 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".

Denying accusations the book is anti-Japanese, Muller reiterates that both he and the main characters in the story have repeatedly stressed the point that the book is against whaling, not Japan or the Japanese people – a fact he says is particularly relevant given that recent surveys have shown that most Japanese do not support their country's continued whaling programme in defiance of the whaling Moratorium, and that fewer than 4% of Japanese regularly eat whalemeat.

Muller says he was particularly concerned by the ICR's assertion that the book's description of Japanese whalers "infringes their vocational rights and gives serious offence to those involved in taking the lives of animals for legitimate reasons."

He responded by saying, "The ICR's reasons for killing whales are anything but "legitimate". Legitimate science does not require killing animals in order to study them, and the commercial sale of whalemeat in Japan makes a mockery of the ICR's claims of scientific independence. Japan's 'scientific' whaling programme has been condemned in the strongest terms by international scientists, governments, and the International Whaling Commission itself which has repeatedly said that Japan's whaling 'research' is not required for the management of whale stocks – a damning indictment given that is the ICR's justification for issuing itself a 'scientific' research permit. In addition, many of the whales Japan targets are classified as 'Vulnerable' or 'Threatened', meaning they are "facing a high or very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future", and their killing and sale are banned by numerous international treaties – Including the International Whaling Commission. The Japanese ICR's so-called research takes place in defiance of the IWC-gazetted Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, and a worldwide Moratorium on commercial whaling."

Further raising the stakes, the ICR also warned that the book could cause a diplomatic incident between Japan and New Zealand, saying, "This kind of anti-Japanese writing may hinder the friendly relationship between New Zealand and Japan that we have built over the years."

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

Koru Press’ legal representative said of the letter, “If the ICR has legitimate concerns we are happy to discuss these with them, however we consider their letter 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 Al Qaeda and accusations we promote terrorism and illegal behaviour to be particularly distressing and bordering on defamatory.”

Author C. George Muller added, “Such aggressive “bully boy” tactics appear commonplace within the Japanese IWC delegation as they try to force support for their whaling agenda, however this personal attack on me represents a new low even for them. I can only conclude that my book hit too close to the mark, and their attempt to discredit me and intimidate my right to free speech represents their desperation to suppress any criticism of their illegal whaling programme.”

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<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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