

The Anatomy of Allied Occupation:
Contesting the Resumption of Japanese Antarctic Whaling, 1945-52

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Abstract

This article scrutinizes the controversy surrounding the resumption of Japanese Antarctic whaling from 1946, focusing on the negotiations and concessions that underline the nature of the Allied Occupation as an international undertaking. Britain, Norway, Australia and New Zealand objected to Japanese pelagic whaling, chiefly on the grounds of its past record of wasteful and inefficient operations. As a result of their opposition, the Natural Resources Section of GHQ SCAP was forced to increase the number of Allied inspectors on board the two Japanese whaling factories from one to two, and to respond carefully to the criticisms they made of the conduct of Japanese whaling. United States sensitivity to international censure caused the Occupation to encourage the factory vessels to prioritize oil yields over meat and blubber for domestic consumption. Moreover, MacArthur summarily rejected a proposal to increase the number of Japanese fleets from two to three in 1947. With its preponderance of power the United States successfully promoted Japanese Antarctic whaling, but a tendency to focus only on *outcomes* obscures the lengthy and difficult *processes* that enabled Japanese whaling expeditions to take place on an annual basis from late 1946.

Keywords

Allied occupation, Antarctic whaling, Allied observers, conservation, whale meat, whale oil, negotiation

Much like the more recent military occupation of Iraq and the war that preceded it, the Occupation of Japan that followed Japan's defeat in the Asia-Pacific War was a multinational operation in more than just name. While it is indisputable that the preponderance of power lay with the United States and the reform programmes so strongly associated with the Occupation period were largely defined and urged on the Japanese by Americans, it is nevertheless the case that General MacArthur as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), together with his subordinates in GHQ SCAP,¹ understood the need to pay due regard to the views and sensibilities of their allies. They understood that the United States led a coalition of nations that had contributed to the defeat of Japan, albeit to varying degrees, and that the subsequent establishment of Allied bodies – the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) and the Allied Council for Japan (ACJ) – reflected a commitment to some degree of consultation on major policy decisions. Conversely, the presence of a substantial British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in southern Japan likewise demonstrated a determination among some allies, most notably Britain, Australia and New Zealand, to make a material contribution to the Occupation and so acquire some leverage in the decision making process.

This article begins by briefly reviewing the literature on the Allied dimension of the Occupation with a view to illuminating its limited or at least fragmented nature. Whilst the scholarship of recent decades has seen a discernible historiographical shift towards framing the Occupation as an international undertaking, few studies capture the complexity of the relationship between the United States and its allies. Historians have paid little attention to the various levels at which disputes played out and the tension between American confidence in their leadership and power on the one hand and their need to accommodate their coalition partners on the other. This tension is clearly evidenced by the dispute over SCAP's decision to authorize the resumption of Japanese Antarctic whaling, which was vigorously opposed by

Britain, Norway, Australia and New Zealand. By contextualizing this controversy, explaining the turbulence it created between the United States and its allies, and exploring the efforts made by the Occupation authorities to manage that conflict, this article adopts a more nuanced view of the anatomy of Allied Occupation. It demonstrates that an over-emphasis on American power obscures some of the more significant multilateral considerations that caused those in GHQ SCAP to tread carefully, to work closely with like-minded Japanese to buttress its position in the face of criticisms from other nations. As will become clear, those Americans with responsibility for justifying, authorizing and supervising Japanese Antarctic whaling were engaged in a delicate balancing act. At the same time as they conceded some ground by permitting Allied observers on the Japanese whaling factories, they worked extremely hard to counter any criticisms, striving to represent the Japanese fleets as efficient and productive, particularly in the context of Japan's food supply crisis and shattered economy. Motivated by the urgent need to conserve stocks of whales, all the parties involved stressed Japanese compliance with international whaling agreements as the most critical issue. Japanese Antarctic whaling thus became a focus for arguments around food and diet (whale meat), Japan's economic recovery (whale oil) and its rehabilitation as a law-abiding nation that reveal much about the inner workings of Allied occupation.

In a wide-ranging and perceptive essay on the historiography of the Occupation of Japan, written in the early 1980s, Carol Gluck referred to an emerging and overdue broadening of perspective on "what was officially an Allied occupation beyond the confines of narrowly Japanese-American relations." Gluck cited recent studies of British or Australian contributions that "revealingly describe the parts played by these nations," so suggesting that the conventional bilateral approach marginalised other important players.² Roger Buckley's pioneering study of Britain's role in the Occupation illuminated a significant diplomatic relationship that was weighted heavily in favour of the United States but was complicated by

major differences – over trade and the peace treaty, for example – that were not always easy to resolve.³ Moreover, Britain’s representation on the ACJ was framed in terms of the British Commonwealth, suggesting a common purpose between Britain and Australia when in fact their approaches were not always convergent. Australia emerged from the war “a fresh, vigorous and provocative player on the international stage,”⁴ willing to defend its interests very robustly.

It is no surprise then that Takemae Eiji – one of the leading Japanese historians of the Occupation – should insist on acknowledging the Allied presence in the form of the BCOF, numbering as many as 40,000 troops and led by an Australian general, and the Allied voice, expressed in the FEC and the ACJ. Still, he stresses that the Occupation was “unitary and preponderantly American,” and that MacArthur “held the BCOF to a very subaltern position.” Likewise, Takemae does not depart from the usual line on the Allied bodies – the FEC, established in Washington DC, was “technically a decision making body,” but “lacked operational control and in practice depended largely on American goodwill.” Whilst the ACJ sat in Tokyo and was made up of representatives of the United States, Soviet Union, China and the British Commonwealth, it was principally a forum for discussions about Occupation policy that seldom altered the preferred position of the Americans. William Macmahon Ball represented the British Commonwealth, a vocal Australian, who was not afraid to challenge Occupation policy and so was viewed by MacArthur, like his Chinese and Soviet counterparts, as a troublemaker. Similarly, the chair of the FEC’s steering committee, Sir Carl Berendsen, was a New Zealander who kicked against what he saw as the United States’ excess of power in Japan. Indeed, Australia and New Zealand frequently worked closely together to pressure the Americans into conceding some ground to them.⁵

Takemae is right to highlight the international dimension of the Occupation but to also stress that the United States in the person of MacArthur usually got its way despite

Allied protests. However, this tendency to focus on outcomes ensures that the Occupation as predominantly an American project continues to be centre stage, obscuring some of the more telling episodes taking place in the wings. For example, in 2012 Franziska Seraphim praised Sarah Kovner's study of prostitution in Occupied Japan "as one of the very few studies of occupied Japan that takes seriously the presence of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force with its multicultural troops" and shows that "social policies had to be negotiated among the Allies, even though the differences in policy were more a matter of degree than substance."⁶ By focusing on *process* rather than *outcomes*, by exploring the reality of negotiation and some give and take on the part of the United States and its Allies, we can better understand the anatomy of Allied Occupation. In many cases, of course, the Occupation authorities were able to advance their reform agendas with relative ease despite frequent objections from the Soviet Union. Thus, studies of educational reform, public health initiatives or the decentralisation of policing, for example, almost exclusively analyse United States policy and Japanese responses. However, issues like food aid and the related matter of fisheries and whaling provoked much opposition from Allied powers with interests in the region, such that Americans in Tokyo and Washington worked long and hard to manage the political turbulence that ensued. In these cases general disquiet amongst the United States' allies at policies that seemed overly sympathetic to Japan eclipsed emerging and more familiar Cold War tensions.⁷ Internal memoranda, reports and check sheets available at the National Archives in Washington DC illuminate these conflicts – they are not discernible in more visible records that report the official line on the Occupation, so finessing much of the upheaval and conflict occurring behind the scenes.

In his account of the Far Eastern Commission, published by the Department of State in 1953, George Blakeslee contended that the resumption of Japanese whaling in the Antarctic and the extension of authorized fishing zones for Japan "aroused acerbic

discussions within the Commission and led probably to more hard feelings on the part of some of the FEC countries than any other issue.”⁸ Historians have explored the controversy from legal, diplomatic and environmental vantage points,⁹ but have not adequately mined it for the insights it provides on the nature of Allied Occupation. This article examines the divisions that arose between the United States and its allies over the issue and considers how they were managed rather than resolved. The dispute arose from a strong feeling on the part of nations with large whaling industries, namely Britain and Norway, that Japan was being permitted by the United States to catch whales in a highly productive region that they wished to dominate. They resisted the proliferation of whaling fleets in the face of a fixed limit on the killing of baleen whales (16,000 blue whale units or BWU) for the Antarctic season (8 December – 7 March) that had been imposed to conserve stocks.¹⁰

Britain and Norway found it particularly galling that the United States was allowing Japan to resume Antarctic whaling despite Japan’s refusal to sign up to international whaling agreements in the late 1930s, when it had earned a reputation for flouting the rules and potentially threatening the sustainability of the British and Norwegian whaling industries. Australia and New Zealand also constantly invoked Japan’s tainted reputation – both objected to Japanese whaling fleets in an area of strategic interest to them. Moreover, Australia had aspirations to develop its own pelagic whaling industry and so coveted the Japanese whaling factories as reparations. All those Allied nations hostile to the resumption of Japanese Antarctic whaling highlighted Japan’s past disregard for international whaling accords, alluding to an apparent laxness and wastefulness on the part of Japanese whalers. A compound of animosities that arose from Japanese aggression and wartime misconduct dwarfed its image problem around pelagic whaling. Wartime enemies chastised Japan as a renegade nation, guilty of committing war crimes, and this censure translated to the high seas, her pre-war fishing and whaling fleets similarly characterised as ruthless and lawless. Indeed,

William Tsutsui refers to Japan's "worldwide reputation for aggressive, predatory fishing practices and a lack of respect for international norms."¹¹ It is difficult to measure the degree to which Japanese whalers flouted the rules and how much more egregious their conduct was compared to other nations' whalers. Interestingly, Japan excused her refusal to sign up to the international whaling protocol by reminding other signatories that she was a latecomer to Antarctic whaling, sending its first whaling factory to the region in late 1934.¹²

Japan chose to disregard restrictions that were enumerated in the Convention for Regulation of Whaling of 1931 (effective from January 1935) and the much more comprehensive Protocol of the International Agreement for Regulation of Whaling, negotiated in London in 1937, and later referred to as the "Principal Agreement." The latter's key provisions stated that there was now to be an inspector on each factory ship, and governments were to prosecute those who broke the rules (Articles 1 and 3 respectively). It prohibited the killing of grey whales as well as right whales (Article 4) and stipulated minimum lengths for particular species – whalers were to desist from killing blue whales less than 70 feet in length, fin whales less than 55 feet and humpback and sperm whales less than 35 feet (Article 5). It limited the whaling season in the Antarctic to the period 8 December to 7 or 15 March (Article 7). Otherwise the 1937 agreement reiterated provisions of the 1931 convention in relation to the ban on killing calves and their mothers (Article 6), the optimal use to be made of all whales taken (Article 11), the provision of data (Articles 16 and 17) and the need for remuneration of crews to reflect sound principles of conservation (Article 13). The meaning of "conservation" at this time differed from current usage, its focus more on utilitarian principles – whaling should be rational and efficient, reflecting the latest scientific advances, and waste was to be avoided at all costs.¹³ Signatories of the new agreement were optimistic that it was "likely...to go far towards maintaining the stock of whales, upon which the prosperity of the whaling industry depends,"¹⁴ the latter being the key consideration.

Japan was not the only newcomer to Antarctic whaling – so too was Germany which signed the new protocol, together with South Africa, United States, Argentina, Australia, UK, Irish Free State, New Zealand and Norway. The signatories declared that their efforts might be frustrated by recourse to unregulated whaling by other countries, causing whaling to become unsustainable. They were particularly mindful of Japan in this regard. Its whaling fleet in the Antarctic during the 1937-8 season was composed of four floating factories and thirty catchers, and it began its operations on 1 November 1937, continuing them until 26 March 1938 (so disregarding the stipulated dates). The ill-feeling that grew against Japan reflected the rapid expansion of its operations – whereas in 1935-6 it was responsible for only 2% of the whales harvested in the Antarctic grounds, in 1938-9 it accounted for 19.7%, compared with 30% for Norway, 29.2% for the UK, 13.2% for Germany.¹⁵

Japan's refusal to sign up to the 1937 protocol gave credence to the view that it carelessly over-exploited whale stocks, that it "remained aloof, preferring freedom of action for its nationals to the restraints of international agreements, and taking a short sighted view of the consequences of its actions."¹⁶ It is difficult to estimate the degree to which such censure was justified, particularly as it may have reflected resentment at unwelcome competition and concerns about Japanese depredations more generally. In March 1947 Ada Espenshade of the Natural Resources Section (NRS) of GHQ SCAP produced a summary of past Japanese whaling transgressions, listing them from the mid-1930s until 1940-41. He noted, for example, that Japanese fleets had illegally killed grey whales in coastal and colonial waters, they had routinely begun their Antarctic whaling in November rather than December, and that one factory in 1941 took fifty under-sized whales (three fin, 29 humpback and 18 blue whales).¹⁷ In short, Japan's history of disregard for the rules provided grounds for Allied misgivings about the American decision to permit Japanese whaling factories to return to the Antarctic for the 1946-7 season. Then again, they may have

preferred to exaggerate Japanese wrongdoing in the past so as to distract attention from any claims of laxness on the part of their own whaling fleets' conduct. These considerations fuelled the heated exchanges that took place between the United States and its allies from 1946 to 1950.

To begin with the Occupation authorities were resistant to any Japanese requests to resume pelagic whaling beyond some limited operations around the Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands around 1,000 kilometres south of Tokyo. At a conference on the subject that took place on 29 January 1946, NRS officials cautioned two Japanese representatives of *Taiyō Gyogyō* (Ocean Fishing), one of whom was a director of the company, that the captains of their whaling vessels must read and understand the provisions of the international whaling conventions. Rather tactlessly the Japanese executives requested that several German whaling vessels that they understood the United States was receiving as reparations be given to the Japanese to operate in the Antarctic. Richard Croker of the Fisheries Division of NRS impatiently responded that the Norwegian and British whalers would have priority for any surplus vessels, that “the Antarctic is outside the authorized Japanese whaling areas,” and that “the US wouldn't let them have the vessels anyway.” Still, the Japanese representatives persisted, “naively” stating that “as long as we had opened the Bonins they expected us to open any other whaling grounds they wanted.”¹⁸

In fact, the director of *Taiyō Gyogyō* and his colleague were prescient in their demands. Little more than a month later officials in Washington DC were frantically responding to the spectre of famine in Japan invoked by General MacArthur's “statement of stupendous food requirements.” They dispatched a high-level special Japanese food commission, representing the Departments of State, War, and Agriculture, to confirm the seriousness of the crisis.¹⁹ Colonel Raymond Harrison, who headed the commission, had no hesitation in recommending large-scale food relief, chiefly in the form of cereals. Moreover,

Washington DC provided a strong steer that Japan should resume Antarctic whaling. Secretary of Agriculture Clinton Anderson urged Harrison to recommend to General MacArthur “whaling operations through [1946-]1947 season.” Thus, Harrison called on the Occupation to expand Japanese fishing and whaling activities “so that full utilization of potential production for Japanese feeding may be made and the excess if any exported as a contribution toward the solution of the world-wide food shortage and to obtain foreign credits for necessary imports.”²⁰ Here was the essential rationale for what would prove to be a very contentious decision in the eyes of the United States’ allies – whaling would alleviate hunger and it would assist economic recovery. As will be seen, the weight given to each of these factors in the diplomatic wrangles of the next few years shifted according to circumstances, the urgent food shortage giving way to the need for economic recovery from 1947.

However, Japan had very little whaling capacity in early April 1946 and so there was no immediate prospect of any international tension over the issue. With the sinking of its six Antarctic factory ships of 10,000 to 20,000 during the war, just one small factory (1,500 tons) was operating around the Bonin Islands.²¹ In a conference on 11 February with Herbert Schenck, the Head of the NRS, Harrison pressed for Japan to be equipped with the necessary factory vessels and machinery for rendering the whale oil. He also maintained that the State Department would be responsible for any necessary negotiations with foreign governments with fishing or whaling interests likely to conflict with those of Japan.²² These two processes – developing domestic shipping capacity and exploring the likely legal and diplomatic repercussions – unfolded in tandem over the next few months. As regards the latter, the State Department informed NRS on 16 May that it approved the policy of resumption of Japanese Antarctic whaling for the 1946-47 season provided that the whale oil produced would be subject to allocation by the International Emergency Food Council (IEFC), and that “this

expedition was without prejudice to future decision regarding disposition of vessels, equipment [as reparations] and products.”²³

At the same time NRS was liaising with the Japanese Bureau of Fisheries to establish how quickly the required whaling fleet could be assembled. Japanese officials assured them that two 10,000 ton oil tankers could be converted to factory ships and these, together with twelve killer boats (around 350 tons each) and seven carrier vessels, would be ready in time for the 1946-47 Antarctic whaling season should the United States finalise the decision for Japan to participate.²⁴ Formal authorization followed on 6 August 1946 in a SCAP instruction (SCAPIN 1103), entitled Japanese Whaling Operations in the Antarctic. This specified precisely the area of operations, the vessels permitted to take part, and the requirement to report every 24 hours the number, kind and output of whales processed. The last paragraph of the SCAPIN stated that “this authorization does not establish any precedent for whaling operations in the Antarctic area...for any subsequent period of time nor is it an expression of Allied policy relative to ultimate determination of national jurisdiction, international boundaries or fishing and whaling operations in the area concerned....”²⁵

Although this final provision was clearly intended to allay the concerns of a number of the United States’ allies with interests in the area, they did not hesitate to object strongly to what they considered to be an inexplicable and misguided policy on the part of GHQ SCAP. The Norwegian government was the first to express its opposition, and the Australian objection followed on 8 August, insisting that the Occupation authorities halt any preparations for the expedition to enable its government to study the problem thoroughly.²⁶ On 21 August the British Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council for Japan, William Macmahon Ball, cautioned General MacArthur that he had refrained from raising the subject at that morning’s meeting to avoid a public clash between the United States and those governments he represented, but that the latter were nevertheless “perturbed” by the

Occupation's directive of 6 August. He called on the Supreme Commander to "defer" his final decision on the dispatch of the Japanese whaling fleet until his government and others had had the opportunity to express their concerns in detail.²⁷

In a lengthy aide memoire to the State Department, dated 3 September 1946, the British Embassy detailed their objections to the new policy, "expressing their profound concern at the manner in which these proposals have so far taken shape." The British government was very "apprehensive that the Japanese whaling expedition will, in fact, constitute a precedent and in the light of the extremely bad whaling record of the Japanese it is considered that the character of the expedition should be radically changed." The statement claimed that the Japanese would prioritise meat over oil and so would infringe the whaling regulations by killing young whales, as they had often done in the past. Despite these concerns, however, the British government approved the Antarctic venture subject to a number of conditions, the most important of which were that the expedition should be run by SCAP under the control of Allied personnel; that *all* the oil should be subject to allocation by the IEFC and not just the surplus remaining after Japanese requirements; that the expedition should not constitute a precedent nor should it prevent whaling ships being surrendered as reparations; that each factory ship should be allocated a quota of whales that should not be exceeded; that Japanese whaling practice should maximise the production of oil in line with modern standards; and that "qualified allied inspectors" should monitor the work of the Japanese crews. Finally, the British government expressed alarm that the Japanese had been authorised on 23 August to convert a tanker into a whale factory ship, because this presaged the "rehabilitation of a Japanese whaling industry without the fullest consultation with all interested Governments."²⁸

Other countries, namely Norway, Australia, the Netherlands and New Zealand, detailed similar objections and safeguards. All complained about Japan's past disregard for

whale conservation, namely its apparently antiquated, inefficient and wasteful operating methods and its failure to sign up to international agreements. Australia and New Zealand were also concerned about the Japanese whaling in an area of obvious strategic interest to them and worried about security issues, namely the ease with which a whaling fleet could be converted to military use in the future. Britain and Norway were particularly exercised by the commercial disadvantage posed by a Japanese whaling expedition depleting the number of whales that they could catch, given there was a fixed limit of 16,000 BWU. As the British aide memoire of 3 September 1946 made clear, the British wanted the various fleets to be allocated particular quotas to minimise this problem, assuming that Britain and Norway would get the lion's share as befitted their larger fleets. Although the American authorities did not agree to this or to most of the other British conditions, they fully appreciated the need to accommodate their allies' concerns and so conceded that the Japanese whaling expedition would be under international control, that there would be Allied inspectors on board the factory ships closely monitoring Japanese whaling practices to ensure compliance with conservation agreements. They strengthened this major concession the following year, when bad-tempered exchanges over what was characterised as a one-off venture escalated into a diplomatic furore over the United States' authorisation of a second Japanese Antarctic expedition for the 1947-48 whaling season.

In the meantime NRS undertook hasty preparations for the departure in November 1946 of two Japanese whaling fleets centred on the factory vessels, the *Hashidate Maru* and the *Nisshin Maru*. Mindful of the need to be sensitive to the apprehensions of their allies, they were careful to ensure that the fleet was in good working order and the Japanese crews understood that they had to comply fully with international whaling regulations. NRS carried out associated briefings and inspections to underline the importance of the need for efficient whaling operations. Indeed, Hubert Schenck himself conducted a tour of inspection of the

Hashidate Maru, warning the Japanese crew that “the eyes of the world were upon this expedition.” He reminded them that “General MacArthur had granted permission for the whaling expedition for purely humanitarian reasons and their strict observance of whaling regulations was a test of their fitness to be included in the family of law-abiding nations.”²⁹ With this remark, Schenck neatly captured the larger purpose of the Occupation as understood by prominent American reformers. For them it was a period of civilizational probation that was necessary to rehabilitate Japan, to restore her reputation as a respectable member of the world community.

As for who would monitor the Japanese whaling fleets, those in charge were not able to find experienced personnel from the United States and Allied nations, largely because of time limitations. Also, likely candidates would face the unappealing prospect of being confined to a whaling factory for more than four months, further depleting the pool of volunteers. NRS selected Lieutenant David McCracken to represent SCAP on the *Hashidate Maru* and Australia nominated Kenneth Coonan as the Allied representative. Their counterparts on the *Nisshin Maru* were A. J. Brewster of the Royal Navy (retired) and Captain William Terry, formerly of Technical Intelligence Company, who was transferred to NRS. None of them had any experience of being an inspector on a whaling ship, although Coonan and Brewster were seasoned seafarers. Coonan had served as a petty officer in the Australian navy (signals) during the war, from which he was discharged on medical grounds in 1945. He saw in this assignment, for which he had just two days to prepare, an opportunity to develop a new career. Following his experience on Japanese factory vessels during the Occupation, Coonan went on to work as a whaling inspector at Australian shore stations during the 1950s. Lieutenant McCracken, who worked in the Transportation Section of GHQ SCAP, heard about the assignment from his roommate, who happened to work for NRS, just three weeks before departure.³⁰ In other words, fairly random considerations governed the

selection of both the United States representative and his Allied counterpart on the *Hashidate Maru*. There is no documentation to suggest that the selection process for those joining the *Nisshin Maru* was any more rigorous.

At the same time that the Occupation authorities appreciated the case for Allied inspectors, they also understood the need to stress American leadership. They wanted to encourage Japan's eagerness to resume whaling in the Antarctic and so sought to minimise diplomatic turbulence. As George Atcheson (chief of SCAP's Diplomatic Section) put it on 13 September, the matter had "now become one in Japan involving American prestige...Any reversal...would be interpreted by the Japanese as clear indication that our predominant role and authority in the Occupation no longer exists and that executive action is not firm, but is, rather, subject to derogation upon unjustified foreign representation."³¹ The tension in this case between American prestige consequent on unilateral action and the need to accommodate other nations in what was formally an Allied Occupation is palpable. Atcheson understood that "foreign representation" was fully justified even if it clashed with a strong United States position favoured by the Japanese. His difficulty lay in reconciling the two, particularly when allies pushed hard to defend their interests against those of the Occupation as he saw them.

These initial tensions highlighted the importance of managing effectively the first postwar Japanese expedition to the Antarctic. British and Australian protests about the whaling vessels flying the flag of the Japanese merchant marine evidenced the sensitivity around the voyage being formally represented as an Allied one. The Australians insisted that the Japanese vessels "be forbidden to wear...any symbol which might be interpreted to indicate that the expedition is Japanese one."³² Following the return of one of the carrier vessels to Yokohama in March 1947, the UK Liaison Mission in Japan contacted the Diplomatic Section of GHQ SCAP, stating that they had seen a photo in a Japanese

newspaper of the ship flying the flag of the Japanese merchant marine rather than the International “E” and demanded to know why this had been permitted. Schenk responded as chief of NRS, explaining that the Japanese flag could not be flown in the Antarctic but could be raised once the fleet was within its authorized fishing area and in the vessels’ home ports. Such relatively minor matters paled into insignificance compared to the complementary issues of conservation, productivity and efficiency, particularly with regard to oil yields.

Judging from the report of the British observer on the *Nisshin Maru*, dated 28 April 1947, the Japanese crew’s practices complied with international whaling regulations, and such violations as the killing of undersized whales were rare and in most cases unavoidable due to bad weather conditions. He noted that projected targets for production of meat and oil were met, despite “some primitive methods employed, breakdowns and untrained personnel.”³³ A few months later a senior figure in the British Foreign Office would express his surprise at Brewster’s positive report given “the antiquated facilities” on Japanese whaling vessels, claiming that he had obviously been “bribed by the Japanese” and an investigation was being conducted to that effect.³⁴ Apparently nothing came of it, although Brewster did not serve as an Allied observer the following year. SCAP’s representative, Captain William Terry, reported “an uneventful voyage,” and stated that the Japanese had “obeyed provisions of SCAP directives and international regulations,” excepting the “accidental capture of three whales that were found to be slightly under minimum size.” He also noted that the factory’s efficiency could be improved by altering the hatch openings, the factory gear and the boilers should “permission for future operation be granted.”³⁵

In contrast, the voyage of the *Hashidate Maru* proved much more contentious and caused a major rift between the United States and its allies. As SCAP’s representative, David McCracken adopted a sympathetic and positive attitude to what he witnessed, as is clear from his account of his time on the factory ship, entitled *Four Months on a Jap Whaler*. For

example, when the Japanese skipper, Captain Miyata, reported to him that one of his catcher vessels had killed a blue whale 68 feet in length (and so two feet short of the prescribed limit), McCracken chided him for the mistake but told him to “haul him on the flensing deck and work him up, just like the rest.” Such errors were inevitable, McCracken wrote, wondering “how a gunner is supposed to be able to judge the length of a whale while it is in the water. At most, he never sees more than a few feet of his back at one time.”³⁶

However, the factory also experienced more intractable problems. From the start of the expedition, McCracken remarked that the *Hashidate Maru* had been “badly adapted.” Its design problems made for some inefficiency, but most seriously the vessel did not have enough boilers to render the whalebones into oil. Given that the factory would be engaged in preparing meat and blubber for human consumption as well as producing oil, NRS had wrongly assumed that three boilers would be enough. As a result, after just a few weeks of whaling, the decks had become cluttered with bones, and this bottleneck was holding up production. McCracken called a crisis meeting, identified with the crew the bones that were richest in oil, and finally gave written instructions “to discard some of the poor bones.” He recorded that the crew was “very grateful” and that “Ken [Coonan] agreed heartily that it was the correct move.” Whilst these measures soon cleared the decks and expedited the processing of whales, the decision to throw away some of the bones contravened the international whaling agreements that McCracken was there to enforce.³⁷

Despite apparently cordial relations during the voyage, Coonan was highly critical of the “wastage of oil-bearing material, mainly bones” in his official report on the expedition, dated 15 April 1947. He referred to piles of back-bones and ribs obstructing work on the flensing deck, making it dangerous and difficult, and noted that on several occasions they were left lying around for two days – so causing the oil to seep or dry out. Captain Miyata informed Coonan that most whale factories had at least six boilers, and his last ship had been

fitted with fourteen. In Coonan's opinion, "the Japanese were taking more whales than they could handle in the boilers, and the logical remedy would have been to have taken less whales." He reported that on some occasions when the factory was very busy, the complete back-bone and whole sides of ribs were discarded, and such actions were defended by McCracken on the basis that much time would be lost cutting them up for rendering in the boilers – time that could be better used catching more whales and processing their meat. Coonan's most stinging rebuke came towards the end of the report when he accused SCAP of disregarding the vessel's deficient equipment so as "to produce as much salted meat and salted blubber as possible without regard to International Whaling Agreements." The Japanese crew, he maintained, were happy to prioritize the production of meat and blubber, because it was destined for home consumption, whereas the oil was to be transferred to the IEFEC.³⁸ Rather than acting on their own initiative, the Japanese understood that the primary justification for this whaling expedition was the urgent provision of food and so prioritised that over the production of oil. McCracken's actions did little to discourage this approach.

Kenneth Coonan's report took on added significance when it transpired that MacArthur was planning to authorize a second Japanese expedition to the Antarctic for the 1947-8 season. As has been shown, United States officials presented the first one as a temporary expedient, intimating that any further decisions on the matter would be made only after consultation with interested allies. Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Norway manoeuvred within the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) in late 1946 and early 1947 to confirm a compromise in line with their wishes and were confident that they had achieved it – that the United States would not authorise further whaling without their agreement.³⁹

Norman Makin, Australia's ambassador to the United States and the most effective critic of its support for Japanese whaling, claimed that the FEC was "lulled into a sense of false security," only to be "suddenly...confronted on 27th May [1947] with a statement from

General Hilldring [Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas] that a second expedition was contemplated.”⁴⁰ At a meeting in his office that day, Hilldring informed representatives of the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Norway that he was consulting them with respect to the proposal; he reassured them that all the provisions of the whaling agreements would be “carefully adhered to” and explained his government’s support for the expedition in terms of the provision of “food for the Japanese occupation and foreign exchange,” thereby reducing the burden on American taxpayers. Mr Graves, representing the UK, maintained that when the limit of 16,000 BWU had been agreed it was assumed that there would be no participation by Japanese whalers, implying that other whaling fleets would be commercially disadvantaged by Japanese competition. Major Plimsoll (Australia) declared that “the US would lose much more in terms of friendship with the allied powers by authorizing Japanese whaling for 1947-8 than it would gain in dollars by permitting it.” Hoping for evidence of Japanese malpractice during the 1946-7 season, Mr Lykke of Norway enquired as to whether anyone had received a report on that first postwar whaling excursion to the Antarctic.⁴¹

A lengthy statement by Norman Makin to the FEC on 26 June indicates that Coonan’s report was only distributed to members on 11 June 1947, confirming – in the ambassador’s words – “what I have been saying about waste and infringements of the international conventions [on the part of Japan].” This was in the context of their past “depredations,” when “the Japanese ruthlessly killed all the whales they could get, regardless of sex and age, regardless of whether they were with calf or not.”⁴² On the same day (26 June 1947) the Australian Mission in Tokyo released a statement to the press, which criticized the United States’ unilateral action and summarized the case against Japanese whaling in the Antarctic as follows: Coonan’s “adverse report” demonstrated Japan’s unwillingness to adopt practices dictated by the need to conserve whale stocks; the re-establishment of a whaling industry in Japan was tantamount to the recreation of a naval potential that threatened the security of

Australia; and Australia should receive the Japanese vessels as reparations and should conduct the proposed whaling expedition itself, possibly with the aid of the UK, New Zealand and Norway.⁴³

The Australian press release followed SCAP's formal authorization of Japan's second Antarctic whaling expedition on 21 June 1947.⁴⁴ On 22 June GHQ SCAP released a statement to the press defending its actions in terms of the Japanese whalers' output last time round – 21,000 metric tons of desperately needed protein foods, together with 12,000 tons of whale oil and 11 tons of vitamin A and D oil for the world market. The Occupation anticipated that the second whaling trip would be every bit as productive and would be conducted according to the same exacting standards imposed on the first whaling fleet.⁴⁵ In response to the Coonan report, the United States Department of State gave assurances in early June 1947 that the *Hashidate Maru* would be modified “to permit necessary processing in complete conformity with conventions.”⁴⁶

The bitterness of the conflict between the United States and its allies over the authorisation of a second Japanese whaling expedition is startling. On 26 June 1947 George Acheson described the UK's attitude as “deplorable” and expressed contempt for the Australian position.⁴⁷ Indeed, he declared that SCAP's decision could not be “overridden by the unreasonable demands of officials of a small nation [Australia] which desires Japanese whaling vessels for its own venal commercial interests.” Acheson insisted that the Antarctic was “not an Australian lake” and the Occupation would not countenance “appeasement of the Australians” when the Japanese Government and newly elected Diet had “tendered formal expressions of gratitude” to the United States for its support.⁴⁸

On 24 July 1947 Ambassador Makin returned to the fray, articulating Australia's objections very effectively on the floor of the FEC.⁴⁹ He maintained that his country's wartime past entitled it “to be the best judge of what constitutes a potential threat to our

security,” and noted that 90% of Japan’s whale catch during the 1946-7 season was obtained in waters adjacent to Australian Antarctic possessions. In the light of Coonan’s criticisms, Makin declared it unreasonable to expect Australia to trust “that the Japanese will in future adhere to the international whaling agreements which they have traditionally violated so flagrantly.” Furthermore, he insisted, the whaling practices of the Japanese during the previous Antarctic season had caused the loss of 3,000 tons of whale oil, together with the loss of another 1,326 tons from the oil-rich blubber that was salted and sent back to Japan for human consumption.

Finally, Makin dismissed the American argument that the meat and blubber were desperately needed to lessen the dearth of animal protein in the Japanese diet – rather it amounted to a “trifling amount of consumption per head.” This was a valid contention. While the Occupation claimed that the meat harvested by the 1946-7 expedition was the equivalent of 34% of the “total Japanese meat consumption from indigenous farm sources in 1946,”⁵⁰ it neglected to reveal how little meat figured in the Japanese diet. Indeed, total daily per capita consumption of meat (including that of whales) in 1947 was 0.97 grams compared to 7.6 grams of fish.⁵¹ When the UK member of the FEC highlighted these discrepancies, the United States, Makin contended, shifted its argument from nutrition to economic recovery, highlighting the Japanese need for foreign exchange from the sale of whale oil abroad.⁵² He deplored the United States’ attitude, which “indulges the Japanese economy in total disregard of the interests of several of the main belligerents against Japan,” and urged in vain for the matter of Japanese whaling be brought to a vote. Ultimately, the UK feared that that “the US would carry out its threat to invoke the veto if the issue came to a vote in the FEC” and considered “the issue not of sufficient importance to risk a fundamental US-UK schism.”⁵³ For these reasons, no one formally objected to the FEC chair’s request on 4 September 1947 to remove the subject of Japanese whaling from the agenda.⁵⁴

Just because the acrimonious debate in the FEC had abated did not mean that the issue was any less toxic. Critics of the policy believed that the United States had acted in bad faith by permitting a second Japanese Antarctic whaling expedition in the face of their strong opposition. American sensitivity to this is demonstrated by the swift rejection of a proposal by NRS to fit out a third Japanese factory ship for operation during the 1947-48 season.⁵⁵ MacArthur likewise prohibited any additional factories for the third and fourth expeditions to the Antarctic in 1948-49 and 1949-50, because he wanted Japanese whaling to continue “on the same basis” to avoid the need for further authorization.⁵⁶ The Supreme Commander understood that reopening the subject would reignite the diplomatic furore.

More importantly, on 1 July 1947 the head of NRS stated that the number of Allied representatives on the whaling factories would be doubled to four,⁵⁷ clearly a response to the angry exchanges of June. By boosting Allied involvement, the Occupation hoped to demonstrate that it was treating their objections seriously and to provide an opportunity for them to witness responsible whaling on the part of the Japanese. The NRS undertook a more rigorous selection process than the previous year. Rather than inviting McCracken to supervise operations again, they selected a more senior American officer, Lieutenant Colonel Waldon C. Winston, as the SCAP representative on the *Hashidate Maru*. His Allied counterparts were the Australian Ken Coonan and Commander Herman Sundt, an experienced Norwegian whaling inspector. William Terry of NRS once again went to sea on the *Nisshin Maru*, and was joined by Captain A. V. Hemming of the British Royal Navy (retired) and Lieutenant Francois Bourgois, a French naval officer.

Despite the urgent need for the Japanese fleets to give a good account of themselves, to avoid any infractions that would provoke the ire of their critics, the *Hashidate Maru* got off to a very bad start. Just a fortnight after it had begun whaling, the head of NRS warned senior managers of *Nihon Suisan* (Japan Marine Products) that the record of its whaling

factory was “very poor,” so poor in fact that unless it was improved he would “order your fleet back to Japan” and would “terminate all whaling activities of your company.” Schenk noted that it was already responsible for three illegal catches and that its oil yield was 84.5 barrels per BWU compared to 112.6 for the *Nisshin Maru*. His closing statement captured the sensitivity of NRS to Allied criticism – he remarked that “we have so much difficulty internationally with the Antarctic whaling that we have to be very careful of everything we do.”⁵⁸ The main difficulty was over the issue of whale oil, and the charge in Coonan’s report of 15 April 1947 that the Japanese had wasted it. NRS had countered that the oil yield had been reduced by the use of blubber for food and when that was taken into account it compared favourably with that of other nations.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Waldon Winston had instructed representatives of the whaling companies before the expedition set off that “every effort should be made to maximize production of whale oil,” again showing how the justification for Japanese whaling was tilting away from the dietary deficit of protein towards the production of oil for foreign exchange.⁶⁰ Winston had been confident that the remodelling of the *Hashidate Maru* would improve its efficiency and productivity and that the voyage would be a successful one.⁶¹

Failure however continued to plague this troublesome ship. On 23 January 1948 company officials had to explain the fifth illegal killing (67 feet in length). Claude M. Adams of NRS reminded them that small size whales would decrease average oil yield per BWU, which would cause yet more “unfavourable criticism from foreign countries.” He called for new size limits – 72 feet for a blue whale, 60 feet for a fin whale – and was promised the introduction of fines or other punishments for gunners who breached these limits.⁶² SCAP’s man on the *Hashidate Maru*, Winston, opposed the new length limits, calling for the company rather than the gunner to be penalized for the killing of undersized whales. He was sceptical about the figures produced by the International Bureau of Whaling Statistics, noting

that “conveniently many come in at maximum length” and that Norwegian whalers most likely had “relatives or friends at the tape.” Indicative perhaps of the beleaguered attitude of the United States in relation to Japanese whaling, he maintained that the British and Norwegians had “engaged in indiscriminate killing for decades” and they shared the same faults as the Japanese.⁶³

These comments reflected the tensions between the SCAP representative and his Australian and Norwegian companions on the *Hashidate Maru*, a kind of microcosm of the Allied Occupation itself. As in the larger context, Winston was definitely in charge but that did not mean that he could summarily dismiss his colleagues’ requests and concerns. They were engaged in a common enterprise and it was important that relations remained cordial so that they could work together effectively, particularly as they were confined to a “floating island for six months.” In a lengthy letter to NRS, Winston vented some of his frustrations, referring one or two matters to his superiors that he could normally handle in order “to avoid unpleasantness.” After all, he “had to live with these people for a few more months.” He was scathing about Coonan, who was “rarely out on the deck” and yet claimed expertise on the basis of this being his second assignment on the *Hashidate Maru*. Relations temporarily broke down when Winston did not allow him to communicate directly with his wife when the fleet was off the coast of Australia, insisting that he go through Tokyo. Coonan reacted angrily to what he saw as censorship and the Norwegian, Sundt, was sympathetic to his case. Further tensions arose when the Allied representatives proved reluctant to permit Winston to see their catch log books. When Winston told Coonan that a certain production report he wanted had been delayed, the latter had sarcastically asked why – “wasn’t the production high enough to suit you?” Likewise, Winston was rebuffed when he asked to examine Sundt’s logbook, the Norwegian exclaiming that “we didn’t come here to tell people how to do things but to observe how they do the job!” Despite this incident, Winston liked Sundt,

describing him as “a fine gentleman,” who could be relied on for accurate reporting.⁶⁴ However, when Sundt had tried to send messages to Oslo, detailing interim catch or production figures, NRS advised Winston to explain to him that weekly reports were the responsibility of SCAP, and that he was an “Allied observer” rather than a Norwegian whaling inspector.⁶⁵ The language speaks volumes about the perceived relationship between the United States and its allies – the former made policy and the latter monitored its implementation.

Nevertheless, NRS counselled that every effort be made to listen to the views of the observers and to limit any fallout arising from their concerns. The Supreme Commander himself met Coonan and Sundt on their return to Japan, thanking them “heartily” for their endeavours on behalf of the Occupation. He asked Sundt about violations of whaling regulations and the proficiency of the factory’s crew, to which the Norwegian responded by noting a few infractions and describing the Japanese as industrious and willing but less comfortable with the use of machinery than his countrymen. In response to questions, Coonan confirmed it was his second trip on the *Hashidate Maru*, it was 100% better this time, but that the crew caught fewer whales due to mechanical problems with a number of killer boats. Schenck then took the two observers out for lunch, during which Sundt complained about Winston’s officious attitude towards his requests – for example, Winston did not allow him to speak to some compatriots on a nearby whaling ship. Schenck hinted that he would have been more permissive.⁶⁶

The head of NRS also met with Captain A. V. Hemming, the UK observer aboard the *Nisshin Maru*, on 13 April 1948 following his return from the Antarctic. Hemming stated that “the Japanese did a good job” and “there was no question of [them] evading regulations” when there were three Allied observers *and* three Japanese inspectors on board. He described the *Nisshin Maru* as “a happy ship,” well run with a clear division of labour. Hemming

remarked that during the 1930s the Japanese factories in the Antarctic had prioritised oil, but now they were more concerned about alleviating hunger, they didn't waste anything and even intestines were salted down and used for food. Interestingly, he claimed that only one undersized whale was killed and it was so close to the prescribed length that he thought Terry overly strict in calling it a short one. In fact, the *Nisshin Maru* took six illegal whales, but the Japanese whaling inspector did not notify NRS of these violations at the times they occurred, deciding to report them only at the end of the season.⁶⁷ Still, the efficiency of the factory made these infringements less visible in the statistics. The *Nisshin Maru* caught 833 whales whereas the figure for the *Hashidate Maru* was only 488, causing the percentage of illegal whales to be 0.72 and 1.024 respectively. So the pattern of the 1946-47 season repeated itself – one of the whaling fleets performed well, the other much less so, both contributing to a total catch of 1,321 whales (1,017 BWU), missing the goal of 1,700 whales by some distance. They produced 36,919 metric tons of whale meat and blubber and 17,829 metric tons of whale oil, exceeding the target figure of 33,128 for food and falling short of the one for oil (20,150).⁶⁸

These numbers show that the issue was more one of productivity than the actual number of illegal whales killed – obviously the percentage of these would fall as the number of legal whales caught and processed increased. *Nihon Suisan* explained the unsatisfactory results of the *Hashidate Maru* with reference to two key factors – three new catcher boats kept breaking down and this disrupted the operations of the fleet, as did Schenck's threat to recall it when a few undersized whales were killed early in the voyage. This made the Japanese gunners overly cautious.⁶⁹ Ironically then NRS's anxiety about any infringements of the whaling regulations in the face of Allied protests may have contributed to the poor productivity of the *Hashidate Maru*.

Given that NRS officials had closely monitored Japanese operations during the 1947-48 season, it is not surprising that none of the observers' reports were contentious. There is no doubt that the Occupation authorities were careful to treat the Allied observers with respect, to listen to their comments, and to accommodate their concerns. Schenk's threat to recall the *Hashidate Maru* may have been directed as much at the Allied observers as it was at the Japanese owners and crew, underlining the seriousness with which NRS viewed any breaches of the whaling regulations. Indeed, NRS consulted no less an expert on whaling than Dr Remington Kellogg, Curator of the Division of Mammals at the Smithsonian Museum, to put the Japanese figures in comparative context. Kellogg noted that the number of undersized whales taken by Norwegian expeditions was less than 1% and was only 0.57% for fin whales killed in 1938-40.⁷⁰ Thus, the figure for the *Nisshin Maru* compared favourably with a leading European whaling nation whereas the record of the *Hashidate Maru* perhaps did not.

When it came to the third Japanese whaling expedition to the Antarctic for the 1948-49 season, each factory hosted just one Allied observer (as was the case for 1946-47). This evidenced that the Occupation had managed to contain the diplomatic fallout of 1947, to take the sting out of the crisis. The same countries continued their protests but they lacked the force and conviction of previous years. NRS employed the French observer on the *Nisshin Maru* for the 1947-48 season, Francois Bourgois, as its SCAP representative on the *Hashidate Maru*. Promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, Bourgois was accompanied by the retired British naval officer, Captain Hemming. This time Ken Coonan supervised operations on the *Nisshin Maru* under Major James A. Crombie, representing SCAP. Again the fleet of the *Hashidate Maru* proved to be inefficient, due to "structural deficiencies which threatened loss of life and cargo, interfered seriously with operations..., and caused the loss of approximately 200 tons of fuel oil." The reports of Bourgois and Hemming highlighted these problems. They recommended on their return to Japan that three

of the vessels undergo extensive repairs.⁷¹ The only other issue on the *Hashidate Maru* was a series of messages about the 1948 whaling regulations exchanged by Hemming and the UK government in the early weeks of the voyage that SCAP characterised as “a misunderstanding of the location of authority” in the Antarctic whaling fleet. Hemming had told the chief of NRS before he left Japan that he should “possess executive authority” and be senior to Bourgois. At the time Schenck had explained that he was an observer, “a guest of SCAP,” and formal control of the vessel lay with Bourgois. NRS dispatched a message to Bourgois on 10 December 1948, advising him to “take no action” as the matter could be “dynamite,” but to keep NRS informed of developments. This again underlines the sensitivity with which the Occupation handled any disputes with Allied observers.

By contrast, the *Nisshin Maru* was a victim of its own success. Some rather frantic exchanges between NRS and Crombie in early February 1949 arose from the volume of its whale catch and the need to process the whales in a timely fashion (the maximum time allowed was 33 hours). On 28 January 1949 the catcher vessels took 19 blue and 4 fin whales, which in the view of William Terry seriously exceeded what he regarded as the factory’s maximum daily processing capacity of 14 blue whales. He informed Crombie that it was “unwise and contrary to best conservation principles” and that he should consider not only the letter of international whaling regulations but also “the impressions which might be created in the minds of Captain Hemming and Mr. Coonan.” An official radio made the point very strongly – “we try to teach conservation and efficiency but to condone [this catch] reverses our stand.” Crombie replied that he would reduce the catch but resented what he thought were “ill founded accusations.”⁷² Ken Coonan sprang to his defence, remarking that the *Nisshin Maru* was much more efficient than the *Hashidate Maru* and that Crombie was doing an excellent job of managing the factory. Indeed, Coonan was happy to report that there was no “over fishing,” nor was there any evidence of “waste or violations of the

whaling regulations.”⁷³ On its return to Japan, Mr Adams of NRS declared that the fleet of the *Nisshin Maru* had exceeded its targets for meat and oil. He commended the crew for its production of 107.4 barrels of oil per BWU, stating that if the meat and blubber had been reduced to oil – as was done by other whaling nations – then the figure would be an impressive 122.5 barrels.⁷⁴ The *Hashidate Maru* was not far behind with a yield of 106 barrels/BWU.⁷⁵ Neither SCAP nor Allied representatives mentioned any illegal catches, although Tokyo District Prosecutor’s Office charged Japanese gunners with killing three lactating whales, only to see the case dismissed due to insufficient evidence.⁷⁶

Further Japanese whaling expeditions to the Antarctic took place in 1949-50 and 1950-51, but were no longer accompanied by Allied observers. NRS hailed both a great success on the grounds that very few illegal whales were taken and oil yields were constantly improving. On 8 March 1950, for example, Schenck declared that during a season 20% shorter than the previous year the Japanese fleets had processed 20% more blue whale units, producing 32% more oil and 2% more meat products. Acknowledging one of the main sources of Allied complaint, he noted that “Throughout the season quantities of meat, which were salted during the first three expeditions, were processed for oil.”⁷⁷ Although Norway and other interested nations continued formally to object to Japanese participation,⁷⁸ the UK Liaison Mission in Japan had informed NRS on 29 August 1949 that the British government was satisfied that the Japanese abided by international whaling agreements, and accordingly did not feel “that the public interest would be served by sending a British observer with the Japanese expedition leaving this autumn.”⁷⁹ This signalled the end of Allied representation on the whaling factories. The United States had contained the dispute satisfactorily although MacArthur did not dare to increase the number of Japanese fleets to three as NRS again recommended on 31 March 1949.⁸⁰ In June 1951 the Occupation announced that the *Hashidate Maru* and the *Nisshin Maru*, both suffering from “latent structural deficiencies,”⁸¹

had been decommissioned as whaling factories and were to be converted back to oil tankers. Japanese companies were building new, much larger whaling factories of around 17,000 tons – the *Tonan Maru* and the *Nisshin Maru II* – that would operate from the start of the 1951-52 Antarctic season.⁸² On 7 September 1951, the day before the Peace Treaty was signed in San Francisco, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry expressed its deepest gratitude to GHQ SCAP for approval of the dispatch of three whaling fleets to the Antarctic, two for baleen whaling and one for the harvesting of sperm whales.⁸³ The Norwegian Diplomatic Mission insisted on the condition that the third fleet limit its catch to sperm whales.⁸⁴ Finally, GHQ SCAP successfully secured the support of the fourteen member nations of the International Whaling Commission for Japan's adherence to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling in early 1951.⁸⁵ This was the culmination of the United States' effort to make Japanese pelagic whaling respectable, to free it of the tarnished image that had bedevilled it since the 1930s.

Ultimately then the United States successfully promoted Japanese Antarctic whaling despite prolonged and vigorous Allied opposition, particularly from Britain, Norway and Australia. Judged by the final outcome of its endeavours, the outlines of the conventional narrative of American executive dominance triumphing over Allied complaints seem intact. However, careful analysis of the process of negotiation between the United States and its allies clearly demonstrates that GHQ SCAP had to concede ground to its critics. The United States felt compelled to permit Allied observers to monitor Japanese whaling practices and undertook the difficult task of managing individuals who, reflecting the misgivings of their governments, approached their duties in a sceptical frame of mind. The United States' decision to represent the first expedition of 1946-47 as a one-off and then to authorise a second one led to a diplomatic furore in the Far Eastern Commission. The State Department was embarrassed by charges of bad faith, causing the Occupation to double the number of

Allied observers on the whaling factories and the Supreme Commander to reject the case for any expansion of Japanese pelagic whaling capability beyond two fleets.

The correspondence between the SCAP representatives and their superiors in Tokyo shows clearly that relations on the factories were carefully managed – in relation to the *Hashidate Maru* in particular, the NRS invested much time and effort accommodating the views of the Allied observers and their superiors in London, Oslo and Canberra. Rather than dismissing their complaints, its officials made every effort to listen to them and respond to them in a considerate and sensitive manner. Thus, the Supreme Commander himself deigned to meet Coonan and Sundt following their return from the Antarctic in April 1948. When Hemming tried to pull rank on Bourgois the following season, NRS counselled caution in handling the situation, describing it as “dynamite.” The Antarctic whaling expeditions of 1946-47, 1947-48 and 1948-49 were collaborative efforts and the careful way they were managed was replicated in the committees of the FEC, where the United States had to make its case for Japanese whaling as convincingly as possible. When critics exposed the United States’ arguments about remedying the dearth of animal protein in the Japanese diet as less than persuasive, its defence shifted to the processing of oil for earning Japan some foreign exchange. NRS’s increasing efforts to improve the factories’ oil yields, to prioritise those over meat and blubber, from the 1947-48 season onwards demonstrate this change of emphasis.

What then does this controversy reveal about the anatomy of Allied Occupation? It shows us that the inner workings of the Occupation were more complex than has been understood. The United States had to account for its actions to its allies where its policies conflicted with their interests, and so its arguments around the resumption of Japanese Antarctic whaling had to be carefully calibrated and adjusted if they lost force. Also, it demonstrates that there were occasions when this was truly a collaborative enterprise, that the

United States had to work closely with its allies to achieve policy objectives – in this case the rebuilding of factory capacity and the rehabilitation of Japan’s whaling industry and reputation. General MacArthur was impatient with any constraints on his action, particularly with regard to the FEC and ACJ, but he and his superiors understood that Allied complaints in these bodies “had to be countered or pre-empted.”⁸⁶ They could not ignore them. This case study represents the Allied Occupation of Japan as a coalition of the willing, a combination of American leadership and dependence on its coalition partners. When it came to whaling, tensions between the United States and its allies eclipsed the rising friction with the Soviet Union, illuminating an Occupation that when properly dissected reveals its international colouring and composition.

Endnotes

¹ SCAP is commonly used as shorthand for both the Supreme Commander and the organization over which he presided.

² Carol Gluck, “Entangling illusions – Japanese and American views of the Occupation,” in *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations*, Warren I. Cohen ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 208, 212.

³ Roger Buckley, *Occupation Diplomacy: Britain, the United States and Japan, 1945-52* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁴ Roger Dingman, “The view from down under: Australia and Japan, 1945-52,” in *The Occupation of Japan: the international context*, Thomas W. Burkman, ed. (Norfolk, Virginia: Macarthur Memorial Foundation, 1984), 100.

⁵ Eiji Takemae, *Inside GHQ: the Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), 98-102, 134.

⁶ Franziska Seraphim, “A new social history of Japan,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 73, no. 1 (February 2014):189, 195. She is referring to Sarah Kovner, *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

⁷ As a newcomer to Antarctic whaling and with just one whaling factory vessel (*Slava*) operating in the Southern Ocean during the Occupation period, the Soviets do not figure as a significant player in this account.

⁸ George Blakeslee, *The Far Eastern Commission* (Washington DC: Department of State, 1953), 105.

⁹ Harry N. Scheiber, *Inter-Allied Conflicts and Ocean Law, 1945-53: The Occupation Command's Revival of Japanese Whaling and Marine Fisheries* (Taipei: Academica Sinica, 2001); K. Dorsey, *Whales and Nations: Environmental Diplomacy on the High Seas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013).

¹⁰ The quota of 16,000 BWU was agreed at a special conference of whaling nations in London in January 1944. The blue whale unit made one blue whale equivalent to two fin whales or 2.5 humpback whales.

¹¹ William Tsutsui, "An empire reborn: the Japanese fishing industry during the Occupation," in *The Economic and Business History of Occupied Japan*, Thomas French, ed. (London: Routledge, 2018), 82.

¹² Arne Kalland & Brian Moran, *Japanese Whaling: End of an Era?* (London: Routledge, 1992), 83; J. N. Tonnessen & A. O. Johnsen, *The History of Modern Whaling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 448.

¹³ Kurkpatrick Dorsey, *Whales and Nations* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 131.

¹⁴ The text of the 1937 Protocol and Final Act can be found in Committee for Whaling Statistics, *International Whaling Statistics XVII*, Oslo, 1947, 26-34.

¹⁵ Larry Leonard, *International Regulation of Fisheries* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 106.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁷ Memorandum for Record, Summary of Past Whaling Activities which were not in accordance with the International Whaling Regulations, 6 March 1947, Natural Resources Section [NRS] Records, file 4, box 8980, Record Group [RG] 331, National Archives II [NAII], College Park, MD.

¹⁸ Memorandum for Record, Conference on Whaling Operations, 29 January 1946, NRS Records, file 5, box 8980, RG 331, NAII.

¹⁹ Chris Aldous, "Contesting Famine: Hunger and Nutrition in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 17, no. 3 (2010): 240-41.

²⁰ Memo to Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Extension of Japanese Whaling and Fishing Activities, 4 April 1946, NRS Records, file 5, box 8980, RG 331, NAII.

²¹ Note from NRS to ESS (Economic and Scientific Section), 6 April 1946, NRS Records, file 5, box 8980, RG 331, NAII; NRS Report Number 73, 4 April 1947, Japanese Whaling in the Bonin Island Area, 12.

²² Memo for Record, 16 April 1946, NRS Records, file 5, box 8980, RG 331, NAII.

²³ Memo for Colonel Harrison (US Food Mission), 12 February 1947, NRS Records, file 9, box 8980, RG 331, NAII.

²⁴ Memo for Chief of Staff from Herbert Schenck, undated; Note for Record made by R. H. Fiedler of NRS, also undated, NRS Records, file 10, box 8980, RG 331, NAII.

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- ²⁵ Memo for Colonel Harrison, Japanese Antarctic Whaling Project, dated 12 February 1947, NRS Records, file 9, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Letter from Ball to MacArthur, NRS Records, file 10, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ²⁸ To the US Political Adviser to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, signed Clayton (Acting), NRS Records, file 10, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ²⁹ *Nippon Times*, 13 August 1946.
- ³⁰ David R. McCracken, *Four Months on a Jap Whaler*, New York: Robert M. McBride, 1948, 3, 15.
- ³¹ SCAP telegram to WARCOS (Pass to SecState), dated 13 September 1946, NRS Records, file 10, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ³² Incoming message from WAR, to CINCFEE, dated 1 January 1947, NRS Records, file 9, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ³³ Memo for Lieutenant Colonel Schenck, Report of the British Whaling Observer aboard the factory ship 'Nissin Maru' of the Japanese Antarctic Whaling Expedition, dated 28 April 1947, NRS Records, file 9, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ³⁴ Message from US Embassy London to Secretary of State, copy to Political Adviser, SCAP, 5 August 1947, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ³⁵ Memo for Record from Claude M. Adams, Scientific Consultant Fisheries Division, Inspection of Factory Ship Nissin Maru of the Japanese Antarctic Whaling Expedition, dated 29 April 1947, NRS Records, file 9, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ³⁶ McCracken, *Four Months on a Jap Whaler*, 57-8.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 11, 97, 157-61.
- ³⁸ Coonan's report on the 1946-7 expedition, External Affairs Department, Japan: Whaling in Antarctic, 1946-47, Series No. A1067, National Archives of Australia, pp. 8, 17-21.
- ³⁹ See Blakeslee, *The Far Eastern Commission*, 107-8, for details of these manoeuvres.
- ⁴⁰ Minutes of 63rd meeting of FEC, 26 June 1947, Iokibe (ed.), *The Occupation of Japan, Part 2*, fiche 4B-62, Tokyo: Maruzen, 1987.
- ⁴¹ Memo of conversation, by Acting Assistance Chief of International Resources Division (Flory), Washington, 27 May 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), vol. VI, The Far East, 218.
- ⁴² Minutes of 63rd meeting of FEC, 26 June 1947.
- ⁴³ Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to Secretary of State, Tokyo, 26 June 1947, *FRUS*, vol. VI, The Far East, 239.
- ⁴⁴ Memo dated 21 June 1947; subject: Japanese whaling operations in the Antarctic in 1947-8 season, Iokibe (ed.), *The Occupation of Japan, Part 2*, 3C-1869.

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- ⁴⁵ Press release issued by HQ of General of Army Douglas MacArthur, Tokyo, 22 June 1947, *FRUS*, vol. VI, The Far East, 235.
- ⁴⁶ Department of State to Norwegian Embassy, *Aide Memoire*, 9 June 1947, *Ibid.*, 222.
- ⁴⁷ Political Adviser in Japan to Secretary of State, 26 June 1947, *Ibid.*, 242.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5 July 1947, 249.
- ⁴⁹ 67th meeting of FEC, 24 July 1947, Iokibe (ed.), *The Occupation of Japan, Part 2*, 4B-66. This is the source for the remainder of this paragraph and the one that follows unless stated otherwise.
- ⁵⁰ Department of State to Norwegian Embassy, *Aide Memoire*, 9 June 47, *FRUS*, vol. VI, The Far East, 222.
- ⁵¹ Office of Intelligence Research Report no. 4627, 30 March 1948, The Japanese fishing industry, 1928-39 and prospects for 1953. Whale meat accounted for just 0.23 grams and beef, pork, mutton, goat meat and poultry for 0.74 grams.
- ⁵² On 5 December 1947 *Nippon Times* reported that 7,200 tons of whale oil, harvested by Japanese whalers during the 1946-7 Antarctic season, were being sent to Germany, and that Japan would be credited with \$2,800,000 on her foreign trade account.
- ⁵³ Message from US Embassy London to Secretary of State, copy to Political Adviser, SCAP, 5 August 1947, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁵⁴ 71st meeting, Iokibe (ed.), *The Occupation of Japan, Part 2*, 4B-70.
- ⁵⁵ Memo from Schenck to Department of State, 29 April 1947, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁵⁶ Memo for Record, Commitments on part of US Government and SCAP to consult interested governments before authorizing Antarctic whaling expeditions, signed by William Terry, 27 June 1950, NRS Records, file 1, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁵⁷ Outgoing message from SCAP to WAR from Schenck, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁵⁸ Memo for Record, 23 December 1947, Antarctic whaling, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁵⁹ Hilldring's response to Mr Knut Lykke, Counselor of the Norwegian Embassy, July 21 1947, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁰ Memo for Record, 15 October 1947, Conference to discuss plan of operation of 1947-48 Antarctic whaling expedition, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶¹ Memo for Record, 7 November 1947, Speech delivered by Lt Col W. C. Winston on occasion of departure for Antarctic of second whaling fleet, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶² Memo for Record, 23 January 1948, Violation of international whaling agreement by Japanese Antarctic whaling fleet, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.

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- ⁶³ Letter from Winston to Schenck, 11 February 1948, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁴ Memo for Record, 22 January 1948, Letter from Lt Col Winston concerning attitude of Allied observers accompanying the Japanese Antarctic whaling expedition, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁵ Proposed radiogram to be send to Lt Col Winston on the Hashidate Maru, 31 December 1947, NRS Records, file 11, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁶ Memo for Record, Conversation this date with Commander Sundt and Mr Coonan upon their return from the Antarctic, 9 April 1948, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁷ Memo for Record, 12 March 1948, Violations of International Whaling Conventions, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁸ Memo for Record, 12 March 1948, Completion of operations of the 1947-48 Antarctic Whaling Expedition, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁶⁹ Memo for Record, 2 April 1948, News item on activity of the Nippon Suisan Antarctic Fleet, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷⁰ Memo for Record, 24 February 1948, Violations of International Whaling Regulations – Taking illegal whales, NRS Records, file 12, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷¹ Check Sheet, NR file 442, to Chief of Staff, 27 June 1949, Japanese Antarctic Whaling in 1949-50 Season, NRS Records, file 16, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷² Memo for Record, Nisshin Maru's catch on 28 January 1949, NRS Records, file 13, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷³ Letter to Schenck from Coonan, 1 February 1949, NRS Records, file 13, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷⁴ Memo for Record, 15 April 1949, Reception on Nisshin Maru, NRS Records, file 13, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷⁵ Memo for Record, 26 April 1949, Reception on Hashidate Maru, NRS Records, file 13, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷⁶ Communication from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to GHQ SCAP, 15 July 1949, file 13, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷⁷ Memo for SCAP, 8 March 1949, Completion of 1949-50 Antarctic Whaling Season, NRS Records, file 15, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁷⁸ Memo for Record, 31 March 1949, Objection of Norway and Britain to Japanese participation in Antarctic whaling, NRS Records, file 16, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
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- ⁸⁰ Memo for Record, 31 March 1949, Objection of Norway and Britain, NRS Records, file 16, box 8980, RG 331, NAI.
- ⁸¹ Check sheet from NRS to ESS, Construction of Whaling Factory Ships, early 1950 (date unclear), NRS Records, file 6, box 8878, RG 331, NAI.

⁸² Letter from Schenck to Mr Rendell Rhoades of Blanchester, Ohio, in response to request for the address of two Japanese whaling companies, NRS Records, file 24, box 8998, RG 331, NAI. In J. N. Tonnessen and A. O. Johnsen, *The History of Modern Whaling*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, page 531, the authors state that the *Hashidate Maru* was scrapped but the *Nisshin Maru I* continued to operate as a whaling factory until broken up in 1965.

⁸³ Memo to GHQ SCAP, NRS Records, file 28, box 8998, RG 331, NAI.

⁸⁴ Aide Memoire, date unclear, NRS Records, file 28, box 8998, RG 331, NAI.

⁸⁵ Japan Will Join Pact on Whaling, *Nippon Times*, 25 February 1951.

⁸⁶ Thomas W. Burkman, "Introduction," *The Occupation of Japan: the international context*, T. W. Burkman, ed. (Norfolk, Virginia: Macarthur Memorial Foundation, 1984), vii.

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