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Whales

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For Immediate Release

October 4, 1993

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

On August 5, 1993, the Secretary of Commerce certified that Norway's resumption of commercial harvesting of minke whales has diminished the effectiveness of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The IWC acted to continue the moratorium on all commercial whaling at its most recent meeting last spring. Despite this action, Norway has recommenced commercial whaling of the Northeastern Atlantic minke, noting that it has lodged an objection to the moratorium. This letter constitutes my report to the Congress pursuant to section 8(b) of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (Pelly Amendment) (22 U.S.C. 1978(a)).

The United States is deeply opposed to commercial whaling: the United States does not engage in commercial whaling, and the United States does not allow the import of whale meat or whale products. While some native Alaskans engage in narrowly circumscribed subsistence whaling, this is approved by the IWC through a quota for "aboriginal whaling." The United States also firmly supports the proposed whale sanctuary in the Antarctic.

The United States has an equally strong commitment to science-based international solutions to global conservation problems. The United States recognizes that not every country agrees with our position against commercial whaling. The issue at hand is the absence of a credible, agreed management and monitoring regime that would ensure that commercial whaling is kept within a science-based limit.

I believe that Norway's action is serious enough to justify sanctions as authorized by the Pelly Amendment. Therefore, I have directed that a list of potential sanctions, including a list of Norwegian seafood products that could be the subject of import prohibitions, be developed. Because the primary interest of the United States in this matter is protecting the integrity of the IWC and its conservation regime, I believe our objectives can best be achieved by delaying the implementation of sanctions until we have exhausted all good faith efforts to persuade Norway to follow agreed conservation measures. It is my sincere hope that Norway will agree to and comply with such measures so that sanctions become unnecessary.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
October 4, 1993.

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