

## Key to ask Clinton for help with whaling

By MARTIN KAY - The Dominion Post

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### [Prime Minister in diplomatic plan for whaling](#)



Prime Minister John Key will ask United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to help broker a diplomatic deal to curb Japanese whaling in Antarctica when she visits this week.

Mr Key said he would raise the issue when he meets Mrs Clinton in Auckland tomorrow, suggesting he will seek United States influence to conclude years of negotiations to stop Japan's annual whale hunt in the Southern Ocean.

The move comes as a select group of a dozen International Whaling Commission members prepare for a meeting in Honolulu this month, which could be a last-ditch chance to broker a compromise acceptable to both anti-whaling and pro-whaling countries.

Any deal is likely to have to involve tradeoffs, such as Japan being allowed to hunt whales in its own, or other, waters in return for it substantially reducing or stopping the annual Southern Ocean kill.

That would be far from ideal for New Zealand but most anti-whaling countries accept a tradeoff will be required to stop the Antarctic hunt.

The hunt is permitted under IWC rules allowing whaling for scientific purposes, but opponents claim it is really a commercial operation.

Mr Key would not say specifically what he would discuss with Mrs Clinton, describing the international talks as "delicate", but the Honolulu meeting would be raised.

"New Zealand has been working very hard to try and find a diplomatic solution to the whaling issue. There is going to be an International Whaling Commission meeting in Honolulu in the latter part of January, so this will be our last chance to voice our perspectives on that meeting when we see Secretary Clinton.

"There's been ongoing [IWC] discussions and ... progress I think has been made, but it's a delicate subject and we need to try and work our way through it, but I don't think name calling or collisions on the high seas are going to resolve this issue. It's only going to be resolved diplomatically and that's what New Zealand's working very hard to try and achieve ..."

It is understood Mr Key will not put a specific proposal to Mrs Clinton, but rather ask her to pressure nations involved in the talks to hammer out a preliminary agreement before a full IWC meeting in June.

There are fears that unless a deal is agreed this year, efforts to find a compromise could collapse altogether, potentially undermining the IWC itself.

The Honolulu meeting will be chaired by New Zealand representative Sir Geoffrey Palmer, who could not be contacted yesterday.

Paul Watson, founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Group, in Antarctica trying to stop the hunt, said a diplomatic deal was unlikely as Japan had shown no interest.

The group believed there should be no whaling at all, but had never interfered in hunts it considered legal.

"Our objection here is that these are endangered whales being taken in an international whale sanctuary in violation of a global moratorium."

Spokesman for the Japanese whaling fleet, Glen Inwood, said he could not discuss what Japan's position at Honolulu would be, but "anything that resolves Sea Shepherd from conducting illegal acts in Antarctica's got to be good".