

ATTACHMENT 9

CHAIRMAN'S TALKING POINTS
for the
64th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION
Panama City, Panama
July 2, 2012

Quyakamsi, igamsiqayugvikamsi whani akuzistekefsiinga. Whanga Mangtaquliinguunga, Sivungaghmiinguunga.

Good afternoon and thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to speak here today.

My name is George Noongwook. I am a whaling captain from Savoonga, Alaska, and Chairman of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission.

I am attending the meeting here with my fellow whaling captains from the villages of Gambell, Barrow, and Nuiqsut. Together we represent four of the eleven northern Alaskan villages that depend on bowhead whales.

Life in our villages is a lot different from what most of you are used to experiencing.

Most of you here go to the grocery store on a regular basis for your food.

In Savoonga, we have one general store with very little groceries. Maybe some canned milk. A pound of meat, if you can find it there might cost \$10 to \$12. You can buy gasoline there for \$7.56 a gallon.

There are a few jobs in our village, working for local government or the school. But that's pretty much it. So we don't get much of our food from the store. We take most of our food from the ocean -- our whales, walrus, seals, and fish.

This is how we live and raise our families, and care for our children and our elders. We've been living this way for at least 2,000 years.

And we've been coming to the IWC since 1977. Most of you will never visit our villages. And you can't tell from here, but back home, the decisions that you make here have a very real impact on people's lives.

We take your rules very seriously and we abide by them. And everybody at home knows when our quota is going to be up for review by the IWC. People can't sleep. They worry.

If something goes wrong with our quota, how are we going to feed our families? These are worries that most of you will never have to face. But they are real for us.

Our bowhead stock is healthy and more than able to support our hunt. We know that from our observations and the science confirms that.

I am certain that most of you here have never been told that you must prove your need for food from the sources available to you. But the IWC tells us that we must prove our need for food from the only reliable source we have -- our ocean. And we have done that. Our subsistence need for bowhead whales is well documented and updated regularly.

In 1977, the IWC asked us to increase the efficiency of our hunt and we have done that. Our 10 year average efficiency is 75%, in spite of deteriorating spring ice conditions that make our hunting harder.

In 1986, the IWC asked us to upgrade our hand-held weapons and to start using penthrite. We have done that. And we continue to work on upgrades to our weapons.

Hunter training in the new weapons and improved hunting methods is a regular part of the AEWC's work.

But in spite of all our efforts, over the years of coming to the IWC, we have faced many threats to our subsistence quota because of the politics here. This practice has been going on for many years, by countries on all sides of the debate over commercial whaling.

This is devastating for us and for our families back home. It is a terrible practice.

I don't want to keep saying negative things. This is not my way. It is not the way of our people.

But I ask each of you to recognize that your decisions here are affecting the lives of real people.

We may come from places that you have never heard of. Our way of life may seem foreign to you. But we are people just as you are. We have families.

Our food security depends on the ocean, not the grocery store. The food we take from the ocean keeps our families alive and healthy. The hunting practices that enable us to take that food keep our communities and our cultures alive and healthy.

If you would like to learn more, several of us have left our families and have traveled a very long way to be here to answer your questions. We also invite you to visit our booth at the Expo Center where we have literature and a video.

And I want to thank you in advance for your support of our proposal to continue taking our whales at current levels. This proposal is found in Document IWC/64/10:
PROPOSAL BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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