

## Book documenting war crimes committed by U.S. troops in Iraq published

LOS ANGELES, — A book has been published recently by Iraq Veterans against the War, which documents war crimes committed by U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The book, entitled *Winter Soldier Iraq and Afghanistan: Eyewitness Accounts of the Occupations*, was compiled by Iraq Veterans Against the War and freelance journalist Aaron Glantz who has covered the Iraq war from the front lines. The English edition was published in the

Spring and the Japanese edition was published this month. Both editions are selling well. The book shows that well-publicized incidents of American brutality like the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and the massacre of an entire family of Iraqis in the town of Haditha are not the isolated incidents perpetrated by "a few bad apples," as many politicians and military leaders have claimed. They are part of a pattern, the group says, of "an increasingly bloody occupation."

The Japanese translation of "Winter Soldier" was done by 20 citizen volunteers from Translators United for Peace (TUP). The translators that worked with TUP to translate *Winter Soldier* span the spectrum of age and employment. "The only way this war is going to end is if the American people truly understand what we have done in their name," said Kelly Dougherty, executive director of Iraq Veterans Against the War. The name "Winter Soldier" is borrowed from the famous Vietnam-era *Winter Soldier* hearings. On Jan. 31, 1971, members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) met in a Detroit hotel to discuss war crimes they claimed to have participated

in or witnessed during their combat tours in Vietnam. During the hearings, more than 100 Vietnam veterans and 16 civilians gave anguished, emotional testimony describing hundreds of atrocities against innocent civilians in South Vietnam, including rape, arson, torture, murder, and the shelling or napalming of entire villages.

The witnesses stated that these acts were being committed casually and routinely, under orders, as a matter of policy. In April, the VVAW stormed Washington in a week-long protest. At its height, spokesman John Kerry went before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to accuse the United States military of committing massive numbers of war crimes in Vietnam. The charges he made shocked and sickened the whole nation, changed the course of a war and stained the reputation of the American military for decades. In spring 2008, inspired by the Vietnam-era *Winter Soldier* hearings, Iraq Veterans Against the War gathered veterans to expose war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The book recorded the powerful words, images and documents of this historic gathering, which show the reality of life in Afghani-

stan and Iraq, the authors claimed.

The book recorded testimonies by Iraqi veterans who described the frustration of routinely raiding the wrong homes and arresting the wrong people in Iraq. It was common for unarmed Iraqis to be killed at U.S. checkpoints or by U.S. convoys, they said. Many said they were congratulated on their "first kill." Some even desecrated Iraqi corpses. Hart Vigés said he refused to pose in a photograph with a corpse when his fellow soldiers prodded him. "I said no—not in the context of, that's really wrong on an ethical basis," he said. "I said no because it wasn't my kill. You shouldn't take trophies for things you didn't kill. That's where my mind-set was back then," he said. Several veterans were quoted as saying in the book that it was common to carry a stash of extra automatic weapons and shovels to plant near the bodies of unarmed civilians they had killed to make it look as if they were combatants.

Others described the surreal sensation of committing cold-blooded murder without facing any consequences. Jon Michael Turner, who served as a machine gunner with Kilo Company, Third Battalion, Eighth Marines, said he shot an unarmed Iraqi in front of the man's

father and friend. "The first round didn't kill him, after I had hit him up here in his neck area. And afterwards he started screaming and looked right into my eyes.

So I looked at my friend...and I said, 'Well, I can't let that happen.' So I took another shot and took him out. He was then carried away by the rest of his family," said Turner.

San Francisco Chronicle commented on the book: "Winter Soldier makes us feel the pain and despair endured by those who serve in a military stretched to the breaking point by stop-loss policies, multiple combat tours, and a war where the goals and the enemies keep shifting, and also makes us admire the unbreakable idealism and hope of those men and women who still believe that by speaking out they can make things better both for themselves and for those who come after them." "Winter Soldier" is a phrase apparently inspired by and playing off of American revolutionary patriot and propagandist Thomas Paine's writing in his first "Crisis" pamphlet written in 1776 to inspire American colonists in their break from Britain. (Xinhua)



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**CLOSING DATE: 20 September 2009**

## Zuma to officially open this year's Harare Show Herald Reporter

South African leader and Sadc chairman President Jacob Zuma is expected to officially open this year's Harare Agriculture Show.

Government said on Tuesday the visit had nothing to do with resolving "outstanding" issues in the Global Political Agreement as speculated by foreign media houses who continuously report that the South African leader was "going to get tough with Zanu-PF".

The reports followed a recent visit to South Africa by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai to meet President Zuma. During the Johannesburg meeting, PM Tsvangirai reportedly briefed President Zuma about "sticking issues" in the GPA. In an interview on Monday, the Secretary for Media, Information and Publicity, Mr George Charamba, said President Zuma would visit the country only to officially open the show.

President Jacob Zuma is coming here to officially open the Agricultural Show and not to resolve the MDC's issues," Mr Charamba said. He would not say when Mr Zuma was expected in the country. MDC-T has been accus-



President Jacob Zuma

ing Zanu-PF of not being sincere in meeting its obligations under the GPA. However, last week the Zanu-PF Politburo fired a broadside at MDC-T and pointed out that the party was yet to act on any of its commitments in the GPA that led to the formation of the inclusive Government. The Politburo pointed out that while President Mugabe had

appointed the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers and members of Cabinet from MDC-T among other obligations, Mr Tsvangirai's party had done nothing to have the illegal sanctions it called for lifted. MDC-T, the Politburo said, had also done nothing about the activities of pirate radio stations that continued to broadcast hate messages into Zimbabwe despite promising to act on these things in the GPA.

The 99th edition of the Harare Agriculture Show starts on Monday next week and runs until Saturday.

President Zuma will officially open the show on Friday next week. President Mugabe opened last year's edition. Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo Nguema opened the 2007 edition. Five hundred stands have already been booked at the Exhibition Park for this year's show compared to the 320 stands taken up in 2008.

## Iran's president says West needs Iran, Syria's help

TEHRAN, — Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday that Western countries are in dire need of Iran and Syria's cooperation and assistance, the official IRNA news agency reported. At a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad, Ahmadinejad said that "Iran and Syria stand in a united front" and the West strongly needs to cooperate with them, drawing upon Iran and Syria's key roles in regional issues. The Syrian President is in Tehran for a one-day official visit.

Ahmadinejad referred to the "resistance and perseverance of regional nations against the West's adventurism" and said that "the West tries to stop the trend in the region but ...the regional nations will emerge victorious due to their spirit of resistance and they (West

countries) have already suffered a big defeat." For his part, Assad congratulated Ahmadinejad on his reelection of president, saying "I am sure that from now on, doors of the international community will be wide open to Iran and Syria."

He condemned foreign intervention in Iran's internal affairs, saying that "the main purpose of the interference of enemies and the West in Iran's internal affairs is to prevent Iran and Syria from gaining consecutive victories in the next four years." Assad also discussed with Iranian foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki on some regional issues and the expansion of mutual relationship.

The details of his talks with Ahmadinejad and Mottaki were not released, but IRNA's report said that Wednesday's meetings had a point of emphasizing the two countries'

solid relations of the last three decades.

Syria is Iran's closest ally in the region and the two countries enjoy common cultural, political and economic interests. Both countries take Israel as their arch-enemy and support Lebanese Shiite armed group Hezbollah and Palestinian

Hamas movement in their struggle against Israel. In the more recent development, Syria has reportedly helped the release of French-Iranian citizen Nazak Afshar from Iran's jail. Afshar was arrested on charges of participating in Iran's post-election unrest in June.

Iran is currently carrying out a large number of economic projects in Syria, including car production and housing projects, while Damascus hosts thousands of Iranian tourists and pilgrims every year. Syria supported Iran during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, breaking from most other Arab countries. (Xinhua)