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Caddel, Jeremy D

From: Stryker, Sara A
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2004 12:57 PM
To: SA-Staff-DL
Subject: S's latest statement on Iraq investigation (5/5 Press Stakeout with Haitian Interim Prime Minister)

SA/AR - see reference S makes to investigation of all detension facilities, including the ones in Afghanistan (highlighted in blue)

I'll send to our PAS sections on the unclassified system.

Sara

Excerpt from Secretary's walk-out with Haitian Interim Prime Minister (5/5)

(begin excerpt)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, as you know, up on Capitol Hill, senators are furious that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld did not tell them about the situation regarding the Iraqi prison abuse. Even as it was about to air on 60 Minutes, they had known about that specific account for weeks.

I'm wondering, first of all, when you heard about this, you have to deal, obviously, with the international reaction to this. And also, where ultimately does responsibility lie? Does it lie with those that supervise the prisoners or much higher up the chain of command?

SECRETARY POWELL: It remains to be seen what the total extent of the problem is, and then you start to follow it up the chain of command and the chain of accountability. And I'm confident they will certainly do that.

Keep in mind that General Sanchez launched an investigation of this matter the day after he heard about it, in the early part of the year. And if you check General Mark Kimmitt's briefings over this past several months, you will see that General Kimmitt noted in his briefings that such investigations were underway and he even made an announcement of when some people had been charged. I think that announcement was made publicly in Baghdad on the 20th of March.

So investigations have been underway; actions has been taken by the chain of command during this period. It was the photos themselves that caused the big stir, rightly so, when we could all see what the investigations were about and what people were being accused of having participated in.

And so we are all terribly distressed and shocked by those photos and by what those photos said about the manner in which the troops there were doing their job. And as you have heard the President, you have heard Secretary Rumsfeld, myself and others say, it's unacceptable. But we are a nation that believes in justice. We are a nation that's governed by the rule of law, and nowhere is that more the case than in the Armed Forces of the United States.

And so Secretary Rumsfeld is hard at work seeing what other investigatory efforts should be put into this matter. He is in touch with members of Congress. I'm sure I'll have a chance to discuss it when I'm up on the Hill this afternoon, as well.

We want to get all the information out so that the American people understand what's happened and also to make sure that our friends in the Arab world, especially, know that we are a nation of laws, we are a nation of justice, and this kind of action and misbehavior will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD

DATE/CASE ID: 29 NOV 2004 200303827

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the firmest possible manner.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you've called -- you've said that you're sure this is isolated, this incident. What makes you so sure that it's isolated?

SECRETARY POWELL: Right now, it seems to be isolated in this particular place, with respect to this -- this incident, if I can call it an incident. The photos you have seen that dealt with this particular wing of that prison, I don't know that there are more individuals involved in that beyond what the investigating officer found.

Now, we are also undertaking a broad review of all of our detention facilities in Baghdad, as well as elsewhere, in Afghanistan, and reviewing our procedures in Guantanamo to make sure we haven't overlooked anything. But with respect to that wing of the Abu Gharib prison that has caused all of the attention, I've seen nothing to suggest that the individuals involved in that constitute a larger group than has already been identified by the military.

But, once again, I'll have to yield to Secretary Rumsfeld and his colleagues to give the definitive answer on that.

Okay, one more. Then I've got to run.

QUESTION: The United States is hard at work on trying to get more countries into Iraq to provide security for the UN, this multinational force.

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah.

QUESTION: Do you think that the reports of the alleged mistreatment of these Iraqi prisoners might have a blow to your efforts in that sense?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't think so. We're hard at work on this. And I think people understand that if they want to see a safe Iraq, an Iraq that is sovereign once again, they need to help with the process. And one of the important areas in which help is needed is to assist the UN in doing its job in Iraq to help get organized for elections.

And so I hope that this would not cause anybody to hold back any support that they might have provided. What we're asking for is people to help the Iraqi people, and you help them through participating in a multinational force, and especially that component of the force that will deal with providing security to the United Nations personnel, who we expect to be returning in some number.

Thank you.

(end excerpt)