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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman****For Immediate Release
2004/535****May 13, 2004****INTERVIEW****Secretary of State Colin L. Powell
On BBC TV with Huw Edwards****May 13, 2004
Washington, D.C.****(1:35 p.m. EDT)**

MR. EDWARDS: Mr. Powell, it's clear that America has lost a good deal of trust, to put it mildly, not just in Iraq, but across the world, in recent weeks. How do you go about rebuilding that trust?

SECRETARY POWELL: By not losing sight of what we're trying to do, and that's to put in place in Iraq a democratic government, to put in place a sovereign government, to help the Iraqi people reconstruct their lives and reconstruct their country and reconstruct their society.

We succeeded in getting rid of a terrible dictator, and sometimes people forget that. Saddam Hussein, who filled mass graves and was an oppressor of the worst kind, is gone and he's not coming back. And we've run into some difficulty recently with our security situation over there because of former members of his regime and those who don't want democracy.

But, you know, we've fought against those in the past who don't want democracy, and we're not going to lose sight of our mission. And with our coalition partners, we will stay the course, deal with the security situation, and get on with the reconstruction and get on with returning sovereignty to the Iraqi people. And we will be standing by them after we return sovereignty to them until they have put in place an elected government and the country is secure.

MR. EDWARDS: Well, listening to some members of the Administration in recent days and weeks, not yourself, you get the impression that some people in the White House haven't grasped the damage worldwide that has been done to America's image. **Do they realize the damage?**

SECRETARY POWELL: Oh, I think we do. We're not unmindful of what these prison pictures have done. We're not unmindful that the difficult month we had in April have damaged our impression -- the impression of us around the world. So we have got to work on that, but it

doesn't mean we turn and walk away or turn and run. That's not the way America does its business.

With respect to the prison pictures, we're devastated about it. To think that our young men and women in uniform would do such a thing was an absolute shock to us. But look what we've been doing in the last two weeks. We've been examining ourselves. It was one of our young soldiers who told us about this. We've been investigating it. Our Secretary of Defense, our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, other generals and officials have been up before Congress and we will get to the bottom of it. And what the people will see is American justice being done as we bring to justice those who were responsible for this.

We also know that the scenes in Fallujah and in Najaf have not been good ones, but slowly and surely we're gaining control of those places and we will move forward for the UN resolution, returning of sovereignty to an Iraqi interim government and we'll move forward toward having elections next January.

So this is a tough time, but this is not a time for the fainthearted. This is a time for those who know what they're doing and believe in what they're doing, and that's us and our coalition partners, no coalition partner stronger than the United Kingdom.

MR. EDWARDS: And when we hear from some of your senior military figures that it was "a failure of leadership" which led to the abuse of some of those, if not all of those, prisoners, whose leadership are we talking about?

SECRETARY POWELL: That's what we're going to find out. It was a failure of leadership. Something like that should never have happened. No sergeant should have tolerated it if he knew about it. No captain, no colonel, no general, no civilian official should have tolerated it if they knew about it.

MR. EDWARDS: And no Secretary of Defense, surely.

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, let's talk about who's responsible and who's accountable through these investigations before you run it all the way up to the top. I can assure you that what we want to find out is who is responsible. We know that on the scene there were soldiers who misbehaved. We also want to find out about their immediate supervisors and whether there were any circumstances that were put in place there that encouraged this kind of misbehavior.

But the way to go about this is in a sensible, calm way, by conducting the necessary investigations. And we're not dallying. Some individuals are going to be court-martialed for this next week. So our justice system will work and, as Secretary Rumsfeld has said, our justice system will not just stop at the privates in that prison, but will go up to see who should have accountability. Secretary Rumsfeld has accepted responsibility, but what's more important for us to discover now is accountability: Who should have known and who should have done something about it before anything like this should possibly have happened?

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MR. EDWARDS: It's a very important point, isn't it, that Secretary Rumsfeld has done that. And if he's done that, surely the logic is that he can't remain in his job.

SECRETARY POWELL: No, the logic is not that at all. He said he is responsible as the Secretary of Defense, as I would expect him to have said. And I know that General Myers and the other generals and leaders feel the same way.

But the issue is now who knew what was going on, who created conditions to allow that to take place, and who might have known about it and should have done something and didn't do something about it. And that's what our investigations are going to find, and you will find that we will hold people accountable for their actions or for their failure to act.

MR. EDWARDS: You've confirmed, Secretary Powell, that the handover of power will take place, as planned, on the 30th of June. You have no stable political institutions of any kind in Iraq. You have insurgency in many regions. What on earth do you think is going to happen when you hand over power?

SECRETARY POWELL: When we hand over power, we will be putting an Iraqi face on the political process moving forward. We are not going to simply hand over power and then withdraw all of our forces. We will be there to provide a security -- a security blanket, a security framework, upon which the Iraqi leaders can then begin to build their institutions.

Why are there no political institutions in Iraq? Because Saddam Hussein would not have any political institutions in Iraq other than his own evil Baath Party. So he's gone and we've got to start somewhere. No democratic nation started with full-flower political institutions. So there's a rebuilding process that has to take place. In some cases, it's a building process to begin with. Institutions have to be created. Ministers have to be created. Ministries have to be put in place. Ministries have to stand up. We need to have elections. It takes time to design elections. And that's what we're going to be doing over the next year or so.

MR. EDWARDS: A final question then, Mr. Powell. Mr. Blair here, as you know, has been taking a bit of a political pounding because of his loyalty to Mr. Bush over these past months, and lots of Mr. Blair's allies want him to distance himself urgently and firmly from the White House. And why shouldn't he do that?

SECRETARY POWELL: Because Mr. Blair is committed not to Mr. Bush; he's committed to the principles that both of them stood on when they took this case to the British people and to the American people that what we were doing was the right thing to do, was a noble cause to get rid of this dictator, to put in place a democracy. That job is not yet done. And things have gotten tough and both Mr. Blair and Mr. Bush are taking some political heat for it and they're being criticized. But both of them, I think, have the commitment to this task and have the courage to prevail, and with that courage we will prevail.

MR. EDWARDS: Well, thank you very much for talking to us.

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SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you.

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