

Beat: Politics

PART FIVE - JOHN KERRY GIVING FULL REMARKS ON UNITED STATES STRATEGY IN SYRIA

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USPA NEWS - Secretary of State John Kerry : 'We are encouraging our European allies to do more "" and they are. We are increasing our operational tempo out of the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, flying more often and to greater effect. We joined with our Kurdish partners in a daring rescue operation...

Secretary of State John Kerry : 'We are encouraging our European allies to do more "" and they are. We are increasing our operational tempo out of the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, flying more often and to greater effect. We joined with our Kurdish partners in a daring rescue operation that saved the lives of 79 Daesh prisoners who were about to be executed one by one.

'We remain in constant communication with our Arab friends, who are fully supportive of our goals and continue to participate in coalition efforts, which are not just military but also include putting relentless pressure on Daesh's finances, on its ability to attract foreign recruits, and on countering its message of division and hate using all of the media available to do so

'We're also providing additional assistance to enhance the security capabilities of Jordan and Lebanon.'

'And these efforts are paying off. Not long ago, Daesh controlled more than half of Syria's 500 mile-long border with Turkey. Today, it has a grip on only about 15 percent, and we have a plan with our partners to pry open and secure the rest. And we will.'

'We are striving with local forces to put the squeeze on al-Raqqa, the center of Daesh's operations. We have hit some of the organization's key energy facilities, including just recently the Omar oil field, from which the terrorists derive both revenue and fuel.'

'And we have made Daesh change the way it moves and operates, because its leaders now get up each morning worrying about what might come down from the sky.'

'All of this and more is part of a strategy to continue building on what has worked and to apply pressure against Daesh from as many directions as possible, with as much intensity as possible, for as long as it takes.'

'At the same time, we know full well that the struggle against Daesh is not taking place in a political vacuum. And that is why we are working to promote a fully sovereign, stable, self-reliant, inclusive Iraq that is secure in its borders and able to protect all of its citizens.'

'But the truth is that nothing could do more to bolster the fight against the terrorists than a broadly supported diplomatic process that would begin to de-escalate the conflict, and that would give the Syrian people a real choice "" not between Assad and Daesh "" but between the status quo and something far better and long overdue: a true transition in which responsible Syrians from across the political spectrum will have a voice.'

'That is why another core element of our strategy in Syria is diplomatic; a renewed political initiative "" broader and more action-oriented than any previously attempted "" to isolate the terrorists and set Syria on the path to peace.'

'Now, this possibility was the focus of meetings in Vienna at the end of last month; meetings that for the first time brought together all the key international interested parties to the very same table. And guess what? It came out with a product. That session produced a communique endorsed by every country who attended "" countries that don't always agree on much "" like Saudi Arabia and Iran "" but who do agree that Daesh is evil and that the war in Syria must be brought to an acceptable end as soon as possible.'

'More specifically, the countries represented in Vienna agreed to support Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and pluralist character.'

'We agreed, all of us, that Daesh and other terrorist groups have to be defeated.'

'We agreed, all of us, that Syria's state institutions should remain intact so we don't have the implosion that we saw in Iraq.'

'We saw and we all agreed that the rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, have to be protected in whatever government comes out.'

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'We agreed, all of us, that access for humanitarian relief has to be assured throughout the country, and that will be one of the topics we talk about on Saturday.'

'We agreed, all of us, to increase support for internally displaced persons and for refugees and for the countries that host them.'

'And we agreed, all of us, that the UN should convene members of the Syrian Government and the Syrian opposition to develop a plan along the lines of the 2012 Geneva communique, leading to a credible, inclusive, non-sectarian governance followed by a new constitution and by free and fair, transparent, accountable elections run under the supervision of the United Nations to the highest standards of elections anywhere in the world. We agreed on that "" all of us.'

'And we agreed to explore the possibility of a nationwide ceasefire to be initiated in parallel with this renewed political process. Now, obviously, such a ceasefire does not include Daesh, because our effort to defeat Daesh "" and the effort of our partners to defeat Daesh "" will continue until we prevail. In fact, it is precisely through this political process that we can, for the first time, if it works, marshal the support of the entire international community against a single common enemy "" Daesh.'

..... TO BE CONTINUED WITH THE FINAL PART

Ruby BIRD

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