

Beat: Politics

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

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USPA NEWS - Secretary of States John Kerry : 'We face an environment now that bears little resemblance to the kind of black-and-white scenarios that make decisions relatively easy. Put simply, there are bad guys all around and good guys who are not accustomed to working with each other....

Secretary of States John Kerry : 'We face an environment now that bears little resemblance to the kind of black-and-white scenarios that make decisions relatively easy. Put simply, there are bad guys all around and good guys who are not accustomed to working with each other. But the dominant truth about the situation in Syria is that, although Assad and Daesh are supposed to be bitter opponents, they are both parts of the same problem.'

'In fact, the rise of Daesh is directly attributable to the policies and actions of the Assad regime, and that is why we have referred to Assad as a magnet for terrorism. This is a case, and there are many in history, in which two supposed enemies are in fact symbolic. Loathing towards Assad drove thousands of Syrians into the arms of Daesh. And fear of Daesh caused some Syrian groups to feel that they had no realistic option but to support the government. That's not just symbolic; that's a symbiotic relationship, each piece dependent on the other. And the desire to flee both explains the massive refugee crisis that we face today.'

'The relationship between Assad and Daesh clarifies one of the apparent peculiarities of this conflict "" that the two extremes have only rarely targeted one another. Think about that. In fact, they even do business with each other, buying and selling oil. Assad and Daesh are enemies far more in theory than in fact, and neither has shown any interest in bringing the killing to an end.'

'If neither the dictator nor the terrorists are the answer "" and they are not "" our challenge is to create conditions under which a clear and broadly acceptable alternative can emerge.'

'To that end, President Obama has set for our nation three interrelated goals.'

'We begin with Daesh. Some 14 months ago, the President made it clear that the United States was committed to the defeat and dismantlement of this terrorist organization. And over the last month, he has directed every member of his national security team to pick up the pace and move forward with ideas for degrading and defeating Daesh more rapidly, more completely, and permanently.'

'Second, we are intensifying our diplomatic effort to finally bring an end to the civil war in Syria.'

'And third, we are determined to support our friends in the region, and to ensure that the instability created by the Syrian crisis does not spread further beyond its borders.'

'Now, these measures are mutually reinforcing. The more progress we make on one, the more likely we are to succeed on the others.'

'President Obama has made his view clear that the crisis in Syria cannot be resolved militarily, and that remains the case. But it's also clear that the chance for successful diplomacy depends, in part, on the ability to exert leverage, on control of territory, on perceptions about who is gaining or has the upper hand. That's why it matters that there is increasing evidence in both Iraq and Syria that Daesh can be defeated "" even routed "" when faced by the combination of coalition airstrikes and effective partners on the ground.'

'Remember this coalition has only been together for 14 months. People forget that. Last summer it did not even exist. But the coalition has already made a huge difference in reversing Daesh's momentum and in saving people's lives. And the evidence is there for everybody to see. To date, the coalition has launched more than 8,000 airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, and the number is rising every day. There were more than 40 just last night.'

'The coalition and its allies on the ground have defended Mosul Dam and other vital facilities in Iraq while also preventing a terrorist assault on Baghdad. We have driven Daesh from the critical border town of Kobani "" everybody predicting it was going to fall and how terrible that would be. Well, it didn't fall. And it didn't fall because we stepped up and the President ordered the strikes, and we reinforced and we provided ammunition and capacity, and people were able to fight back. We've seen the city of Tikrit liberated, enabling most of its population, about 100,000 people, to return and start to rebuild their communities.'

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'With its partners, the coalition helped to rescue an endangered minority on Sinjar Mountain. And today, as we sit here, allied forces are engaged in a major operation to liberate Sinjar itself, cut off Highway 47, which is Daesh's main artery from Syria into Iraq.'

'We have also established a robust program, including the deployment of thousands of American advisers, to train and assist Iraqi security forces.'

'We have significantly degraded Daesh's top leadership, including Haji Mutazz, the organization's second in command, and we continue to eliminate commanders and other personnel from the battlefield.'

'Overall, Daesh is unable to operate in 20 to 25 percent of the territory it controlled a year ago. And we are just getting started. We now know more about the enemy than we did, and we know more about what has worked and what has not worked and what can work. And so, at the President's direction, and with those lessons in mind, we are stepping up our strategy in all its aspects.'

'In Iraq, we are supplying our partners with the help that they need, in the form of armored bulldozers and mine-clearing equipment, to break down the Daesh defenses around the key city of Ramadi. In fact, as I speak, Iraqi forces are engaged in a systematic but carefully calibrated effort to encircle and re-take that city.'

'Meanwhile, another Iraqi force recently took back the Baiji oil refinery, which is strategically located on the road linking Baghdad and Mosul.'

'In Syria, we have increased the shipment of supplies and ammunition to moderate opposition forces fighting Daesh. And the President has authorized the deployment of a small number of U.S. Special Forces in an advisory role to help them in this fight.'

..... TO BE CONTINUED WITH PART FIVE

Ruby BIRD

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