Kerry: U.S. Considering “All Options” in Syria War

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“We do not know for sure whether the right possibilities have come together in connection with Syria,” he said, addressing a crowd at the U.S. Institute for Peace in Washington. “We do not know for certain whether the kind of political transition we seek in that country can be achieved. We do not know for certain how long it will take before we can say that Daesh has been defeated.”

“But we do know for certain that we have an obligation to ourselves and friends throughout the region and above all to Syria’s next generation to test those possibilities to the fullest and even more,” he added.

Kerry said that there is “no doubt” that the longer the Syrian civil war drags on, the more difficult it will be to recover from it. Nevertheless, he said that the U.S. government’s priority is to try and find a solution to it that will create the conditions for a political transition that will end the regime of Bashar Al-Assad.

Regarding the Islamic State jihadists, over the past month, President Barack Obama “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,” Kerry said, using an alternative name for the IS.

However, the IS cannot be defeated until the Syrian groups can stop fighting Assad’s forces and unite against it. Although no Syrian government or rebel group representatives have

participated in the Vienna talks on ending the conflict, Kerry said he and other State Department officials are in constant communication with Syrian opposition leaders.

Kerry said that time and turmoil can create new possibilities, although he could not say that an overall accord is in the offing since much work remains to be done before that can be achieved.

“The Syrian people will be the validators of this whole effort,” he said. “This is not about imposing anything on anyone. We are trying to come together as stakeholder to create a framework, which can ignite the United Nations negotiating process,” the secretary said.