



Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller

**Remarks
at September 11 Commemoration Ceremony**

Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyz Republic

Good morning. I welcome you, Mr. President, to the Manas Transit Center, a symbol of the close and strong relationship between our two countries. Today is a solemn occasion, as we mark the anniversary of September 11, 2001 and honor the memory of the men, women and children who lost their lives in the heinous terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

It is fitting to mark the occasion here at the Manas Transit Center, where we see that brave men and women from all walks of life and many countries continue to combat terrorism every day, often risking their own lives to protect us from these criminals. I thank you for your bravery and your service.

While September 11th was a day of tragedy, it was also a day that proved the resilience of the human spirit. Intertwined with images of unimaginable suffering, we remember images of incredible heroism. As we remember those who passed away on 9/11 and honor the loved ones they left behind, we realize that we are on this earth for only a short time. We should fill our lives with the things that matter – family, love for neighbors, love for country, and gratitude for each moment.

September 11 is a date that is deeply emotional to the American people, so we appreciate that the people of Kyrgyzstan have stood beside us ever since. Shortly after that day, Kyrgyzstan agreed to allow the coalition to use its facilities here in support of its efforts to drive the terrorists from Afghanistan. Although our joint efforts have changed over the past years, and the role of Manas has changed to meet changing needs and interests, most recently from base to transit center, the importance of our combined work to rid the region of terror has not changed.

September 11 has come to mean more than just the fight with extremism; September 11 is a day to focus on what brings us together.

As President Obama said in Cairo: “So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, those who promote conflict rather than the cooperation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. And this cycle of suspicion and discord must end.”

There will always be the few who wish to promote conflict and sow discord, but today is a day for us to raise our voices calling for peace and cooperation. Kyrgyzstan is an independent and sovereign country with many friends around the world and we are happy to count ourselves among them. Moreover, your contribution to the struggle against terrorism has placed Kyrgyzstan in a leadership position. I want to thank President Bakiyev personally for his efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Both President Karzai of Afghanistan and President Obama have acknowledged this crucial role. Our partnership and shared common interest in regional security and stability have become the basis for a broader relationship that we can build upon.

As we remember September 11th, remember also that tomorrow is September 12th. The future is before us, and I urge each one of you to do your part to make the world more peaceful and prosperous.

Thank you.