

**News Briefing with Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell at the Pentagon  
April 28, 2009**

**Excerpt on Manas AB, Krygyzstan**

Q Denial of access to the Manas Air Base north of Afghanistan, is there any progress toward an alternate route or an alternate base that we can use?

MR. MORRELL: Well, I mean, two-fold. I think there's actually progress in dealing with the Kyrgyz on Manas, and so I don't think we have anything to announce there yet, but I think that we are -- have been engaged in conversations with them about extending our use of that facility. And I think we see reason for hope there, that that can be worked out.

But simultaneously, I think we are, and have been for quite some time, looking for alternatives; have found a number of suitable ones, in terms of -- in terms of passenger trans-loading to Afghanistan. Obviously, we've developed now this extensive northern distribution network for the transportation of non-lethal aid, non-human traffic, that will go, you know, through a number of the Central Asian nations. So I think we feel as though, between our, you know, Pakistani lines of communication, which obviously have had issues in the past but still -- there's still 70-plus percent of our supplies continue to flow through there -- and the establishment of this northern distribution network, that we've got many backups and alternatives. And I think, should it become necessary to find other bases to fly out of and trans-load our personnel into Afghanistan, I think we've got suitable alternatives within the region. Okay?

Q Are you saying you think you're close to a deal to reverse the Kyrgyz decision?

MR. MORRELL: We hope we're getting closer.

Ann, quickly.

Q Yeah, okay, well, just really a short follow-up on that. Other than monetary compensation, what else is, you know, sort of on the table that might --

MR. MORRELL: I'm not going to get into the -- I'm not going to get into the negotiations. . . .