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Kabul, Washington to discuss presence of US troops in Afghanistan

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Kabul and Washington will hold talks over the extension of the presence of the US forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014.

Aimal Faizi, Karzai's chief spokesman said on Thursday, "The negotiation between the two countries are due to start today and the most important issue for Afghanistan is its national sovereignty and national interest."

"Afghanistan wants a strategic pact with US but will seriously consider the red lines."

James B. Warlick, the deputy special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, heads the US delegation, and Eklil Hakimi, Afghanistan's ambassador to the United States, leads the Afghan team in Kabul.

The US administration has claimed that the war in Afghanistan will come to an end in 2014.

A key element of any agreement will be the question of immunity from prosecution for the US troops in local courts.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has long demanded trial of the US soldiers under the Afghan law, but the US government insists that the soldiers accused of crimes in Afghanistan will be tried in America.

In May, US President Barack Obama and Hamid Karzai signed a deal which provides a framework for a post-2014 US role in Afghanistan.

The strategic deal provides aid, advisers, and support for Afghan forces for a period of 10 years after the expected departure of foreign combat troops in 2014.

The US and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of the so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity remains across the country.