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## US wants to kick-start talks with Taliban

by Lalit K Jhaon  
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WASHINGTON (*PAN*): With considerable progress being made toward signing the strategic partnership pact with Afghanistan, America's other important goal is to open the door for talks with the Taliban, a diplomat said on Wednesday.

“At the moment, the Taliban don't want to talk to the government of Afghanistan. And somebody is going to have to break through and open that door. Our goal is to try to open that door,” said the US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“I don't know if we'll succeed,” Marc Grossman said at a discussion on Afghanistan organised by the US Institute of Peace — a Washington-based think tank. Talks between the US and the Taliban are currently suspended.

“I can't give you a guarantee that anything will go forward. But our purpose is to go open that door so that Afghans can talk to other Afghans about the future of Afghanistan,” he said in response to a question.

Behind the scenes, Grossman has worked hard to start talks with the Taliban and has succeeded to some extent. The Taliban suspended the negotiations after a US soldier killed 17 Afghan civilians in a village in southern Kandahar province last month.

Grossman said the *High Peace Council* had a huge role to play as a more inclusive body in promoting the reconciliation drive. “I think that's important that the message is it has to be more inclusive. Talk to the people all around the country,” he added.

“Reconciliation is not an issue between the government of Afghanistan and insurgents. Reconciliation is an issue about Afghan society. And that means all of society has to be involved in this,” he concluded.