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Kabul seeks security guarantee from US

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The United States is believed to refuse to give a security commitment to Afghanistan in case of an attack on it by its neighbours, officials from both sides said on Tuesday.

Under the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) currently being negotiated between the two countries, Kabul wants the US to come to its rescue in the event of aggression from its neighbours.

Informed sources told Pajhwok Afghan News the request was made by the Karzai government which primarily referred to the possible threat to its territorial integrity from Pakistan.

The United States and Afghanistan have so far had three rounds of BSA negotiations, which are to be completed by November this year.

Familiar with the discussions, one official said the US had refused to hold out such a commitment, arguing that the pact was not going to be Article 5 of *NATO*.

Under that provision, an attack on any of the alliance countries is considered an assault on all members.

However, the Obama administration has assured the Karzai government the BSA would include a “consultative mechanism” between the two nations in case of any attack on the latter.

In line with the mechanism, each side will “look with grave concern” at any serious threat to Afghanistan’s territorial integrity and find ways, discuss and “respond appropriately” to the threat.

Some Afghan sources said that based on its past experience, Kabul feared it might face threats to its territorial integrity from neighbours and hence its insistence on a firm security commitment from the US.

But Washington has firmly refused to give such a commitment, given the sensitivity of other countries in the region and the complications that it might create, according to the official.

Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan James Warlick, is leading negotiations for the US, while Afghan Ambassador to the US Eklil Hakimi represents his country.