

FTA talks to continue in Washington

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MALAYSIA and the US will resume bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) discussions in Washington in 10 days, said International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

"The two countries will discuss all the outstanding issues in Washington," she said, declining to comment further when met after the launch of Intrade

Malaysia 2007 Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

US government officials said the upcoming meeting scheduled sometime during the week of April 16, will enable the Americans to find out the Cabinet's resolutions to the 58 contentious issues.

After the fifth round of talks in Karambunai in Sabah in February, the Malaysian negotiating team said it required the consensus of the Cabinet before proceeding.

Malaysia has said that it will not

be pressured by time frames or deadlines in its negotiations with the US.

Miti secretary-general Datuk Abdul Rahman Mamat and US Assistant Trade Representative for Asia Pacific Barbara Weisel will continue to lead discussions.

For the Americans, the current Trade Promotion Authority granted to negotiate FTAs expires on July 1, after which the US Congress needs to approve a new mandate for talks.