

## Saudis 'undermining efforts in Iraq

2007-07-29 21:02:51 by Southern

Article from: Agence France-Presse

THE US ambassador to the UN accused Saudi Arabia and other US allies in the Middle East today of undermining efforts to curb violence in Iraq.

UN envoy Zalmay Khalilzad acknowledged on CNN he was also referring to Saudi Arabia when he wrote in an opinion piece in The New York Times last week that "several of Iraq's neighbours - not only Syria and Iran but also some friends of the United States - are pursuing destabilising policies".

"Yes, well, there is no question that ... Saudi Arabia and a number of other countries are not doing all they can to help us in Iraq," Mr Khalilzad, the former US ambassador to Iraq, told the US news network.

"I mean, they are great allies of ours in that region. And the future of Iraq is the most important issue now affecting the region," he said.

"And therefore, we would expect and want them to help us on this strategic issue more than they are doing. And at times, some of them are not only not helping, (they) are doing things that is undermining the effort to make progress."

The envoy lamented that some of Iraq's neighbours were not engaging the government or the Shiite majority and had no diplomatic representation in Baghdad.

"The level of positive effort that they are making compared to the stakes involved for the region is minimal," he said.

His comments came one day before Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defence Secretary Robert Gates are to depart to the Middle East to seek Arab support to bolster Iraq and to discuss weapons sales with allies.

Dr Rice and Mr Gates will make rare joint visits to Egypt and Saudi Arabia before separate trips to other parts of the region.

Ahead of the trip, the US government was expected to announce tomorrow arms deals worth at least \$US20 billion (\$23 billion) with Saudi Arabia and the five other Gulf states, US media reported.

[news.com](http://www.southernwolf.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=10)

<http://www.southernwolf.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=10>