

Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad

- U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, 2007-2009
- Ambassador to Iraq, 2005-2007
- Ambassador to Afghanistan, 2003-2005

Praised for his inclusive tactics, convivial style, and result oriented approach, Ambassador Zal Khalilzad's record in the most turbulent areas of U.S. foreign policy has earned him broad respect throughout the world. Serving as the 26th United States Ambassador to the United Nations, he dealt with extraordinary global issues during one of the most challenging periods in our history, including the recent Russia-Georgia conflict and the Mumbai terror attacks. He is the highest-ranking Muslim in the U.S. Government in the history of the United States. Previously, he served as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, where he played a significant role in facilitating both countries' constitutions, elections and formation of government. In Iraq, he was instrumental in getting the Sunni Arabs to participate in the political process and move away from al-Qaida. Ambassador Khalilzad's first-hand knowledge, and experience as a statesman, in these important hotspots, at this crucial juncture in time give him unparalleled insights into the global issues of security, terror, extremism, state building, peace negotiation, and energy.



Having served as Ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan, Ambassador Khalilzad brought unprecedented credentials, regional knowledge and strong negotiating skills to his appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. He skillfully navigated many critical issues for the United States, including Darfur, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, the Middle East, increasing the U.N.'s role and effectiveness in Iraq and Afghanistan, and U.N. reform.

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, President Bush came to rely on Dr. Khalilzad's regional expertise. Dr. Khalilzad was involved in the early stages of planning to overthrow the Taliban, and on December 31st, 2001, he was selected as Bush's Special Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan. He served in that position until November 2003, when he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. He oversaw the drafting of Afghanistan's constitution and was involved with the country's first elections.

Ambassador Khalilzad was sworn in on June 22, 2005 as U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. He had served earlier—from November 2002 until May 2003—as Presidential Envoy and Ambassador at large for Free Iraqis. He was credited with helping negotiate compromises, which allowed the ratification of Iraq's Constitution in October 2005. He worked to ensure that the December 2005 elections ran smoothly, played a substantial role in forming the current government, and he played a vital role in convincing the Sunni Arabs to participate in the political process and move away from al-Qaida.

Before becoming Ambassador to Afghanistan, he served at the National Security Council as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director first for Southwest Asia and Regional Issues; then for the Middle East and North Africa and finally for Islamic Outreach and Southwest Asia Initiatives. He also has been a Special Presidential Envoy and Ambassador at Large for Free Iraqis with the task of coordinating "preparations for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq." In 2000, President George W. Bush asked Dr. Khalilzad to head the Bush-Cheney transition team for the Department of Defense.

Between 1993 and 1999, Dr. Khalilzad was Director of the Strategy, Doctrine and Force Structure program for RAND's Project Air Force. While with RAND, he founded the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He also consulted for Cambridge Energy Research Associates, which at the time was conducting a risk analysis for UNOCAL for a proposed Trans-Afghanistan gas pipeline project which would have extended from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan and further proceeding to Pakistan.

Between 1991 and 1992, Dr. Khalilzad served as Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning. He also served as a senior political scientist at RAND and an associate professor at the University of California at San Diego in 1989 and 1991. From 1985 to 1989 at the Department of State, Dr. Khalilzad served as Special Advisor to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs working policy issues, advising on the Iran-Iraq war and the Soviet war in Afghanistan. From 1979 to 1986, he was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Columbia University.

Ambassador Khalilzad received his bachelor's and master's degree from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He is the author of more than 200 books, articles, studies, and reports. His work has been translated in many languages including Arabic, Chinese, German, Japanese, and Turkish.

Ambassador Khalilzad has received the Department of Defense's Medal for Distinguished Service three times, from three different Secretaries of Defense. Ambassador Khalilzad has also received Afghanistan's highest medal.