

Venkatesh Varma



Ambassador D.B.Venkatesh Varma was a Member of the Indian Foreign Service from 1988 to 2021. During his diplomatic career, he has worked in the Ministry of External Affairs, in the Office of External Affairs Minister and in the Prime Minister's Office. He served as India's Ambassador to Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, to the Kingdom of Spain and to the Russian Federation, until October 2021.

He has vast experience in India's Security and Defence policies, including its nuclear, missile, and space programs. He has more than 12 years of experience in the field of multilateral non-proliferation and disarmament—nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons, having served three postings in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. He also served as Joint Secretary in charge of Disarmament and International Security in the Ministry of External Affairs between 2010-2013. He was a member of the UN Group of Government Experts on Missiles and on Disarmament and Nuclear Nonproliferation Education. He was also a Member of the Indian Delegation to the UNGA in 1998-1999, 2003- 2005 and 2008-2016. He has attended 9 Sessions of the UN First Committee and 7 Sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

He was a key member of the Indian negotiating team involved in the Civil Nuclear Initiative with the US during his tenure as Director in the Prime Minister's Office during 2004-2007, and as a member of Indian Delegation to Conference on Disarmament and as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. He was involved in negotiations relating to all stages of the Civil Nuclear Initiative—the bilateral negotiations with the US, including the 123 Agreement; negotiations with the Nuclear Suppliers Group; and negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency. He has vast experience with respect to India's Civil Nuclear Programme. Amb.

Varma was key member of India's delegation to the Nuclear Security Summits during 2010-2013.

With three separate postings in Moscow, spanning three decades, he has vast experience in India's defence and strategic relations with Russia. He has excellent contacts in the Russian leadership. As Ambassador, he was closely involved with developing India's relations with Russia including Prime Minister Modi's Act Far East Initiative, deepening of India's Defence, Nuclear, Space, Energy, Commercial, Science & Technology and Cultural relations with Russia. He has spoken at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum and the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

Varma was the first Recipient of the S.K.Singh Award for Excellence in the Indian Foreign Service in 2011 for his contribution to the negotiations of the Civil Nuclear Initiative.

He has an M.Phil in International Relations (Disarmament Studies) from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. He has spoken at numerous think-tanks in Geneva, Washington, New York, Monterey, Vienna, Brussels, London, Melbourne, The Hague, Seoul, Madrid and Moscow. He has lectured at the Russian Diplomatic Academy, the Russian General Staff Academy in Moscow, the National Defence College, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses and Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi, and the College of Defence Management, Secunderabad.