

RajendraMadhukarAbhyankar
Visiting Professor, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University
Former Indian Ambassador to EU,Belgium and Luxembourg

Ambassador RajendraAbhyankaris Visiting Professor, School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA), Indiana University, Bloomington. He was adjunct Professor in SPEA in 2012 and Diplomat-in-Residence at the Centre for American and Global Security at the University in 2011.

He joined the Indian Diplomatic Service in 1968 and retired in August 2005 as India's Ambassador to the EU,Belgium and Luxembourg. Hewas Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India from 2001 to 2004.

The following are his postings, in chronological order starting with the last:

- 2004-05 Ambassador of India to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg
- 2001-04 Secretary (East) Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi
- 1998-2001 Consul General of India, San Francisco, US
- 1996-1998 Ambassador of India to Turkey with concurrent accreditation to Azerbaijan
- 1992-1996 Ambassador of India to Syria
- 1990-1992 Joint Secretary (Bangladesh,Sri Lanka, Maldives) Ministry of External Affairs
- 1987-1990 High Commissioner of India to Cyprus
- 1984-1987 Minister, Embassy of India , Rome and non-resident Consul General to san Marino
- 1982-1984 Deputy High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka
- 1979-1982 Counsellor, Embassy of India, Baghdad
- 1975-1979 Deputy Secretary (Trade Policy Division) Ministry of Commerce, New Delhi
- 1972-1975 First Secretary, Embassy of India, Belgium
- 1970-1972 Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of India to UN, Geneva
- 1968-1970 under training

Since retirement from the diplomatic service Ambassador Abhyankarhas been involved a in a range of activities:

Academics

- Professor and Director, Centre for West Asian (Middle East) Studies, JamiaMilliaIslamia University , New Delhi,(2005-2008)The Centre was set up in July 2004 and was formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India on 29 January 2005.As its first Director he laid the foundation of its mission.
- Chairman, Kunzru Centre for Defence Studies and Research,Pune, Indiaa private think-tank on defence and security issues.
- Member, Executive Board and Regulating Council of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune,(Govt of Maharashtra nominee)India's premier institution on Indology, oriental studies and Sanskrit.

Philanthropy

- Adviser (2009-2011) and Director ,India Programs(2005-2009) ,The Asia Foundation(TAF), San Francisco,a non-profit, non-governmental US Foundation which supports NGO's in Asia in the theme areas of governance, law and justice, women's empowerment, economic reform and development, information and communication technology, environment and international relations. He was instrumental in re-introducing TAF in India and developing its program.
- President of the Hinduja Foundation,Mumbai,(2006-2009) a philanthropic Trust linked to the global Hinduja Group. The Hinduja Foundation focuses on the CSR theme areas of education and health.
- Trustee Jai Ho Trust,set up by Danny Boyle and Charles Colson, the makers of the film 'Slumdog Millionaire'(2009 to date).
- He has been member of number of government committees'e.g, the official India-EU Round-Table on Civil Society, the India-EU High Level Trade Group and the Ministry of NER's Steering Committee on the Vision Document.

Consultancy and Advisory

- He has been Consultant to UNDP,Baku Azerbaijan (2005-2006)
- He has served as to Reliance Industries Ltd, India's foremost petro-chemical conglomerate on their external petroleum business
- He has served on the Advisory Board of Vedanta Resources plc a leader an international natural resources major

Track II Dialogues

- India-US Track II Strategic Dialogue (2005 to date)
- India-Israel Dialogue
- India-Bangladesh Dialogue
- India-Afghanistan-Pakistan Dialogue

Diplomatic Career

Ambassador Abhyankar has dealt with a wide variety of bilateral and multilateral political and economic work and has held important positions in a number of Indian diplomatic missions in US, Europe, Middle East and South Asia. He has been involved in formulating policy and programmes in the areas of politics and security, trade and investment, and culture and education. He has acquired specialization on the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia having served, for over two decades, in posts in Baghdad, Damascus, Ankara, Baku and Nicosia. He also has an experience of over five years in handling India's relations with Sri Lanka having also served in Colombo. His two tenures in Brussels and one in Rome have given him a unique insight into the workings of European institutions and policy. His tenure as Consul General in San Francisco, coming as it did, soon after India's nuclear tests in 1998, required him to undertake special advocacy of India's views and perspectives on disarmament and non-proliferation. The economic success of India and of Indians during the Internet boom in Silicon Valley added a new dimension to Ambassador Abhyankar's knowledge, experience and contacts. His deep knowledge of the cultures of these regions and his facility with its languages is an asset, which has enabled him to build a wide range of personal friendships in these countries.

As Secretary (East) in Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, he was closely involved with India's Middle East policy, particularly, Iraq. He was also responsible for fashioning India's policy vis-a-vis the GCC, on Palestine-Israel issue; and on developing India's relations with Israel. He was responsible for commencing India's regular Consultations with the Arab League and the GCC.. He formulated and supervised India's policy in the field of counter-terrorism and led a number of bilateral groups with countries in the region. He was involved with taking forward India's 'Look East' policy which gave a new thrust to relations with ASEAN and the PIF and with Korea and Australia. Equally he was involved in developing India's policy on energy security and implementing its diplomatic dimension in Sudan, the Gulf and the Caspian basin.

As Ambassador to the EU his tenure was marked by the finalisation of the 'Strategic Partnership between India and the EU; as well as the commencement of regular consultations with the NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

As Consul General in San Francisco he developed close contacts with the famed Indians in Silicon Valley but he was also able to develop close contacts with all the international IT majors based in the Bay area.

Education

1966-68 Worked on Ph.D in Economics at the Centre for Industrial Economics, Department of Economics, University of Bombay. At the same time, he also worked on a path-breaking report on India's Industrial Licensing Policy for the Ministry of Industrial Development, Government of India [1966].

2013 Currently registered for PhD at University of Pune, India: field of study- Syria

1966 MA [Economics], University of Delhi.

1964 BA [Honours] [Economics] from St. Stephens College, University of Delhi.

Publications/Books

The Crossing by Rajendra Abhyankar, iUniverse, Bloomington 2013-12-17

Stuff Happens, An Anecdotal Insight into Indian Diplomacy by Rajendra Abhyankar, Har-Anand Publishers 2013,

India-Israel Relations: Evolution and Future by Rajendra Abhyankar, Tel Aviv University 2011

India and West Asia edited volume by Rajendra Abhyankar, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2008

INTERESTS

Ambassador Abhyankar is a frequent speaker and contributor on India, Middle-East and other international issues at universities, think-tanks and public affairs forums and media in India and abroad.

LANGUAGES **Fluent, active:** English, French and Italian

Passive and spoken: Arabic, Turkish and Greek.

He also knows four Indian languages