

Uzbekistan's Envoy to the United Nations, Ambassador Bakhtiyor Ibragimov speaks at UVU

The presentation at Utah Valley University on February 5, 2018 on “Foreign Policy Priorities of the New Government of Uzbekistan” Ambassador Bakhtiyor Ibragimov started off by expressing his gratitude to our school for focusing on education. He admired our diversity, faculty members, and said we created a perfect environment for learning. He stated students should appreciate every year, hour, minute, and second of the university. He encouraged us to immerse ourselves in our education, discover other cultures, and to make connections while we are in college.



Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan, Ambassador Bakhtiyor Ibragimov during presentation at UVU

Uzbekistan had an election last year, in 2017, after the new president was elected in December of 2016. Policies related to immediate neighbors has been one of the priorities the new government has focused on. Central Asian region is struggling with financial crises, worsening environment, organized crime, and drug trafficking. That is why government of Uzbekistan would like to focus

on sustainability with their neighbors and also continue to keep peace and friendliness within the governments of surrounding Central Asian neighbors.

In one year the new president of Uzbekistan Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev has met almost with almost every Central Asian state and many other countries. He visited Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and has even met with Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Ambassador Nikki Hailey. New Uzbek administration discussed issue such as a beneficial trade relationship and building the economy. For the past 25 years for example, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have not had a relationship, however under the current president he has closed that gap. Trade has increased by 50% with Turkmenistan and 25% with Kyrgyzstan. The President Mirziyoyev has worked on building trust with their neighbors, this has clearly paid off. The United Nations helped to develop a draft of a treaty to manage water resources from the rivers in the region, which identifies rights and identifies obligations of each country. This discussion of water rights and the management of the rivers has had a positive impact between the countries.

President Mirziyoyev stated that Uzbekistan is ready to address any issue with any countries and would like to compromise with issues that other countries have. Uzbekistan has also focused on addressing security, because of the war in Afghanistan and new government would like to alter this situation. Foreign ministers of Central Asian countries in a meeting organized by Uzbekistan to meet regularly about how to change opinions on issues within the regional countries. The mission of Uzbekistan to the UN focuses on passing a resolution to promote peace and sustainability in the region.

Afghanistan has a direct impact in Central Asia. The country has focused in jumpstarting cooperation with Afghanistan. The President of Afghanistan Gani visited Uzbekistan for the first time in twenty years, which is a huge achievement. No countries economy can be sustained with the continuous war and rumors of war. Uzbekistan has offered to lend a hand to help the economy and infrastructure of Afghanistan because it believes that every central Asian country would benefit if the relations between them and Afghanistan increased. The Presidents of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement to build more railroads and signed over 20 documents in

many areas like security and trade. Instead of importing goods from a far distance, they have worked on ordering them from Afghanistan which helps their economy.

Overall, I found this lecture very beneficial and would attend another event by H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Ibragimov. Before this lecture I had never heard of Uzbekistan and knew absolutely nothing about the Central Asian region. I enjoyed this lecture because I was able to learn about the benefit the new President of Uzbekistan and how the government in this region works. I also found it fascinating to hear how much Uzbekistan is working to keep peace and help out their neighbor, Afghanistan. By focusing on economy growth, peace between the regions, and working together with all Central Asian countries they can all benefit.

Ezra Pugliano, UVU student