

## *Foreign Policy Priorities of the New Government of Uzbekistan*

I had the privilege to attend the presentation the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations held at UVU on the foreign policies and the new government of Uzbekistan on February 5, 2018. I will admit, it was quite difficult for me to understand exactly what the Ambassador was saying word for word because his accent was so rich I couldn't keep up fast enough. I gathered as much information as I could so hopefully my analysis pieces well together.

When Ambassador Ibragimov spoke out about his country and his role in it, he spoke with great pride. This was the first time I ever heard about Uzbekistan, so to have its official representative visit campus was the best way to learn about it. Before delving into the core of his presentation, the Ambassador shared some facts about the country itself. Uzbekistan is located in central Asia right by Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. It is a former Soviet republic.

The Ambassador Ibragimov began his lecture by emphasizing that the focus for the presentation was on the country's immediate neighbors which are central Asian countries and Afghanistan. It is their priority to be on good terms with them and vice versa for they act as alliances. The reason for it as well is that its readiness to become involved with its neighbors can move the region forward or make it fall short of its possibility to excel. It's important to do so because Uzbekistan's current policy opens opportunity which results in good ties with those who decide to approach it. For example, meetings between the presidents of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were held to discuss current regional and international issues of mutual interest. What exactly did that consist of? Both leaders agreed on the neat format of trade, economy, transport, communication, culture, humanity, and political aspects in the prospect of further expansion and deepening of cooperation within those traits. Also, intensification of cooperation between the border regions of two countries was a significant point they brought up as that is what the countries now run on.

Towards the end of Ambassador Ibragimov's lecture, foreign guest was asked who Uzbekistan's largest trading partner as of today is and he replied that it is Russia. With that, he mentioned the country's top exports which include gold, petroleum gas, cotton, radioactive chemicals and refined copper. Going opposite of the exports, the country's top imports are medicaments, vehicle parts, refined petroleum, iron, and sawn wood. Russia sits at \$2.22 billion in export destination with Uzbekistan.

Before the event came to a close, the Ambassador shared with the attendees a couple of advises. As an expert in international relations, Ambassador Ibragimov, in summary, said to recommend other countries to work together in order to promote collaboration. That is what makes countries successful in a sense of self and with others.

*Leslie Sixtos-Cruz, UVU student*