

## **Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy speaks at UVU**



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First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy spoke before the audience at Utah Valley University (UVU) on April 5, 2019. The Russian diplomat was very straightforward with his presentation as well as his attitude. Ambassador Polyanskiy talked about the world perception of Russia and the repercussions from that when it comes to international relations.

He mentioned how people like or tend to blame Russia and this is only because Russia can be seen as the scapegoat for all the problem going on internationally. The whole reasoning for some countries or representatives to blame Russia is to try to combat and defend their own best interest. The Russian diplomat also stated that Russia along with other 4 countries are part of the P5 of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which means that in the UNSC they have permanent status while the other ten countries rotate when they get elected. Ambassador Polyanskiy also spoke about the conflict between Ukraine and Russia over Donbass, which is an

economic region in eastern Ukraine and southwestern Russia. The conflict, the Ambassador Polyanskiy said, was more of an internal conflict aka its citizens rather than between the two countries. The region is a very complicated one, as people from Ukraine, the south and east, claim Russian nationalism due to the fact, that they speak Russian and have very similar culture and customs as Russians. The reasoning behind why Russia is blamed for this conflict between two countries is due to Russian aggression. With that Mr. Polyanskiy said that Russia completely support international law and does not want to be seen as playing favorites: Russian Federation wants resolution of international issues to be done in a just way. As the example, he used the situation in Venezuela and its state of crisis. As Venezuela's humanitarian and governmental crisis get worse, more western countries are becoming in favor of using military force and removing President Maduro from office and to get Venezuela back to its feet. But Russia, as Ambassador Polyanskiy said, has been portrayed as in favor of Maduro staying in office and Venezuela figuring things on their own without any international intervention. The Russian diplomat said that they in support of Venezuela but not Maduro and Russia feels like if things go the way other members of the UN want it to be developed, then it will catapult in a civil war and that's what Russia wants to avoid.

As my personal experience goes with this meeting, it was very different from the presentation of the Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN, Ambassador Jan Kickert on February 19, 2019, which I attended as well. The Russian diplomat was very honest and straightforward with his questions and answers, something I would not expect. My expectations were based on the impressions from the lecture of the Austrian diplomat, as he was the first UN representative whom I met and much of his answers were very diplomatic, as I thought they should be.

Therefore, meeting with Ambassador Polyanskiy gave me an insight that Permanent Representatives of not all countries have to be diplomatic in their answers. The way Ambassador Polyanskiy answered questions and talked about international relations demonstrated to me what does it mean to be a Permanent Representative. Although you do have to be diplomatic one can still show own ethnicity and personality, and the Russian diplomats position was not what I expected. I admire the fact that he was able to truly speak his mind to college students as I feel we get out answers sugar coated. How are we planning to face the real political climate and challenges if we are not able to understand what really is happening through their minds and their country. I

truly appreciate the opportunity to meet Ambassador Polyanskiy and experience what people in the UN see every day and which is what I hope to be part of in the future.

*Samantha Tiburcio, UVU student*