

Germany's Role at the United Nations: Ambassador Harald Braun

I am very grateful for the opportunity I had to listen to German ambassador, Harald Brauns' lecture at UVU on October 31, 2016. After listening, I must say, I like him. I know this statement may seem juvenile; however, the way he spoke to us and explained his duties at the United Nations and Germany's participation there in really pulled together in class learning and real life application. Something that he mentioned really drew my attention.



Ambassador Harald Braun Makes Presentation at UVU

In the United Nations the Security Council is made up of five permanent members and ten elected members who serve for 2-year terms. Those of the five permanent hold power of a veto. Each of the five have a veto for each reform brought to their attention. For example, the past three attempts to decide on a resolution to the Syrian conflict have been vetoed by Russia (a permanent member). For this reason, Braun suggests that the power of the veto be limited to a more specific set of cases. Still it is believed that the role of the veto amongst the five permanent Security Council members remains important; however to the extent in which it stretches is seen as needing reform.

Another very interesting point of the lecture was that of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals agreed upon by the Council. These goals are represented on a circular button with 17 colors representing each goal. These goals pertain to the major issues across the globe; things that the council has agreed need attention and reform internationally. For example, a goal of these seventeen is that to eliminate hunger and poverty. Braun shared that the countries of the United Nations have agreed to put their best foot forward in attempting to make this goal a reality by the year 2030.

Interestingly enough, Germany is actually looking to apply to become a permanent member of the Security Council. Germany has been elected as a 2-year member of the Security Council five times in the past. With Germany's increasing participation and support of peace missions in the past years, as a country it has proven its intentions to be in line with those of the United Nations. Thus I would not be surprised that if the Security Council does undergo some level of reform, Germany would be an ideal candidate for permanent membership.

All in all, I would love to further hear about the United Nations from representatives themselves. In hearing how the UN works (behind the scenes) and the steps being taken in reference to current events like the Syrian Conflict. The members of the UN encourage countries to open its borders to refugees. Germany has been one to have open borders, taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees. I am very interested in the make up of the UN and how it may be able to act more effectively in the future.

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