

Lecture of the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Ambassador Harald Braun at UVU

On Monday, October 31, 2016, His Excellency, Dr. Harald Braun, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, visited Utah Valley University and spoke on “Germany’s Role at the United Nations.” There were two topics of discussion Dr. Braun focused on; what is Germany doing in the UN that sets them apart, and the conflicting question “Is Germany punching below its weight?”



(L to R): Ute Braun, Wife of Ambassador, Ambassador Harald Braun and Dr. Baldomero Lago, Assistant Vice President – Global Engagement, UVU

This semester I am enrolled in the International Relations class and it was important for me to understand from Ambassador Braun’s presentation about Germany’s role in the United Nations and how his nation has become an example of leadership, especially to those countries who do not find themselves in the Security Council. Germany is considered the “heart of Europe” as Mr. Braun explained, and paved the way in multiple facets, including economic growth and prosperity, and human rights advancement. The Ambassador also explained what Germany’s role today in the UN is. Germany must maintain peace in the world. Germany provides substantial aid to the United Nations through peacekeepers, and Military instructors, including 3,300 International peace member troops, and 1,000 troops in Iraq. Germany currently gives the third largest amount in financial contributions to the UN (7.1 percent of the UN’s total contributions), only behind the United States (22 percent) and Japan (10.8 percent)¹. Germany also strives to maintain Human Rights goals internationally. At present, Germany supports the majority of the 16 peacekeeping missions in effect by the United Nations. Germany was also recently reelected to the Human Rights

Council, and has been a massive contributor to the global south in its efforts to create the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (a roadmap to economic prosperity, supported by the entire world community).

Germany's role in the United Nations has created a question asked by some of its fellow General Assembly members, "Is Germany punching below its weight?" Dr. Braun described to us that "Germany has one vote in the UN, no more, no less." He also brought to our attention the dynamics of the countries who are active in the United Nations. In the hierarchy of the system, you are either in the Security Council, or out. Dr. Braun also noted that those who are elected to a non-permanent position in the Security Council are still considered less important than those nations who have permanent seats. The Ambassador also made a very demonstrative point that the Security Council's personal ideals and use of vetoes on clearly positive resolutions "is not meant for the 21st century." The veto is not used to stop war as it was meant when created, but rather used to support or deny political issues. The Ambassador explained that the forces at work in the upper ranks of the UN need to change if the full potential of the UN is to be reached.

It was very interesting and productive lecture, which provided both the audience at UVU and myself with new knowledge about important role of Germany as one of the leading nations both in Europe and globally at the United Nations.

William Crist, Member of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU

¹ DGVN. (2016). Germany in the United Nations – deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen e.V. Retrieved November 2, 2016, from <http://www.dgvn.de/germany-in-the-united-nations/>, <http://www.dgvn.de/germany-in-the-united-nations/>
