

Interacting with Ambassador of Hungary to the US, Dr. Laszlo Szabo at UVU



Ambassador Laszlo Szabo speaks at UVU

It was very interesting for me to attend the presentation that the Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Laszlo Szabo gave at Utah Valley University on November 6, 2018. It was titled: “Hungary and the Geopolitical Importance of Central Europe: What’s in it for the United States?” I was especially interested in his lecture, because I lived in Hungary for two years as I served an ecclesiastical mission. A lot of the presentation was used to highlight many of the more favorable, although slightly pointless, things about Hungary. These things included things that had been invented by Hungarians, Hungarian celebrities, and companies that have factories in Hungary. While these issues were interesting and are important parts of Hungary, I wish there would have been a more focus on the politics and the economic and social situations in Hungary.

The issues that Ambassador Szabo did talk about that touched on the economy and politics were good and informative. A topic that he mentioned was the situation of

Jews in Hungary. He talked about how it was one of the, if not the, best states in Europe for Jews to live in. I saw this a little bit as I was in Hungary. There is a section in downtown Budapest that is a Jewish section. It has a large synagogue and it also had monuments to some of the horrible things that happened to the Jews during World War II and the Cold War.

I also wished that there would have been more time at the end for questions and answer. The little bit of time that we did had was taken up by questions from faculty. While these questions were good, I wish that there would have been a better opportunity for students to participate and ask questions that would be important to us. In response to these questions I thought that the Ambassador Szabo deflected them a little bit and only partially answered some of them. With situation like this you always need to take what is said with a grain of salt: it is hard to know sometimes if we can trust what Ambassador of any country is saying at face value. This was true with Ambassador Szabo, when much of what he claimed left me wanting to look up other sources and check what he is saying.



Ambassador Laszlo Szabo talks to UVU students

The most interesting part of the experience to me was talking with and listening to conversations of some Hungarians after the presentation. They were talking in Hungarian with each other and I was standing there with them and found it very interesting to hear what they say. The main thoughts from what they were saying is that they thought that the Ambassador Szabo did really good job and that it was a good presentation, indeed. They mentioned another place where they had been earlier, but I didn't catch where it was, when there was quite a bit more opposition during the question and answer section. It was probably a more liberal place for the Hungarian guest to attend, with the audience who disagree, or at least disagree more, with some of the issues that are happening in the conservative country of Hungary.

Stuart Cannon, UVU student