

First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, Ambassador Polyanskiy discusses global politics at UVU.



On April 5, 2019, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy visited Utah Valley University (UVU) and held a stirring discussion with students and faculty regarding Moscow’s policies and interests in terms of Ukraine as well as in Venezuela. A key point he reiterated many times in regards to helping us understand these policies is that one cannot gain insight from just one source or one media outlet, but rather one should obtain knowledge from numerous outlets, as many as possible. In light of these comments, he described to us the situations in Ukraine and Venezuela and how Russian interests there are not what is typically described in the Western media because we still widely regard Russia as our Cold War enemy. For example, the well-known military invasion of Ukraine, specifically in Donbass as well as Crimea, in his words, is not to wage war against Ukraine and retrieve stolen or lost territory after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is, rather the case, when Russia gaining a presence there to ensure that ethnic Russians in these regions gain rights that the Ukrainian government is not ensuring them. He described this as acting in a “humanitarian manner”. Naturally, as Ambassador Polyanskiy explained, mostly homogenous countries would want their

ethnic citizens to be granted rights in other countries and treated as the citizens they are, so it is understandable for Moscow to get involved. The key is that this idea and mindset was rarely reported on in the US, and if it was, then it was widely skewed.



Drew Tschirki, with Ambassador Polyanskiy

The same goes for the presidential situation in Venezuela. The Ambassador Polyanskiy explicitly said, “Russia doesn’t support Maduro, it supports Venezuela.” He would go on to say, that Western support of Guaido is completely contrary to international law. Any sustainable development or aid in Venezuela should be done within the laws and statutes they now have, and if they are not accepting it, you cannot force them to take it. “You can’t force a man to eat who doesn’t want to eat.” Of course, a huge part of American foreign relations is the deposing of current leaders, replacing them with “democratic” leaders that we want to represent the people, not who legally is the representative of the people. This is a gross overreach of power and destroys others’ sovereignty as well as legitimacy on the world scale. According to the Ambassador Polyanskiy, we must, as Russia does, respect the authority and power held by those elected in their elections

(whether there were widespread protests or not) and recognize that the country does what it can to help its citizens.

When question was asked about United Nations sustainable development goals, Ambassador responded that sustainable goals are brought about naturally, not imposed on anybody. Russia, as he said, is trying to avoid telling countries what they should or should not do, but is trying to assist those countries how they can, in the ways that the respective countries need and will allow. We as Americans, on the global scale and also individually, can do better at not forcing our hand on others but letting life evolve naturally, helping and assisting when and where needed. A huge part of this is understanding multiple interpretations of the news and trying to learn the truth, not just through one source, but also through as many as possible. In the words of the Ambassador, “If you want to see through all lenses, you need to learn from all sources.”

Drew Tschirki, UVU student