

Learning about Kyrgyzstan from Mr. Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev



Mr. Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev lecture at UVU

I really did enjoy the talk which was made by Mr. Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev during our class on Central Asia at Utah Valley University on August 23rd, 2019. Mr. Dyikanbaev is the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President to the Kyrgyz Parliament.

It truly was a unique experience. To hear from a person born in a different time, as well as being born in a completely different part of the world during a time in the world where the two biggest ideologies on the planet were both trying to take over the world and to be the best.

Unfortunately, because Kyrgyzstan geographically was closer to the “bad guy” (Soviet Union) than the “good guy” (U.S.) they automatically were crippled both physically and mentally by the Soviet Union. The talk made me realize how angry, and powerless I would feel if I was in his shoes growing up. Seeing foreign military and personnel take over your country with no questions asked is one of the worst things a person can experience.

All while stripping them of their rights and sovereignty. All of this coming from the commands in Moscow, a place how many miles away from you, but somehow is dictating you in the way you live your life. This though absolutely infuriates me personally. This talk opened my eyes by showing the importance of sovereignty and democracy. It took me off guard when foreign dignitary talked about how great the American philosophy and government system is and made me realize you don't truly appreciate something until it is stripped away from you.

I could not imagine living in a country where you literally could not vote. Or choose what you did for a living. These principles like many others slowly combine and mold into how you identify yourself. The discussion made me realize of how actually special Kyrgyzstan as a country truly is. To have two massive neighbors next door China and Russia, and to still choose for yourself to have a country that truly does care about fair elections, sovereignty, separation of church and state, all while protecting human rights. To have this ideology in a moderately weak country compared to China and Russia, shows to me that change can happen even when you least expect it to. Either for the better or the worse, it is all a roll of the dice depending where and when you live on this planet. I mean, Utah and Kyrgyzstan have relatively the same population and the same climate. Just imagine Utah going against Russia or China. This absolutely blows my mind, all while having a completely opposite government and ideology than almost all the other countries surrounding it.

Kanyon Lee, UVU student