“Never give up...” these were the concluding words of Benjamin Ferencz, the last surviving prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials, during the closing session of the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law (ASIL). He reminded the audience that, despite its myriad flaws, international law has made significant accomplishments. Yet much remains to be done, and it is upon all of us to continue the path set by those who dared to change the status quo, even when facing great uncertainty and peril. And so, his concluding words become a mantra not just to international law practitioners and scholars, but to all of us. We all bear the responsibility – and privilege – to create a better world.

But Benjamin Ferencz was not the only distinguished speaker in this year’s ASIL meeting. Some notorious panelists included former ICJ Judge Bruno Simma, the celebrated constitutional law scholar Bruce Ackerman, and the prolific historian David Armitage. The range of panels was vast as well. They stretched from a last-minute discussion on the missile strikes against Syria to challenges posed by new technologies – such as artificial intelligence – to humanitarian international law.

Therefore, I can say that attending the 2017 ASIL annual meeting was an extraordinary experience. Not only did I get to learn from some of the world’s leading authorities in the field of international law, but also interact with them through questions, and occasional conversations during a plethora of evening receptions organized throughout the conference.

I am very grateful to the Miller Institute for Global Challenges and the Law and to the Advanced Degree Programs Office for allowing me the opportunity to both, attend this year’s ASIL annual meeting, and to represent Berkeley as a JSD student. I pledge to take Benjamin Ferencz’s advice to never give up wherever the contingencies of life take me; in the practice of law or in academia there is much yet to be done.

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