



The Honorable G. William and Ariadna Miller INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THE LAW

Report on the American Society of International Law Annual Meeting April 2015



I am honored and grateful to have been chosen as the Miller Institute and the Advanced Degrees Program (ADP) Office's inaugural JSD fellow for the American Society of International Law Annual Meeting. Now that I have had some time to reflect upon the trip, I can safely say that attending the Annual Meeting was an incredibly rewarding experience. I hope by sharing a few of my thoughts here, I will be able to convince future JSD students to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity offered by the Miller Institute and the ADP Office.

I believe it is absolutely worthwhile for JSD candidates to attend the Annual Meeting for three main reasons. First, the contacts you will make are invaluable. In just a few short days I met people from the World Bank, ICJ, NATO, the OECD, the Red Cross, various universities around the world and more. For aspiring scholars, the practitioners present at the Annual Meeting are invaluable fountains of knowledge about international law as it is practiced. Many of these practitioners

will gladly share their insights and observations, potentially giving you fresh research ideas and opportunities at collaboration.

Second, the Annual Meeting can put a human face on international law, even at the highest level. Let's face it. Sometimes legal academic debate can seem distant and, well, academic. But at the Annual Meeting you will come to see how passionate international law advocates interact with each other during debate panels and networking events. I believe that this is valuable experience for aspiring scholars because it is impossible to disaggregate the study of international law from the advocacy, politics, and even the individual personalities of the practitioners. In the end, your scholarship and thinking will become all the richer because of it.

Finally, experiencing first-hand the panels at the Annual Meeting will help underscore the fact that the study of international law must be rooted in practical considerations as well as in theory. No more was this more evident than in the policy keynote speech given by the Department of Defense General Counsel Stephen Preston, who outlined the Obama administration's stance on the use of force authorization for military operations against ISIS. Throughout the speech, Mr. Preston made it clear that the US government's position reflects and engages the academic debate about use of force authorizations. It is important to remember that since much of the development of international law stems from state practice, as serious scholars we cannot ignore the nexus between politics and law.

In short, my experience at the Annual Meeting was all around excellent. I believe future JSD students will find their experiences similarly enriching. I hope this will be the start of a long Berkeley Law tradition of sending our graduate-level students to experience one of the great annual international law gatherings in the United States.

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