

REMARKS

PATRICIA LEE REFO

PRESIDENT, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

CHARLES MOXLEY:

Let me introduce ABA President Trish Refo. But let me first say that it's very hard to move beyond this past panel. A wonderful discussion and very thought provoking and we'll carry it through the day and carry it into hopefully a follow-up program where we can take the dialogue to the next level. I think we can have no better sequel to this panel than to say that the ABA is the largest voluntary association of attorneys and legal professionals in the world. And its International Section is very active in the area of national security, including disarmament and addressing limits on nuclear weapons.

Trish Refo, President of the ABA, the floor is yours.

PATRICIA REFO:

Hello, I'm Trish Refo, President of the American Bar Association. Before we begin the rest of today's program, I'd like to thank the New York State Bar Association International Law Section for organizing this conference with support from co-sponsors, including the American Bar Association Section of International Law. Meeting today, we advance a critical goal to ensure the very survival of our world. And that is to insist on the central role of the rule of law in the governance of nuclear weapons. The legal profession is strengthened by the ABA's dynamic relationship with the New York State Bar Association and other organizations that lead on the important issues of our day: issues where thoughtful and committed lawyers can and do make a difference.

Speaking before the UN general assembly in 1961, President John F. Kennedy famously said, "Every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman, and child lives under a sword of Damocles hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being

cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us.”

After the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the intelligence agencies of both the United States and the then Soviet Union concluded that without a legal constraint, a cascade of nuclear proliferation was likely, and thus, they committed to advancing a path to curb proliferation and advance disarmament. In 1970, under the presidency of Richard Nixon, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force. I am proud that the ABA House of Delegates resolved to support the indefinite extension of that treaty in 1995.

Among today’s panelists is the distinguished U.S. diplomat who led the negotiations of that accomplishment, Ambassador Thomas Graham. Ambassador Graham is a member of the ABA International Law Section’s task force on nuclear proliferation. The ABA also supports the comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty for which Ambassador Graham was also a central figure. The ABA’s leadership in this area is part of our broader commitment to pursue international stability and order, based on the rule of law. We act on our commitment with the hard work of our task force on nuclear non-proliferation, and many other committees that focus on bringing about a safer and more secure world, not through the law of power, but through the power of law.

The American Bar Association, the world’s largest, most prominent organization of legal professionals, stands firmly for advancing the power of law to control, constrain, and eliminate nuclear weapons. Thank you, all of you, for your contributions and your commitment to protecting all the world’s inhabitants by advancing justice, security, and liberty for all. The American Bar Association stands with you.

CHARLES MOXLEY:

Thank you, Trish. That was a wonderful confirmation of the ABA’s interest in this issue and recognition of its importance. John Burroughs is the moderator of our next panel, which he will tell you about.