What International Law Values

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW
Dear Colleagues:

As we convene our 112th Annual Meeting, it is an opportunity to look back on the past year. Our 2017 meeting considered “What International Law Values” at a time of deepening concern about the future of international law and rule-based institutions. The meeting inspired and motivated us to continue our work to advance our mission—to foster international law and promote international relations on the basis of law and justice.

The challenges of the past year have placed extraordinary pressure on our civic institutions, underscoring the vital importance of civil society organizations such as ours in reinforcing the values and norms on which the rule of law depends. The Society has responded to those challenges with a number of initiatives to educate and inform policymakers, the media, and the public about the value and importance of international law and institutions.

Our series of livestream dialogues on “International Law and the Trump Administration” has enabled us to reach a wider audience than ever before, attracting thousands of viewers and listeners around the world, and increasing our impact on a public debate that has too often been devoid of clear thinking and fact-based analysis. We recently released an updated online edition of our centennial publication, *International Law: 100 Ways It Shapes Our Lives*, which will be followed in the coming months by a new series of discussions in podcast format and short online videos on key concepts and issues in international law.

We also marked the first anniversary of our publishing partnership with Cambridge University Press, which has provided an enhanced and integrated online platform for the American Journal of International Law and its companion publication, *AJIL Unbound*—one of the most exciting and dynamic ventures in legal publishing today.

Our Midyear Meeting took us to St. Louis, where we held a half-day Practitioner’s Forum—one of a number of initiatives we have undertaken over the past year to expand our offerings for lawyers in practice—in addition to our now well-established and vibrant Research Forum. These gatherings provide an opportunity for new professionals to engage directly with leaders in the field on cutting-edge topics, while strengthening our ties with partner institutions and international law communities throughout the United States and around the world.

The past year also brought increased engagement with a number of international organizations, including a growing relationship with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). At the 2018 Annual Meeting, we will conclude a Memorandum of Understanding with the OECD to facilitate joint projects and programs of mutual interest, including in the areas of business and human rights, cybersecurity and other cyber-related issues, and multilateralism.

Finally, given the range and scope of our activities, we are taking steps to better integrate all of the things we do, from publications to podcasts and conferences, and to increase collaboration among our interest groups, with our partner organizations, and with colleagues in other disciplines. At the 2018 Annual Meeting, we will launch a “signature topics” initiative, whose goal is to enable our members to develop cross-cutting projects on key international law issues that span the range of our activities. If this effort is successful, it will increase our public impact while delivering an ever more dynamic and cohesive experience for our members.

The work of the Society has prospered over the past year, thanks to the wisdom, dedication, and generosity of our leaders, volunteers, donors, and staff. We are grateful for all they do to sustain and nurture this essential institution, and to ensure that we remain strong and relevant in these challenging times. We hope that this Annual Meeting, focusing on the essential role of international law in practice, provides you with ideas, inspiration and energy for the continuing challenges ahead.

Sincerely yours,

Lucinda A. Low
President, 2016 – 2018

Mark D. Agrast
Executive Director

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**WHO WE ARE**

The American Society of International Law (ASIL) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational membership organization founded in 1906 by U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root and chartered by Congress in 1950.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., its mission is “to foster the study of international law and to promote the establishment and maintenance of international relations on the basis of law and justice.”

ASIL holds Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and is a constituent society of the American Council of Learned Societies.

The Society’s 3,500 members hail from more than 100 nations with nearly 40% residing outside the United States. Its members include scholars, jurists, practitioners, government officials, leaders in international and nongovernmental organizations, students and others interested in international law.

Engaging policymakers, civil society, and the public to promote peace and justice through the greater understanding and use of international law.

Through its many publications, conferences, briefings and educational events, ASIL seeks to serve the needs of its diverse membership and to advance understanding of international law among policymakers and the public.

ASIL is a volunteer-led organization governed by a 60-member Executive Council elected by its membership. In partnership with the elected leadership, ASIL is led by an executive director and supported by a professional staff of 12.
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017

FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Flagship Publications—The Society celebrated the first anniversary of its publishing partnership with Cambridge University Press, which has provided an updated design and an advanced, integrated platform for the American Journal of International Law and its online companion, AJIL Unbound, as well as International Legal Materials (ILM) and the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting, making the Society’s publications accessible in multiple formats. The Society continues to offer opportunities for members to publish their work through ASIL Insights and our other online publications.

Livestreaming and Social Media—As the new U.S. administration began its first 100 days in office, the Society launched year-long, 10-part livestream series on “International Law and the Trump Administration.” The goal of the series was to provide factual information and thoughtful, bipartisan perspectives on critical policy issues implicated by the change of administrations. Featuring moderated discussions of each party, the series has attracted thousands of viewers and listeners.

From the inauguration through the first 100 days, the Society ran a Twitter campaign to illustrate the importance of international law in daily life. The campaign, #100Days100Ways, was based on the Society’s centennial publication, *International Law: 100 Ways it Shapes Our Lives*, with daily posts highlighting one of the “100 Ways.” The Society will introduce an updated online edition of that publication in conjunction with the 2018 Annual Meeting.

PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2017 Midyear Meeting—In October, the eighth annual Midyear Meeting took the Society to St. Louis, Missouri, providing an opportunity to deepen its relationships with members and both corporate and academic partners in the region. The three-day event combined the long-established Research Forum, held on the campus of ASIL Academic Partner Washington University School of Law, with the Practitioners’ Forum hosted by St. Louis-based law firm Armstrong Teasdale LLP. Midyear Meeting sponsors also included Bryan Cave LLP and Emerson.

Serving Academics—The Research Forum, organized by co-chairs Julian Arato and Lei-la Nadya Sadat, featured presentations of 65 works-in-progress by scholars from nearly 20 countries. It also offered expert panels, including a lunchtime program on “Looking East and West: The Future of U.S. Engagement in Asia and Europe,” with Hon. Louis B. Susman, former U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom, and Sara Yang Bosco, senior vice president and general counsel of Emerson.

Serving Practitioners—The Practitioners’ Forum, led by co-chairs Perry Bechky and Jennifer Schwesig, featured high-level panels on “Navigating International Regulatory Risks in a Changing Legal Landscape.” The program included two panel discussions and keynote remarks on “Anti-Corruption and the New World of Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement” by Bruce Swartz, deputy assistant attorney general and counselor for international affairs at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Serving Young Arbitrators—Throughout 2017, the Society and ASIL Leadership Circle Law Firm Member Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP continued its series of Young Arbitrator Debates,” with three debates in 2017. The ongoing series is held at Tillar House, the Society’s headquarters, and is co-sponsored by ASIL’s Howard M. Holtzmann Research Center for the Study of International Arbitration and Conciliation.

Serving Government Attorneys—The Government Attorneys Interest Group started a new series of events for current and former government attorneys working in international law. In November 2017, the interest group held the first in its “International Law in Government Practice Dinner Series,” with special guest USAID General Counsel David Moore. The interest group will be hosting more events in the series in 2018 to give government attorneys from different agencies the opportunity to meet others working on international law issues.

Providing Fellowships for Fieldwork and Research—The Society also continued its efforts to encourage recent law graduates to pursue careers in international law through its fellowship and mentorship programs. In 2017, the Society awarded five Arthur C. Helton Fellowships for work with non-governmental organizations in Malaysia, China, Turkey, Israel, and the United States.

Providing Mentoring and Career Services—The Society provides a portfolio of career and professional development services through its Academic Partner schools. In 2017, the Society conducted more than 20 on-site consultations and mentoring services for law students at partner institutions. 
Society’s Women in International Law Interest Group (WILIG) operates a mentoring program that has served hundreds of women in over 20 cities since 2013. The BASIL (Blacks of the American Society of International Law) Task Force held its third “speed mentoring” session, and New Professionals Interest Group hosted a reception for new professionals, both at the Annual Meeting.

PROVIDING A FORUM FOR DIALOGUE

Foreign Legal Attachés—In 2015, the Society began a series of off-the-record breakfast meetings for senior legal officers of foreign delegations in Washington, DC. In 2017, the group met with current and former senior U.S. legal officers from various agencies and departments with jurisdiction over matters of international law.

International Law Commissioners—The Society hosted a well-attended discussion with Finnish Ambassador Marja Lehto and ASIL President-Elect Sean D. Murphy on “International Law and Cyberspace,” with a reception sponsored by the Embassy of Finland. The speakers represent their respective countries on the U.N. International Law Commission.

International Courts and Tribunals—The Society hosted a series of summer events with Academic Partner American University Washington College of Law’s Academy of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. The three sessions featured conversations with judges from regional and international courts and tribunals on current issues and challenges in human rights and humanitarian law.

International Humanitarian Law Dialogs—In August, the Society cosponsored the 11th International Humanitarian Law Dialogs, an annual event held at the Chautauqua Institution in New York. As part of its support for the Dialogs, the Society edits and publishes the Proceedings.

UN Observers—In 2017, two groups of ASIL members had the opportunity to act as official observers to the United Nations under the Society’s Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council. ASIL member Valerie Oosterveld and seven of her international law students attended the 61st Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and five members of the Private International Law Interest Group attended the 50th Session of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

11th Annual Meeting—The 2017 Annual Meeting, co-chaired by Aloysius (Louie) Llamzon, Julie Maupin, and Saira Mohamed, featured over 40 substantive sessions organized around the theme, “What International Law Values.” Attended by over 1200 participants from 48 countries, the conference included the annual Grotius Lecture by David Armitage (Harvard University), the Assembly keynote by Philippe Sands (University College London), and the Friday keynote by Sandie Okoro (World Bank Group).

In addition to the regular sessions, each day began with a special session on “International Law and the Trump Administration,” examining a key policy area in which the change of administrations had brought about a change of direction, from security, to trade and investment, to the environment. In addition, a “late-breaking” session considered the legality of the U.S. missile strikes against Syria that had taken place in the run-up to the meeting.

Other highlights included the Manley O. Hudson Medal Luncheon featured a conversation between the 2017 Hudson Medal recipient, Georges Abi-Saab, and the recipient of the 2017 Honorary Member Award, Philip Alston. The Women in International Law Interest Group (WILIG) Luncheon included remarks by ASIL’s honorary president, Judge Rosemary Barkett, who received the Prominent Woman in International Law Award from Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Fifth Annual Charles N. Brower Lecture on International Dispute Resolution was delivered by Judge David Caron of the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal.

The closing plenary, on “Building Trust in International Law and Institutions,” was sponsored by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington and the Municipality of The Hague. The program concluded with a special presentation by the Deputy Mayor of The Hague, designating a footpath adjacent to the Peace Palace in honor of famed Nuremberg prosecutor Benjamin Ferencz, followed by moving remarks by Mr. Ferencz.

Pictured here are some special moments from the gathering.

Annual Meeting sponsors included American University Washington College of Law; Arnold & Porter Kay Scholer LLP; Cambridge University Press; the Centre for International Governance Innovation; Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; Foley Hoag LLP; Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP; George Washington University School of Law; the International Law Students Association; the Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington and the Municipality of The Hague; and White & Case LLP.
The year ahead will bring continued challenges for international law and institutions. And the Society will continue to respond, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of our members.

SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS. We will continue to provide our members with the resources they need to serve as educators and interpreters for policymakers, the media, and the public.

ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC. We will continue to offer authoritative information and nonpartisan analysis, and a forum for civil discussion and debate. Building on the extraordinary success of last year’s livestream series, we plan to launch a new podcast series in the first half of 2018, together with a series of short online video features to illuminate key concepts and issues in international law for a non-specialist audience.

ONLINE RESOURCES. Following the release of an updated online edition of our centennial publication, International Law: 100 Ways it Shapes our Lives, we plan to develop an enhanced interactive version that will illustrate the myriad ways in which international law is an indispensable part of our everyday experience.

We also plan to reintroduce the Electronic Information System for International Law (EISIL) in 2018. With updated content and improved functionality, the new platform will serve as a go-to Internet reference for authoritative primary materials, web sites and other useful documents in international law.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS. In April, 2018 we will sign a memorandum of understanding with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which will enable us to undertake joint projects and programs of mutual interest.

The coming year will also see the launch of a “signature topics” initiative, which is designed to increase the impact of our work through collaborative, cross-cutting projects, both within the Society and with partner organizations and colleagues in other disciplines.

In these and other ways, the Society will engage with its members, partners, and new audiences to advance its mission in the coming year.
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The American Society of International Law was founded in 1906 to foster the study of international law and to promote the establishment and maintenance of international relations on the basis of law and justice. Society membership is open to all persons of any nationality and profession who are interested in its objectives.