Saving the World from New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

The Introduction to my joint Global Law Externship with the Global Security Institute and the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

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**The Beginnings**

Even though my externship is not exactly focused on Global Health Law, the prospect of a nuclear attack or accident, with modern nuclear weapons, would have more of an effect on global health than anything our world community has ever seen. My externship in this highly important field had its beginnings well before this summer ever started. In the past few semesters, my interest has been increasingly focused upon the field of international disarmament and arms control law. I have always wanted to make some sort of positive change in the world and when I began law school, I wasn’t exactly sure how to accomplish this lofty goal. However, starting with Widener’s abroad program to Kenya, I began to realize how – I would help to change the world through rule-of-law initiatives from within the world’s diplomatic legal system, itself. This past year, while competing in and managing the Widener Jessup International Law Moot Court Team, and serving as the International Law Society President, I met an extraordinary person. Jonathan Granoff is the President of the Global Security Institute and he is also one of the Professors for Widener’s International Law Class.

Last fall, in October, Professor Granoff invited me to attend a high-level meeting on the future of nuclear weapons policy at the United Nations in New York on UN Day. It was at this event that my focus became clear. I had attended General Assembly meetings in the past, consisting of hundreds of people reading prepared statements over 8 hours; but this, however, was a small 40-person meeting where I was able to sit at “the big table” and hear high-level diplomats and ambassadors speak candidly about nuclear weapons policy. When the group broke out into smaller working groups, I attended an even smaller meeting at the Swiss Mission (yes, they served chocolate!), and after collecting my then developing thoughts on the topic, I stood up and made a statement contributing to conversation. After seeing Professor Granoff’s approving “that’s-my-boy” type of glance, I was approached by Dr. John Burroughs, the Executive Director of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, an International Law professor at Rutgers and incredibly intelligent legal mind. Taking this road less traveled has certainly made all the difference.

Shortly after the UN Day meeting, through Professor Granoff’s contacts, I organized a team of students to bring the “Discussion on Nuclear Nonproliferation with a Great American Ambassador, featuring Thomas Graham, Jr.” to Widener’s campus. From working with Jonathan in his International Law class, the event with the Ambassador, the UN Day and other varying tasks, it seemed like a logical next step to continue working with him. So, approaching Professors Granoff and Burroughs, we began to outline my involvement for the summer, with Professor Forzley of Widener Law supervising my involvement.

**The Locations**

Global Security Institute and Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy

The Global Security Institute is a non-governmental civil society organization that “is dedicated to strengthening international cooperation and security based on the rule of law, with a particular focus on nuclear arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.” Much of their work is as an advocacy group, but with a legal approach. The headquarters for GSI is in Philadelphia, but they have affiliates in NYC, Washington, DC and many other countries.

Similarly, the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy is “a non-profit educational association of lawyers and legal scholars that engages in research and advocacy in support of the global elimination of nuclear weapons and a more just and peaceful world through respect for domestic and international law. LCNP serves as the UN office of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms.” The office of the LCNP is located in NYC right next to the UN building.

Initially, I was to spend the summer working on Capitol Hill, in Washington, however, due to some unforeseen circumstances, the DC office had to postpone for the time being. In the meantime, I have been doing most of my work varying from a remote setting, to NYC and the Philadelphia office. The Philadelphia office is a small suite in Bala Cynwood and staffed with a few dedicated and extremely nice people who have been extremely accommodating.

**Jobs, Duties and Experiences**

Nuclear Weapons Discussions at the ABAIL Conference

On April 20th, I helped Professors Granoff and Burroughs put on an even at the American Bar Association International Law (ABAIL) section’s annual meeting. The first day, Professor Granoff had a lively discussion with Michael Douglas, reflecting on his long-time commitment as a United Nations Messenger of Peace to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. This was a very interesting event and I, personally, never knew that Michael Douglas was so involved in the effort, but he told his story, of course, in a very entertaining fashion. The conversation meandered to the different areas of Michael Douglas’ life and of the few anecdotal remarks, I especially enjoyed one where a young man approached him in New York City and told him that his role in Wall Street inspired the young man to be a stock broker, to which Michael responded, “you do know that I played a really bad man, right?”

The next day, GSI and LCNP put on a panel discussion on Nuclear Weapons and their Role within International Humanitarian Law. Simply being present to hear the well-learned speakers would have been enough for me. The speakers were Professors Granoff and Burroughs; Ambassador Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines; Professor Charles J. Moxley, Jr. of Fordham Law; and Gary Solis, who formerly was the head of the Law of War department for West Point Academy and is a Professor at both Georgetown and George Washington University Law Schools. Some pretty big heavyweights! However, with helping to set up and organize the program, I had a chance to converse with the speakers beforehand in the ‘green room’, take notes that were later edited to be published on the internet and meet several audience members. On top of all that, I was invited to lunch with the speakers and the Section Chair of the ABAIL, John Harrington. Both Professor Solis and myself had to, unfortunately, leave the lunch early to catch a train, but sharing a cab ride and waiting in Penn Station with “Gary” gave me an extraordinary opportunity to speak in depth with the professor. I have found it very interesting that many of the former ‘military men’ that have become involved with the disarmament effort have irrevocably stated their support for ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

Research Paper

Since that event and before, I have been working with Professor Burroughs in drafting my research paper, which performs an analysis of the different methods that President Obama could take in leading the effort for disarmament and reducing the nuclear stockpile with or without congressional support, particularly apposite in these times of such congressional volatility. The research and paper has been coming along nicely and has been very enlightening. This type of research is quite timely since world leaders and newscasters have been pushing for a further effort in the matter. Since my research paper is being written for LCNP and GSI, there is actually a chance that President Obama may even read a report based off of it (even if this is a bit far-fetched)! I may have a real opportunity to affect some sort of positive change, which of course, is my ultimate end goal.

Current Projects and Assignments

I have been working on two tasks for Professor Granoff in the past few weeks. The first of which is to research material that will be included in an op-ed style introduction to a collection of writings on Ronald Reagan’s obsession with the Strategic Defense Initiative (aka, Star Wars), and how that obsession prevented the two super powers (US and USSR) from coming to an agreement on complete disarmament during the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. The second is to research some very detailed information and sources to be used for a podcast that Professor Granoff will be recording with the ABA on Terrorism.

Future Projects and Assignments

Coming up in the future part of the summer, I will be traveling periodically to NYC to help Professor Burroughs run the LCNP Executive Board meeting and to assist him in a number of ventures. I also recently learned of the opportunity to possibly attend a program in San Diego through an associate of Professor Burroughs at the University of San Diego, earning a Certificate in Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy at their Institute for Global. Not a bad way to possibly end an incredible summer!