

REMARKS OF CHARLES N. BROWER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW*

Excellencies, director doctor Soberanes, ladies and gentlemen:

As president of the American Society of the International Law, I welcome you to this important conference. The fact that I have taken my first trip outside the United States as President of the American Society of International Law to help inaugurate and to attend this conference is a manifestation of the great importance the Society ascribes to this conference.

As the American Society of International Law celebrates this year the 90th Anniversary of its founding under the tutelage of such persons as former Secretary of State Elihu Root and the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, it is especially fitting that this conference take place in furtherance of article II of the Constitution of the Society, Which provides as follows:

“The objet of this Society is to foster the study of international law and promote the establishment of international relations on the basis of law and justice. For this purpose it will cooperate with other societies in this and other countries having the same objetive”.

Indeed, this meeting takes a distinguished place in a hallowed tradition of the Society, forty percent of whose members reside outside of the United States:

- The Society has held three biennial joint Conferences (and is planing a fourth) at the capital city of international law, The Hague, in The Netherlands, with its Dutch counterpart, the Nederlandse Vereniging voor International Recht.
- A trilateral projet with our neighbor to the North, Canada, involving also Japan, through collaboration of the relevant three organizations, has just completed its first phase and planning has begun for the next.

Thus the American Society reaches out, and is connected, to the East, to the West, to the North, and also to the South.

* June 6, 1996, in Mexico City Inaugurating “the Role of International Law in the Americas: Rethinking National Sovereignty in an Age of Regional Integration”, a Program Co-sponsored by the American Society of International Law and the Instituto de Investigaciones Juridicas.

Our connection to the South, I should note, in fact is our oldest and most enduring one. As is recounted in the first chapter of a soon to be published history of the Society, the American Journal of International Law was published in a Spanish edition from 1912 until 1922, when it was taken over as the "La Revista de Derecho Internacional", edited by Antonio S. de Bustamante y Sirven and published in Havana. Thus in its earliest years, the Society directed itself southward in a way in which it never, so far as I am aware, has directed itself elsewhere. Mexico, I might add, has been a unique friend to the American Society of International Law. I myself recall serving on the Society's Executive Council in recent years with your then future Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernardo Sepulveda Amor.

And so it is most fitting that today our custom and our mutual goal of furthering the rule of law internationally, and hence our common destiny, bring us together here to inaugurate our discussion of "The Role of International Law in the Americas".

Therefore, on this grand occasion, may I on behalf of the American Society of International Law felicitate and thank all those who have made it possible, in particular director doctor Jose Luis Soberanes and Mr. Hugo Concha of the Instituto, and extend to all participants my personal wishes and those of the American Society of International Law that these discussions will contribute to success in the determined pursuit of our cherished common goal.