

Interpol Secretary General Inspires Law Graduates by Example

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ANDOVER, Mass. -- Ronald K. Noble, the Secretary General of Interpol, addressed the 150 members of the 20th Anniversary graduating class of the Massachusetts School of Law. He welcomed them to a journey with hurdles and great rewards. He spoke passionately about their future roles and how they might help find peace where today there are problems and order where there is chaos.

The former law professor and U.S. Treasury and Justice Department official, now the world's "top-cop," urged the graduates to cherish the rule of law as they enter the legal community. "The rule of law must not be allowed to discriminate against any individual or group," Noble said. "It must not be allowed to engage in a double standard between any majority and any minority."

The Massachusetts School of Law is perhaps less known than Harvard or other Boston-area law schools, but its "affordable tuition policy" has provided lower cost educational opportunities and has put many minority students on the road to a legal career.

As tensions worldwide and diplomatic threats have remained high during the first six months of 2009, Noble has quietly shuttled around the world solving problems, softening global disputes, helping catch bad guys and finally getting the U.S. and other key countries to lean more towards a law enforcement solution to what is still called "the war on terrorism."

There was China and the Olympics and the request that Interpol help strategize security, which they did to great success. There was the private meeting with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and a breakthrough in securing Russian support for key law enforcement and anti-terrorist policies that the U.S. supports on a global basis. There was the South American fiasco that saw Interpol authenticating the content on captured rebel computers in Colombia, while Venezuela's Hugo Chavez continued to deny links to terrorists in neighboring countries.

Then too, there was Interpol's unprecedented use of unique technology to identify, track and bring to justice global pedophiles. In addition, Interpol's DNA expertise aided the Philippines in identifying thousands of victims of a ferry disaster to help bring closure to the families.

Noble represents an almost unique background combining law enforcement, work as a high level government prosecutor, as a law professor and as the first African-American to serve as U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement with responsibility for the Secret Service, ATF and other major federal agencies. He was honored to

address Massachusetts Law graduates as this year he is celebrating 30 years since he entered Stanford Law School en route to a career as Professor of Law at New York University.

Noble's experience in world-wide law enforcement and his travel to some 127 of Interpol's 187 member nations has given him unique insights into law around the world and allowed him to challenge the Massachusetts Law School graduates, including eight who are active police officers, that no matter where they may end up professionally, they have an obligation to always foster the rule of law and to develop a broader view of what constitutes law enforcement.

"For an example of what can happen in the absence of the rule of law," he told the eager graduates, "we can look at the situation in the Gulf of Aden, where pirates in the waters near Somalia continue to threaten countries throughout the world, either directly through hijackings or indirectly through higher social and economic costs.

"This transnational organized crime poses many challenges for us in the law enforcement and judicial communities, because maritime piracy by definition occurs in international waters; because national laws are frequently inadequate for addressing the modern-day iteration of this centuries-old crime; and because there is no uniform law governing the detention, extradition and prosecution of criminals involved in attacks on ships that may be thousands of miles away from their home countries.

"Because this problem has its roots on land, the military alone cannot solve this problem. Police, through an international police organization like Interpol, can effectively assist prosecutors and law enforcement in dismantling the transnational organized groups behind these crimes, which occur in the open seas but the proceeds from which finance other illegal activities that span the globe.

"This is a good example of how our globalized world in the 21st century demands a broader vision of the role of law enforcement and, indeed, of everyone in the legal profession."