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## The Spirit of Justice

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## THE SPIRIT OF JUSTICE

HENRY RAMSEY, JR.<sup>1</sup>

As chair of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, I want to commend the organizers of this conference for a job well done. This "Justice Mission" conference is organized around a topic that is of great importance throughout the world. I underscore *throughout* the world. The American Bar Association, with the lead being taken in part by the Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, is engaged in what is known as the Central and Eastern European Law Initiative (CEELI). This is an attempt to work with law schools, law teachers and law administrators in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; to bring to them the benefits of the American legal educational system as they attempt to deal with the transition to a market economy and democracy.

Several American law deans went to Central Europe in April of this year, to Yugoslavia and Poland, to meet with deans from throughout that region. The questions they kept asking us over and over again were those of, "How do we get to the nuts and bolts of how you implement legal principles that deal with the question of justice? That deal with the question of fairness? That deal with the question of equal representation?" They emphasized over and over again that what they thought was so wonderful about America was that we did not just have the words of justice. They said they were not interested in just the words that existed in the Constitution because, they said, "We have copies and we can read that. But we need to know how you have been so successful at making the words a reality." It seems to me that this is what the subject matter of this conference, "The Justice Mission of American Law Schools," is concerned with, the question of how is it that we in this country can make certain that all the lofty phrases and the high-sounding language that speaks to this issue of justice, can be a reality in the day-to-day lives of the people in this country.

The theme of this conference is also important, not just for the people of this country but for the people of the world, because wherever I travel, and particularly in Africa, the thing that people think America has most to contribute to them is this basic and fundamental principle of justice for everyone. Even when those people are critical about our foreign policy they have asked me:

What we cannot understand is how you (America) can stand as a nation with those people who oppress us, with those governments that oppress us when the light that we look to in the world is your history? You are a former colony like us and you have established the basic principles of justice, of fairness, of equality for everybody. Although

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we recognize you are not perfect, those are the principles that you have established and those are the principles that you are working for. How could you not assist us in our efforts to gain what you have?

I am very pleased that the Section of Legal Education is involved in this Justice Mission conference. The work that you are doing today is the primary work that will help America survive and stand. This kind of activity will help to build the foundation that will be required to bring about that result.