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By BARRY SCHWEID

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK AP - Leon Jaworski, the Houston lawyer taking over as president of the American Bar Association, said Sunday that respect for the law is vanishing among the young and old.

The stark fact in our current circumstances is the prevalence of disorder, he said in a speech prepared for the law student division at the ABA 94th annual meeting.

He said the disorder is physical, material, moral, philosophical, international and universal, and is "spreading like a cancerous growth."

Jaworski said the United States, therefore, was passing through a time when the most urgent task for the law is to make government effective in securing the safety of people and property.

"If the chaos of our time is permitted to extend itself unchecked," he said, "we shall surely fall victim to the authoritarian rule which the radicals of the left pretend to fear."

At the same time, though, he added: "if the impulse to overreaction is not likewise held in check, then authoritarian rule will be upon us, whatever we may wish."

Jaworski, 38, will become president of the ABA July 21.

The association's convention swings into official business Monday, when Chief Justice Warren Burger delivers his second annual state of the judiciary message.

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