



THE GROUP OF 78
LE GROUPE DES 78

The Group of 78
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July, 2009

Dear Friends:

I am happy to inform you that planning is well underway for our 2009 Policy Conference, to be held September 25 – 27, at the Cartier Place Suite Hotel, 180 Cooper St., Ottawa. The title of this year's conference is "***Peace Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Canada's Role in the Middle East***", and it is my privilege to invite you to join our discussions on this important issue.

Since the inception of the Group of 78 our membership has been united in a common concern to foster global justice, peace and human security, and committed to securing the vitality of international institutions dedicated to those ends. Over the years we have maintained a consistent focus on issues of peace and disarmament, international development, strengthening the United Nations and the role Canadians might play in the realization of a more just international order.

This year's conference is focused on the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people, with a particular emphasis on the human rights implications of the conflict, its history, and prospects for international efforts in the pursuit of peace in the region. The conference takes as its starting point the conviction that human rights considerations and a commitment to core principles of international law are essential to clearer understanding of the conflict and any prospects for its resolution.

We are delighted that Richard Falk has confirmed his participation as our opening key-note speaker. Professor Falk is United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories and Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University.

The Group of 78 has long worked to provide stimulating fora for informed, frank discourse with a view to developing sound foreign policy recommendations. In keeping with this tradition, the conference will launch an ongoing engagement with the pivotal regional and international issues posed for Canada and others by the Israel-Palestinian question.

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For further information and background reading materials as the conference program is developed, visit www.group78.org . Members are welcome to submit suggestions for background materials in French or English, and to forward this conference invitation to colleagues. *Nous invitons les membres à soumettre des suggestions de documents contextuels en français ou en anglais et à transmettre cette invitation de participation au congrès à leurs collègues.*

The enclosed form gives a breakdown of the options for registration. While we attempt to keep registration costs down, and try to find sources of funding for administrative expenses, we do, as in previous years, ask that participants cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

Please complete the form and mail it with your payment to our office. We ask you to register by September 11 to reserve your place. Full refunds are available up to two weeks in advance of the conference.

Though the conference presentations will be conducted in English, and no simultaneous interpretation will be available, questions and discussion will be welcome in either English or French. *Même si les exposés présentés durant le congrès seront offerts en anglais seulement et qu'aucun service de traduction simultanée ne sera disponible, nous accepterons les questions et les discussions en français ou en anglais.*

Please contact Mary Edwards at 613-230-0860 or by email at group78@web.net if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on the weekend of September 25 – 27 for what promises to be a very exciting and timely meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Harmston', written in a cursive style.

Richard Harmston
Chair

RH/me
Encl.