

## *The Politics of a Culture of Peace* **The Group of 78 and Canadian Values for Peace**

### **Senator Douglas Roche**

In 1981, a group of distinguished and visionary Canadian intellectuals, ambassadors, MPs, and authors among others, founded the Group of 78 with a declaration encouraging basic priorities needed for an effective Canadian foreign policy.

A cross-section of the Canadian political actors of the time was revealed in the membership of the 78 prominent Canadians: The Liberals Eugene Forsey, Jacques Hébert, Renaude Lapointe, Donald MacDonald; the Progressive Conservatives Gordon Fairweather, David MacDonald; the New Democrats Andrew Brewin, Alfred Gleave; the now Independent Senator Lois Wilson.

The Group of 78 immediately called for:

- The removal of the threat of nuclear war, the greatest danger facing humanity.
- Strengthening the United Nations and other global institutions to bring about a pacific settlement of disputes, foster international cooperation, promote the growth of international law and the protection of basic human rights.
- Mobilizing the world's resources to achieve a more just and equitable international order and bring an end to poverty.

Advancing peace and disarmament through common security and a combined global effort with other peoples were ambitious and far-reaching goals in 1981. This was a time of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) being introduced into Western Europe, the birth of the neutron bomb, and acrid public denunciations between the superpowers.

Believing that a basic attribute of human nature is cooperation, not confrontation, the Group pressed the government of Canada through the following years to pursue the United Nations agenda for world security, insisting, in the words of King Gordon, that this agenda is "the assertion of sanity in an interdependent world".

By 1995, when the government did a full-fledged review of Canadian foreign policy, much of what the Group of 78 stood for had found its way into Canadian policy.

In its document, "Canada and the World," the government cited three key foreign policy objectives:

- the promotion of prosperity and employment, anchoring international stability and progress toward sustainable development;