

Appendix 31: emails from Monahan to Shoukri and Cohen re Drummond's threat about speaking to CAUT, April 25, 2009



"Cohen, Marshall"
<mcohen@casselsbrock.com
>
04/27/2009 02:05 PM

To "Law Dean/osgoode" <lawdean@osgoode.yorku.ca>,
"Mamdouh Shoukri"
cc
bcc

Subject RE: Update on June Conference

that's good progress but we're not home safe and sound yet. My thought for the moment wld be to wait and see whether they can get enough new speakers to ensure a balanced program. If they can't, then you will have to turn your mind to a Plan "B".

This issue may come up at the Board mtg to-morrow. Or you may wish to use the occasion to initiate some comments and thereby send a "public" message. Either way, you shld be prepared and give some careful thought to what you say at this juncture, especially since we don't yet know whether we will end up with Plan A or Plan B.

From: Law Dean/osgoode [mailto:lawdean@osgoode.yorku.ca]
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2009 11:16 AM
To: Mamdouh Shoukri; Cohen, Marshall
Subject: Update on June Conference

Mamdouh and Mickey

I wanted to update you on a couple of meetings I had this week with the organizers of the June Conference on Israel/Palestine, Bruce Ryder and Susan Drummond, and where we are at this point.

The bottom line is that we have made some progress, although perhaps not as much as I would have liked.

First, they have agreed to add a second keynote speaker (the first is Jeremy Webber, a CRC from University of Victoria, who is very balanced and strong). They have agreed on the following 3 to be invited as the 2nd keynote, in this order: Michael Bell (former Cdn amb. to Israel); Bob Rae and Irwin Cotler. They are writing Bell (who is now at the U of Windsor) and I will follow up with a call to him to attempt to persuade him to attend.

Second, they have agreed to create a hierarchy amongst the 40 or so speakers by having 10-12 featured in plenary sessions, with the others speaking at concurrent sessions that will be in the nature of workshops. They are working to identify who the 10-12 major speakers will be. I have emphasized the need for strong, credible speakers to be on the plenaries as the major speakers.

They have gotten their backs up on the idea of moving off campus. They say they booked the space at Glendon long ago and there is no legitimate academic reason for moving it now. They also say it would be embarrassing to them b/c the location has been advertised (including in the U50 booklet) and it would be hard for them to explain why it is being moved. Ryder (who is the more reasonable of the two) was particularly exercised on this point. With the changes discussed above, I have indicated that they can go ahead at Glendon.

They also don't want to shorten down the conference. This was a suggestion from David Dewitt (with whom they ultimately refused to meet., but that is another long story that I can share if you want), but I don't think it makes a lot of difference whether it is 1.5 days or 2.5 days. The key is to get this kind of rebalancing that will ensure that the conference is a legitimate academic conference.

I have to say that I pushed them very hard, even to the point where Drummond on Thursday said that I was pressuring them inappropriately and infringing their academic freedom. She suggested they may have to raise the matter with CAUT and with the Faculty Association. I don't think that will happen, but I just wanted to indicate that I have to be very cautious now in making suggestions, as opposed to demands.

It is still a work in progress, but there is definitely progress.

BTW I am getting a lot of emails from lawyers who are asking me what is going on. I have spoken to a couple of friends in an effort to get people to calm down and stop raising the temperature, which I don't think helps anyone. There is an email circulating calling for 1,000 Jewish flags to be waved on campus when the conference opens. That would make this into a media circus, which I hope we can avoid.

Happy to chat at your convenience to provide more detail.

Best,
Patrick

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