

The February CPRF was titled, “Track Two and Iran: Arresting the Downward Spiral”. Speakers included:

Professor Marshall J. Breger, professor of law at the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America. In 2002, Breger was Lady Davis Visiting Professor of Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2003 he was Distinguished Sy-Cip Fulbright Lecturer in the Philippines.

Professor Robert A. Destro, professor of law and director and founder of the Interdisciplinary Program in Law & Religion at the Catholic University of America.

Dr. Ahmad Iravani, Director for Islamic Studies and Dialogue at the Center for the Study of Culture and Values at the Catholic University of America. He received the first stage of Khareg, (equal to PhD) in Islamic Studies, Islamic University, in Qom, Iran, in 1992.

Ambassador (ret.) William Green Miller, Senior Advisor to the US-Iran Program of Search for Common Ground since 1998. He is currently a Senior Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He served as Vice Consul and Political Officer at the US Consulate in Isfahan, Iran, for three years; he served as political officer in the US Embassy in Tehran between 1962 and 1964.

The speakers talked about the value of track two programs involving Iran. One area in particular that they found to be conducive to dialogue was religion. They thought that much common ground could be found between religions, especially when focusing on an Abrahamic paradigm. Sports and science were two other areas that were mentioned as good subjects for dialogue involving Iran.

Iranians are tolerant and intelligent people, and the speakers noted that anyone who travels to Iran is welcomed warmly and treated with respect. Courtesy and respect lead to civilized discourse, but that is just what is missing at the official levels.

The aim of track two diplomacy with Iran is to bring back a policy of normalcy through direct engagement. Hopefully after religious leaders connect, they will be followed by ambassadors and presidents.

One problem with track two efforts involving Iran is logistics. It is especially difficult to get visas for Iranians traveling temporarily to the US (as opposed to Iranians immigrating to the US).

The general conclusion was that track two efforts involving Iran should be utilized more extensively.