

I had a phenomenal time; it was honestly and truly one of the best experiences of my life and it remains, and likely will remain, absolutely unparalleled.

I shook hands with President Obama, within his first 100 days and have a picture to prove it, sat in the same room as, and asked questions of, Associate United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg while she imparted her stories and wisdom for over an hour, a mere week after her surgery for cancer, met both of my Senators, and heard from many, many other impressive, influential, informative, and inspiring people.

When I found we would not have the opportunity to meet with Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I was initially slightly disappointed but took it in stride because the week had already far exceeded all of my greatest expectations. Although I did not know what to expect of his assistant, Lieutenant General Paul Selva, I had heard his rise to 3-star General was quite impressive. All I can say about him as a speaker is that I was absolutely floored. The intelligence, candor, and articulateness with which he addressed such a wide variety of topics was incredible. I thought he was one of the most informative, engaging, and insightful speakers we heard from, and that is quite a feat given the good company he shared among our other guests.

Our military mentors were also incredible. My image of, and respect for, the military and those who serve in it increased greatly.

Finally, I would like to explain that, despite the absolutely incredible things I got to do while in Washington, D.C., the true reason this week remains unparalleled in my mind is because of the people I shared it with. I met some of the brightest, most personable, respectful, and friendly people I have ever met--of any age. I will never forget the things I got to do or the people I met. I am very grateful I was afforded the honor of being able to participate in such a program.

**Yoni Blumberg - ME**