Lugar Diplomacy Series hosts Former White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten

Washington, D.C.
September 26, 2017
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The Lugar Diplomacy Series launched its second season Sept. 26, 2017, with a talk by former White House chief of staff Joshua Bolten, who discussed the first months of the Trump administration and the prospects for future developments in legislation, trade and foreign policy.

The meeting, the first of the 2017-18 Lugar Diplomacy Series events, was held at the offices of The Business Roundtable, where Bolten became president and CEO in January, 2017. Some 18 ambassadors and other diplomats from Asia, Europe and Latin America attended the off-the-record discussion.

Bolten served as White House chief of staff under President George W. Bush, and was also head of Bush’s White House Office of Management and Budget. He was policy director of the Bush 2000 presidential campaign, and deputy chief of staff for policy in the early part of the Bush administration. In 20 years of government service, he also served as general counsel to the U.S. Trade Representative and as a lawyer for the State Department.

As former Sen. Richard Lugar, president of The Lugar Center, noted in his welcoming remarks, “He is widely regarded as one of the foremost American experts on making government work effectively. If I were charged with standing up a new Administration, he would be one of the first phone calls that I would make.”

Sen. Lugar added, “At a time of frequent upheaval within the new Administration and many questions about the operations of the U.S. government, we are pleased to have a chance to hear Mr. Bolten’s insights into how the White House functions and how the Federal government can operate more efficiently.”

The Lugar Diplomacy Series, which began in the fall of 2016, aims to strengthen diplomatic relationships and to promote diplomats’ engagement with leading American figures in both domestic and international affairs. The off-the-record sessions are intended to give a select group of ambassadors the opportunity for lively give-and-take with guests who are free to speak candidly.
Last year’s Series featured four-star Gen. David Petraeus, former head of the CIA and former U.S. commander in Iraq and Afghanistan; United States Supreme Court Associate Justice Elena Kagan; U.S. Senator Susan Collins of Maine; philanthropist and global agriculture expert Howard Buffett; and former CIA director Michael Hayden.