



For Immediate Release

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Korean Americans Respond to Historic Visit by South Korean President Yoon and 70th Anniversary of the U.S.-Korea Bilateral Alliance

Washington, D.C. -- Korean Americans and Members of the Council of Korean Americans (CKA) celebrated the historic State Visit to the United States by South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and the strong relationship between the United States, South Korea, and the Korean diaspora across the United States by participating in many events from April 25 - April 28, 2023, including the State Arrival ceremony, a State Dinner at the White House, Joint Address to Congress a dinner with Korean American leaders and programs at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

“President Yoon’s State Visit occurred at a historic point in Korean and American history a year that marks the 120th anniversary of the start of Korean immigration to the United States and the 70th anniversary of the U.S. - Korea bilateral alliance,” **said CKA Executive Director, Abraham Kim, Ph.D.** “As a scholar studying U.S.-Korea relations for over twenty years, I am struck by the treatment of Korea as an equal partner in the relationship, with full honors granted to President Yoon including the State Dinner and opportunity to make a Joint Address to Congress. Importantly, President Biden and President Yoon made a deliberate effort to include and recognize the important role that Korean Americans and our members play in the relationship between the two countries.”

“Hearing the Korean and American anthems with the flags representing both countries waving in the air was a moving moment of pride, recognition, and sense of validation that the Korean and Korean American community are integrally linked,” **said CKA Board Chair, Peter Huh.** “This moment was captured beautifully by the Korean American Children’s Choir of New Jersey seamlessly switching between singing Arirang in Korean and Annie in English. As President Yoon emphasized, both nations are linked by shared values—freedom, human rights, adherence to international rule of law, and democracy.”

CKA Members joined key leaders and influencers throughout the three day State Visit and during President Yoon's travels in Massachusetts. Highlights included:

1. Welcoming President Yoon Suk-Yeol and First Lady Kim Keon Hee at the South Lawn of the White House
2. Attending the White House State Dinner hosted by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden
3. Attending President Yoon's Address to a Joint Session of the U.S. Congress
4. Participating in a U.S. State Department Luncheon hosted by Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary Anthony Blinken
5. Laying of Wreaths at the Korean War Veterans Memorial by President Yoon and President Biden
6. Participating in the US - Korea Business Forum with President Yoon, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimundo, and over 150 Korean and Korean American business leaders
7. Attending a dinner with President Yoon and First Lady Kim hosted by the leaders across the Korean American Community
8. Attending programs with President Yoon at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology

CKA Members shared their reactions to the events:

“As we gazed at the Korean and United States' flags flying side by side in front of the White House, we felt an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude as we joined President Biden to welcome President Yoon,” **said CKA Board Treasurer, Eugene Choi, CEO of United Exchange Corporation.** “The flags represented the power of the 70 year alliance between the two countries and the sacrifices of American soldiers and the Korean people, which created today's strong partnership and the emergence of South Korea as a global leader. As a Korean American, I am proud that the United States is home to one of the most vibrant Korean diaspora communities in the world.”

CKA Board Member, Gideon Yu, Co-Owner, San Francisco 49ers remarked: “As a Korean American immigrant, attending the White House State Dinner in honor of the President of my home country was an honor of a lifetime, not only for my wife and myself, but also for our parents and extended families.”

“As a Korean American, I felt immense pride and belonging during the State Arrival ceremony, hearing the children's choir singing ‘Arirang’ and the anthems of both countries,” **said CKA Member Jean Lee, Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson**

International Center for Scholars. “This State Visit by the South Korean President comes at such a significant moment: in the 70th year of the US-ROK alliance. We not only saw the gratitude paid to the US troops, including surviving veterans, who helped to defend South Korea. But we also saw a strong demonstration of how the alliance has helped South Korea grow into a thriving, flourishing country, one that is no longer a tiny, wartorn nation in need of protection but one that can also stand as an equal partner to the United States in key matters of geoeconomic, geopolitical and global importance. As Korean Americans, we serve as a bridge connecting these two worlds — with pride, respect, passion, and conviction.”

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The Council of Korean Americans is a national nonprofit organization. Our mission is to advance the national voice, interest, and influence of the Korean American community through education, collaboration, and leadership development. For more information, please visit our website: www.councilka.org.

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