

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Remarks With President Park Geun-hye of South Korea on the Return of South Korean Cultural Artifacts in Seoul, South Korea

April 25, 2014

President Obama. So we just had an excellent meeting, and I know that we'll have the opportunity to answer questions from the press about policy. But I just wanted to make a brief remark about these remarkable artifacts.

These are historic seals that were part of the monarchy here in Korea. And during the Korean war, a marine from the United States found them and took them back as mementos to the United States. And I don't think he fully appreciated the historic significance of them.

After his passing, his widow discovered how important they were, and she graciously recognized that they appropriately belonged here in Korea. So she facilitated the return, and I wanted to just let the Korean people know that they're back where they belong. And this is a symbol, hopefully, of the respect that we have for Korean culture and our friendship. And they're very beautiful.

President Park. It's very significant that we were able to return home these very historic and precious artifacts. And I do wish to thank President Obama, as well as the American people, for this gesture.

This event is really the fruits of the close consultations and collaboration that our two countries have been undertaking since late last year. And I do wish to acknowledge all the hard work of the officials—the relevant officials at the Department of Homeland Security as well as other related agencies—for their hard work.

I also understand that later this year, we're preparing to adopt an MOU with regard to the return of cultural artifacts, and preparations are currently underway to do so. And I believe the event can further catalyze collaboration in terms and with regard to cultural heritage. Once again, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the American Government for this wonderful present.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:49 p.m. at the Blue House. President Park spoke in Korean, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders : South Korea, President Park.

Locations: Seoul, South Korea.

Names: Park Geun-hye.

Subjects: Korea : President Obama's visit; South Korea : Cultural artifacts, repatriation from U.S.; South Korea : President; South Korea : Relations with U.S.

DCPD Number: DCPD201400290.