



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

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## Fort Knox student's Journey to Leadership and Reunion

FORT KNOX, Ky. — In a world where global leadership is typically the domain of adults in boardrooms and international conferences, Alex Knyshev, a Fort Knox Middle High School senior, brings a personal dimension to the story of diplomacy and personal development. Alex, whose family has roots in South Korea due to his father's military service, was chosen to be an ambassador at the Asian Leadership Conference (ALC) during his summer break. The ALC, a prestigious event hosted by Korea's leading media institution, The Chosunilbo, gathers global and influential figures like this year's speakers Jacinda Ardern, former Prime Minister of New Zealand; Sanna Marin, former Prime Minister of Finland; Kevin McCarthy, former Speaker of the House of Representatives; and Ronald Klain, former White House Chief of Staff (2021-2023) to discuss critical world issues.

The ALC's innovative approach involves inviting 1,000 students from around the world with the expectation that they will return as future leaders to share their experiences, thus continuing a cycle of inspiration and leadership. Alex's role was particularly poignant, symbolizing the strength of the U.S.-South Korea military alliance through people-to-people diplomacy. His journey took on a personal significance when he reunited with his father, Major Yuriy Knyshev, stationed in South Korea.

Alex's selection as an ambassador was facilitated by his heartfelt essay, where he detailed his previous experiences in South Korea, his affection for the country, and the emotional challenges of being separated from his father. This narrative not only highlighted his connection to Korea but also his readiness for diplomatic engagement, selected through the Educational Divide Reform, a non-profit organization.

As one of the few American students at the ALC, alongside ambassadors from other programs, Alex represented not just his school but the entire DoDEA community. He engaged with global leaders and peers, and gained insights into leadership. The trip, funded by ALC donors, eliminated financial barriers, allowing Alex to immerse himself fully in the experience.

Reflecting on his journey, Alex noted, "My trip to South Korea was truly life changing. Exploring the country, meeting influential individuals, and expanding my horizons in ways I couldn't have imagined before has transformed me. Reuniting with my father after nearly a year is a memory I'll cherish forever. I'm deeply grateful for this opportunity, which many others might not have."

Alex's story transcends the typical narrative of a student's international trip; it's a tale of personal growth, cultural exchange, and the profound impact of international diplomacy seen through the eyes of a young leader.

Remote video URL

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