

Impact Players

Sydney A. Seiler

By Andy Lim

Who is he?

Mr. Sydney A. Seiler is the United States Department of State's new special envoy for the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Seiler previously served as the director for Korea in the White House National Security Council (NSC) for the Obama administration (May 2011 – August 2014). He is a career intelligence official with over 30 years of experience working in various intelligence disciplines, including twelve years serving in South Korea. He has worked as a collector and analyst in the National Security Agency (NSA), as an all-source analyst and manager in the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Directorate of Intelligence and Directorate of Operations, and as a media analyst and manager in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS).

Prior to his position in the NSC, he served the deputy director of national intelligence (DNI) national intelligence manager for North Korea. Previously he served in the National Clandestine Service of the CIA. Mr. Seiler is the author of the book *Kim Il Song 1941-1948: The Creation of a Legend, the Building of a Regime*. He received his M.A. in Korean Studies from Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies. He is also a graduate of the Korean language programs of the Defense Language Institute and Yonsei University.

Why has he been in the news?

In his first trip in his new capacity, Mr. Seiler is currently traveling to Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo from September 28 to October 3 with Special Representative for North Korea Policy Glyn Davies and the new director for Korea at the National Security Council Allison Hooker for meetings with their counterparts. Mr. Seiler recently made the transition from the White House's NSC to the Department of State on September 2 as part of a reshuffling within the Obama's administration team that deals with both Koreas. His appointment as the new special envoy to the Six-Party Talks is notable because the position has been vacant for a year since the last holder of that position, Clifford A. Hart, left to become the consul general of Hong Kong and Macao in June of 2013.

What can we expect from him?

Mr. Seiler is considered by many to be the most authoritative expert on the two Koreas within the Obama administration. His experience will be needed in navigating the so-called "New York Channel," the unofficial communications track between Washington and Pyongyang's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York.



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