

Impact Players

Cho Tae-yong

By Si-Ryoung Kim

Who is he?

Cho Tae-yong is the new first deputy director of National Security at the Blue House. He previously held the position of first vice foreign minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (February 2014 - October 2015).

Ambassador Cho first joined the Ministry in 1980 and has over 35 years of experience as a career diplomat. Throughout his distinguished diplomatic career, he served in a variety of positions working with North Korea, including as Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs (2013 - 2014). He was also concurrently Director-General of the Task Force on the North Korea Nuclear Issue at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and deputy head of the ROK delegation to the Six-Party Talks (2004 - 2006).



A majority of Ambassador Cho's assignments at the Foreign Ministry have been in the North American Affairs Bureau, where he most recently served as Director General (2006 - 2007). Within that bureau, he has held the position of Deputy Director-General and Senior Advisor to the Minister (2002-2003), the Director of North America Division I (1998-1999), and the Director of North America Division II (1997-1998).

He has held numerous overseas posts throughout his career, including: Ambassador to Australia (2011 - 2013); Ambassador to Ireland (2007 - 2009); Counsellor at the ROK embassy in Thailand (1999 - 2002); First Secretary at the ROK Embassy in United States (1993-1997); First Secretary at the ROK Embassy in Iraq (1990 - 1993); and Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations (1984 - 1990).

Ambassador Cho received a B.A. in political science from Seoul National University and has also studied at Oxford University in the United Kingdom.

Why has he been in the news?

On October 19, President Park Geun-hye nominated Cho Tae-yong to be her new first deputy director of National Security, replacing Kim Kyou-hyun who was promoted to the new Senior Secretary for Foreign Affairs and National Security at the Blue House. Cho's promotion was part of a government reshuffle within the current administration where President Park Geun-hye replaced the ministers of transport and maritime affairs and six vice ministers of foreign and security, finance, education, health and maritime affairs.

What can we expect from him?

Ambassador Cho is a well-seasoned diplomat and expert on U.S. and North Korean affairs. While in office, his biggest priority will be managing the U.S.-ROK relationship and regional issues. His previous experience on policy related to the United States will be important for helping to manage relations with the ROK's important alliance partner. Furthermore, his time as first vice foreign minister, where he helped handle ROK's overall foreign relations will be critical in helping him work with the numerous actors related to his NSC portfolio at the Blue House. Moreover, his experience and expertise in North Korean nuclear affairs will also be a valuable asset for formulating and maintaining ROK's policy towards North Korea.

Impact Players is made possible by the support of Grosvenor Capital Management. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the sponsor or its affiliates.



Impact Players is a product by the CSIS Korea Chair to inform audiences about key policy makers in issue areas of importance to US-Korea relations. All views, positions, and conclusions expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the author(s).

Photo Credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs