

Impact Players

Kim Hong-kyun

By Charlotte Fitzek

Who is he?

Kim Hong-kyun is the new Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs for the Republic of Korea.

Prior to this new position, Mr. Kim was the Deputy Minister for Political Affairs at the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously he was Secretary to the President for Policy Coordination and Deputy Secretary-General of the NSC Secretariat, in the Office of National Security (January 2014 - March 2015). Mr. Kim also served as Secretary to the President for International Policy Cooperation in the Office of the President (March 2013 - January 2014). He also worked on the Presidential Transition Committee in 2013.



Special Representative Kim has had a distinguished career as a diplomat and civil servant. He served as Director-General of the Korean Peninsula Peace Regime, in the Office of Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs at the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (December 2009 – 2012). He was also Minister-Counsellor of the ROK Embassy in Belgium and ROK Mission to the European Union (January 2008 -December 2009). Other notable positions in his diplomatic career that first started in 1984 include Senior Coordinator for ROK-U.S. Security Cooperation in the North American Affairs Bureau, (July 2006-December 2006), Director of the North America Division II, North American Affairs Bureau (February 2003-December 2003), and First Secretary for the ROK Permanent Mission to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, Switzerland (December 1997-February 2002).

Mr. Kim is a graduate of the University of Virginia where he completed an M.A. in Foreign Affairs, and Seoul National University where he completed a B.A. in English Language and Literature.

Why has he been in the news?

Kim Hong-kyun's appointment was announced on February 29. He replaced Mr. Hwang Joon-kook, who was nominated to be the new Ambassador to the United Kingdom. This change in leadership is occurring in the midst of a rapid deterioration in inter-Korean relations due to events such as North Korea's 4th nuclear test, its February 7 missile test, and closing of the Kaesong Industrial Complex by the Park administration. Going forward, Kim will have to work with the other Six Party Talks members to restart the process of denuclearization and to enforce UNSCR 2270. His first trip abroad will be to Washington this week, where he will meet Sung Kim to assess North Korea.

What can we expect from him?

When Kim Hong-kyun served as director-general of the Korean Peninsula Peace Regime, he was involved in dealing with the sinking of the ROK corvette the *Cheonan* and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 by North Korea. He was also in this position when Kim Jong-il passed away in 2011. Kim's previous experience dealing with contingencies and crisis situations makes him an interesting choice. Inter-Korean relations are likely to be tense for the next several months and Kim's experience could prove to be valuable to the Park administration.



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