

Kobre & Kim Adds To Recent Crop Of Ex-Gov't Attys

By Jody Godoy

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Kobre & Kim continues to bring in former government attorneys with a penchant for cross-border work — including five recent hires with experience at the U.S. Department of Justice and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the firm announced on Thursday.

The group includes partners with U.S. government experience who are being dispatched to China, Korea and the U.K. Speaking to Law360 on Thursday, firm co-founder Steven Kobre said the expansion relates to the ongoing phenomenon of authorities in multiple countries teaming up on large investigations into companies.

“There's a need to have people on the ground in the various jurisdictions who have the language capability or local expertise,” Kobre said.

The two newest hires joined the firm from in-house roles. Jonathan Huth, who's coming aboard in London in August, currently works in compliance at HSBC Bank where he was previously an associate general counsel. Before that, Huth was at the CFTC for six years during which the agency and its domestic and international counterparts cracked down on benchmark rigging.

Huth's focus at Kobre & Kim will include digital currencies — an enforcement area where the CFTC has set its sights.

G. Scott Hulsey, who starts in Washington, D.C., next week, is leaving behind a job as global chief compliance officer at General Electric Energy Connections. Part of what he'll provide at Kobre are investigations and corporate monitorships, according to the firm.

“His experience in a global position at a company the size of GE gives him an international vantage point,” Kobre said.

Earlier in his career, Hulsey was a prosecutor in Atlanta, and went on to serve as a lieutenant to then-U.S. Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates.

Three other hires in recent months came straight from the government.

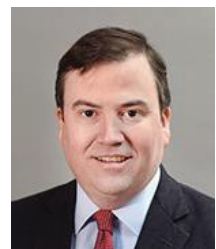
In February, the firm hired Daniel Lee, a former federal prosecutor in Texas and Hawaii who also previously worked for the Department of Defense.



Wade Weems



Daniel Lee



Sean Buckley



G. Scott Hulsey

A native Korean speaker, Lee is preparing to move to Seoul, South Korea. Kobre noted that, along with China, Korea has developed as a hub of activity in the cryptocurrency space, making Lee well-positioned to help potential clients in the industry.

Former Manhattan federal prosecutor Sean Buckley, who joined in April, brings experience co-leading the unit at the U.S. attorney's office dedicated to narcotics and terrorism. That work steeped Buckley in the law around money laundering and sanctions.

Additionally, the firm is moving former national security prosecutor Wade Weems, who joined the firm in November, to Shanghai. Kobre said there has been an uptick in sanctions-related cases, making the timing right to provide more expertise in China via Weems and in New York via Buckley.

As for how U.S. partners adjust to practicing full-time overseas, Kobre said the attorneys who come on board are generally enterprising, open-minded types.

"I think there is a natural connection. We have lawyers who know what our model is and they are interested in it. A lot of the time it doesn't take much convincing," Kobre said.

--Editing by Bruce Goldman.