

Opening Statement for Erik J. Woodhouse
Nominee for Head of the Office of Sanctions Coordination, with the Rank of Ambassador
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 7, 2024

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today. Thank you for considering my nomination, and I also thank the Committee staff for meeting with me. I am honored that President Biden has nominated me to lead the Office of Sanctions Coordination and grateful for Secretary Blinken's support for my candidacy.

I am here because of the love and support of my family, most importantly my wife Emily and our three children. They are the foundation of my ability to serve. I am thrilled that my mother, Cristina, and my stepfather, Erdmann, can be here with me today. My father, Mark, passed away almost two years ago; he would be very proud to know that I am here with you today. Beyond my family, I am grateful for many mentors and friends whose encouragement and lessons have shaped me in ways that helped bring me here today.

I have spent more than half of my career in public service, in various roles at the State Department and at the Treasury Department, and a substantial time also in the private sector. I've seen from several perspectives how impactful sanctions can be, as well as the importance of enforcement, clear communication, and engagement, and would commit myself to furthering these efforts if confirmed.

In my current job, I work on sanctions policy with colleagues across the State Department and the interagency, as well as with our partners and allies around the world. I have worked closely with the current Office of Sanctions Coordination since its inception and have seen the important role it plays for U.S. sanctions policy overall. If confirmed, I would seek to continue and deepen this work to ensure that our sanctions are fully integrated and in support of our foreign policy.

The Office makes the State Department more effective internally, in the interagency, and diplomatically when it comes to sanctions policy and implementation. Within the Department, more than ten bureaus reporting to four different Under Secretaries work intensively on sanctions programs within their purview and although an impressive amount of collaboration already happens, it is a tall task. The Office can play a key role ensuring consistency across our sanctions practice, identifying and shepherding good ideas through the bureaucracy, resolving disagreements, and ensuring that we are being responsive and timely. The Office also has played a key role facilitating and strengthening coordination with the Treasury Department, as well as with partners and allies, on sanctions policy and implementation. If confirmed, this work would remain a priority for me.

I also am mindful of this Committee's role in creating the position for which I am nominated, and would feel a special responsibility to ensure effective consultation with the Committee in the course of our work.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, our sanctions are one of the most powerful tools we have to pursue our foreign policy and national security. I am honored to be nominated to lead the State Department's work in this area, and if confirmed, to be entrusted with the responsibilities that entails.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.