

State Department Sanctions Official Rejoins Crowell & Moring

By Christine DeRosa

Law360 (November 19, 2024, 12:02 AM EST) -- After more than three years working as a senior sanctions policy official in the U.S. State Department, Erik Woodhouse has returned to private practice at Crowell & Moring LLP in the firm's Washington, D.C., office, the firm announced Tuesday.

Woodhouse, who had been the deputy assistant secretary for the Division for Counter Threat Finance and Sanctions since 2021, returns to the firm as a partner in the international trade and financial services groups, the firm said in a statement.

Woodhouse told Law360 Pulse that he led a division that advised the department to support policymaking and implementation across most U.S. sanctions programs. He added that the division worked closely with counterparts at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in particular in the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Given events over recent years, Woodhouse said, sanctions, export controls and other tools of economic statecraft are going to be part of the landscape and part of any geopolitical conflict going forward.

"I wanted to join a team that really has a strong bench across all of those areas, and at Crowell, there's a full-spectrum trade practice with customs and trade regulation, inbound and outbound investment, sanctions and export controls, along with a great team on investigations and enforcement," Woodhouse said. "I wanted to join a team that's really well positioned to help clients assess their risks, understand changes as they happen and ensure that they're able to maintain compliance in what is a rapidly evolving area."

At Crowell & Moring, Woodhouse will advise clients on complying with U.S. economic sanctions, Bank Secrecy Act and money laundering rules and regulations, the firm said. He will also conduct risk assessments, advise on the design and administration of corporate compliance programs and lead companies through investigations.

Woodhouse will represent clients in sectors including exporters and multinational companies, as well as investment funds, banks and other financial services companies, the firm said.

"As I left government, I was really grateful to so many colleagues across the executive branch with whom I had the privilege to work again," Woodhouse said, "I'm really looking forward to rejoining the team here and helping clients to be able to assess their risks going forward, understand changes as



Erik Woodhouse

quickly as possible as they happen and as new measures are imposed, and ensure that they're well positioned to comply, not only today, but going forward in a rapidly changing environment."

Woodhouse was counsel at Crowell & Moring from 2017 to 2021, focusing his practice on compliance with U.S. economic sanctions and laws against money laundering.

"Erik has been deeply involved in the development and implementation of U.S. sanctions policy over what was likely its most commercially consequential four-year stretch," David "Dj" Wolff, co-chair of the international trade group, said in a statement. "He also helped lead U.S. sanctions-related engagement with allied and neutral countries, as well as private companies around the world. Our clients are increasingly looking for integrated multijurisdictional guidance on their global sanctions risk profile, and with his years of experience in government and the private sector, Erik brings a unique perspective."

Before his first stint with Crowell & Moring, Woodhouse spent three years at the Treasury Department in the Office of International Affairs, where he was a senior adviser to the undersecretary, and five years at the Office of the Legal Adviser at the State Department, he said.

Woodhouse earned his law degree from Stanford Law School and his undergraduate degree from Emory University.

"Erik brings extensive experience to financial services clients, which are often at the center of the most complex challenges related to U.S. sanctions and AML policy," Carlton Greene, co-chair of the financial services group, said in a statement. "He understands the rapidly evolving geopolitical and regulatory environment that our financial services clients face and what financial institutions can do to limit their exposure."

Other attorneys returning to Crowell & Moring in recent years after holding positions in the federal government include Jason Crawford, who in January 2023 returned to the firm as a partner after three years as a trial attorney in the fraud section of the Department of Justice's Civil Division.

In December 2022, Tyler O'Connor, former energy counsel to the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee, returned to Crowell & Moring as a partner in the firm's energy and government affairs practices.

Maria Alejandra del-Cerro rejoined the firm as a partner in its international trade and government contract groups in September 2022 after 14 months with the U.S. Department of State.

And in January 2022, Agustin D. Orozco, an assistant U.S. attorney in the public corruption and civil rights section of the Central District of California, returned to Crowell & Moring as a partner in the firm's white collar and regulatory enforcement and government contracts groups.

--Additional reporting by Phillip Bantz, Jack Rodgers, Andrea Keckley and Rachel Rippetoe. Editing by Karin Roberts.