

## MoFo Nabs Former OFAC Sanctions Official In DC

By Shayna Posses

*Law360 (December 12, 2018, 4:41 PM EST)* -- Morrison & Foerster LLP has lured another attorney away from the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, bolstering its national security practice in Washington, D.C., with his experience helping formulate sanctions policy, according to a Tuesday announcement.

Michael Dobson comes to MoFo as of counsel, following in the footsteps of colleague John Smith, who served as OFAC director before coming to the firm in July to serve as the co-head of its national security practice, the announcement said.



Michael V. Dobson

"The opportunity to work again with John, and to join the firm's growing national security practice and its impressive bench of former government officials, made my decision to come to MoFo an easy one," Dobson said in a Tuesday statement. "I look forward to working with my new colleagues to further build out the practice and to meet the needs of our clients in the U.S. and abroad."

The attorney's practice at MoFo will involve counseling clients on national security issues relating to U.S. sanctions and export controls, along with other regulatory and compliance concerns, drawing on the expertise he developed as a senior sanctions policy adviser for the OFAC, the firm said.

In that role, Dobson developed and implemented U.S. sanctions policy, helping to craft executive orders, regulations, and interpretive guidance in connection with actions against countries including Russia, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Belarus. He was also involved in sanctions relating to narcotics trafficking, particularly in Latin America, according to MoFo.

Dobson's time in government also involved interagency work, including guiding efforts to get ahead of potential unintended consequences stemming from sanctions and representing the OFAC in meetings with other agencies. He also regularly served as the office's representative before Congress, in outreach to the private sector and during international engagements, the firm said.

Before he joined the OFAC in spring 2016, he spent more than six years as an associate at Kelley Drye & Warren LLP in the nation's capital, according to his LinkedIn page. His practice involved providing counsel to clients on international trade laws and regulations, including economic sanctions, as well as representing them before government agencies, MoFo said.

The attorney's experience with sanctions — particularly U.S. sanctions against Russia — will be a huge boon for MoFo's clients, further solidifying the firm's "unmatched ability" to provide counsel on national security concerns, Smith said in a Tuesday statement.

"The U.S. government's escalating sanctions implementation and enforcement are significantly impacting U.S. and global financial institutions and operating companies," Smith said. "Our clients across the world — in the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Gulf — will greatly benefit from Mike's experience and insights as they navigate how to meet these challenges."

Smith came to MoFo in July to help lead its national security group, leaving his post as director of the OFAC. As the head of the office, he was responsible for enforcing all U.S. sanctions programs, which involved ensuring compliance with sanctions against countries like Russia and North Korea, as well as individuals.

Dobson earned his bachelor's degree from The George Washington University in 2005 and his law degree from the George Washington University Law School in 2009.

--Additional reporting by Nadia Dreid. Editing by Amy Rowe.