

Opening Statement of Sigal P. Mandelker, Nominee for Under Secretary for Terrorism and
Financial Crimes, U.S. Department of the Treasury

U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

May 16, 2017

Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Committee, it is a great honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the Under Secretary to lead the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. I thank the President and the Secretary for their trust and confidence in me. I have had the opportunity to meet with many of you and your staff over the last few weeks and I want to thank you for the courtesies you have extended to me. I look forward to working closely with this Committee if I am honored to be confirmed.

I am grateful for the tremendous support of my family and friends, including those who have traveled to attend this hearing. I want to recognize in particular two of my heroes and constant sources of inspiration, my father, Gershon Mandelker, who is here today, and my wonderfully lovely mother, Ester Mandelker, who passed away 12 years ago. Both of them were Holocaust survivors who spent part of their childhood hiding underground, in the forest, and elsewhere in constant fear for their lives as they tried to escape the Nazis. My father tells one story about how, when he was around six years old, he was hiding with my grandfather and others in a barn that belonged to the head of a village, a courageous man who agreed to hide them. My father recalls that one day, soldiers came into the barn in order to decide whether to park their guns and horses there. My father was hiding under a haystack as the soldiers walked in, looked around, and then decided not to use the barn. My father vividly remembers watching the boots of one of the soldiers as he walked by. Had my father so much as sneezed, I would not be sitting here before you in this Committee room.

I grew up hearing about my parents' many courageous stories of survival and how they narrowly avoided death. At the same time, I knew that so many members of my family did not survive, including three of my grandparents who were either killed or died as a result of the Holocaust. With this history, my parents not only survived but went on to pursue successful careers and served as incredibly positive role models. They raised my brother and me with enormous love and a deep appreciation for the opportunities that our great nation provides and the knowledge that we should never take for granted our safety, security, and freedom. I carry this legacy with me and it has always been what has motivated me to public service, for the opportunity to make a difference is truly humbling.

After 9/11, like so many other Americans, I wanted nothing more than to contribute to the response to this terrible attack on our nation. After finishing a clerkship, I immediately went to work for the Justice Department in August 2002, where I joined in its counterterrorism and national security mission in positions in both the Criminal Division and later the Deputy Attorney General's Office. With the nation on high alert for follow on attacks, I worked as part of the dedicated team that oversaw the nation's counterterrorism and national security criminal cases, including those involving illicit financing of terrorism. After then going on to serve as an

Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York, I came back to Washington to work as a Counselor to the Secretary of Homeland Security, where I focused again on counterterrorism, national security, law enforcement, and intelligence. In 2006, I returned to the Justice Department to be Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Division, where I supervised four major sections, leading the many talented prosecutors and other professionals in those sections, and had a portfolio that included ground-breaking and cross-border cyber security, human rights, money laundering, and other cases that involved the intersection of national security and law enforcement. In 2009, I joined the private sector, where I have gained valuable and practical insights into the compliance issues that financial institutions and other companies face on a regular basis.

I am particularly honored to be nominated for this position, which serves such an important function in our national security, foreign policy, and economic apparatus. If confirmed, I will strategically and tactically marshal all of the tools of the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, and will constantly evaluate how to evolve those tools to meet new challenges, and to always be proactive, intelligence driven, and results oriented. I am looking forward to working with and leading the talented and dedicated career professionals in the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. I will also work closely both with this Committee and the interagency to ensure that we use all of the elements of government power in the most effective way to achieve the objectives we set for ourselves and for the country.

Finally, from my time in the Executive Branch, I know how important it is to have a close relationship with Congress. I have thoroughly enjoyed my discussions with so many of you and I look forward to doing important work together should I be honored to be confirmed.