

Statement of Peter Lichtenbaum
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration - Designate
before the
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

September 16, 2003

Chairman Shelby, Senator Sarbanes, Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration. I thank President Bush and Secretary Evans for the trust they have placed in me. I also appreciate the time that members of this Committee, including Senators Shelby and Enzi, have taken recently to meet with me. If confirmed, I will work closely with you and your staff.

As everyone here knows, we are living in dangerous times. We are all aware of the dangers that surround us, from terrorist organizations as well as from certain countries. As our security concerns have increased, so too has the importance of our export control system.

I am strongly committed to the principle that the core function of U.S. export controls is to protect U.S. national and economic security. Since entering office, this Administration has taken numerous actions to re-emphasize the importance of security in export controls. The Administration has made it a prime objective to ensure that the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, which administers the dual-use controls, considers national security as its fundamental goal. The Bureau's mission statement describes this as its "paramount concern." I can assure you that I am completely committed to this mission.

While national security is our top priority, we cannot disregard the impact that export controls have on the U.S. private sector. This is especially true in the current economic climate. If controls become outdated, then they burden our businesses and workers, without promoting our security. Indeed, such controls could reduce our security if they spur high-technology industries in other countries, which may not maintain adequate export controls.

I have worked for the last 11 years in the private sector, where I focused on promoting compliance by U.S. companies with our export laws, primarily the Commerce controls but also the State Department and Treasury Department rules. I believe that this private sector work will be helpful to me in understanding the impact of export controls on the business community.

If confirmed, I plan to work closely with Under Secretary Ken Juster, Assistant Secretary designate for Export Enforcement Julie Myers, and the career Commerce Department staff. I also will coordinate with other agencies who have an important role in our export control system, such as the Departments of State and Defense.

In closing, I want to thank my family for their extraordinary love and support. In the audience today are my parents, Steve and Lynn Lichtenbaum; my wife Greta and her father, Dale Husemoller; as well as two of my three children, Annika and Jacob. I regret that my four-year old daughter Rose could not be here today, as she had a more important commitment: her birthday party at school.

I appreciate your time and am pleased to answer any questions you may have.