



LAW360

2017 MVP

Mario Mancuso

Mario Mancuso, the head of Kirkland & Ellis LLP's international trade and national security practice, has tackled thorny deals involving significant global regulatory hurdles in the past year, including a \$6.1 billion health care industry acquisition for The Blackstone Group L.P., securing him a place as one of *Law360's* 2017 International Trade MVPs.

Why he's an international trade attorney:

Mancuso said his most formative professional experience was his service as a special operations army officer. He was deployed in Iraq in March 2003 and attached to the 1st Marine Division, serving in combat and gaining an awareness of defense and international security issues. It was after active duty that he attended New York University School of Law while staying in the reserves, going on to become an international corporate lawyer.

What motivates him:

Mancuso said he only came to fully understand how his passion for public service, national security issues and global affairs

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complemented his legal expertise when he served as the U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce in President George W. Bush's administration. In that role, he directed American security and economic objectives across strategic industries.

Returning to the private sector in 2009, Mancuso pursued what he classifies as an international risk practice, tackling legal risk such as sanctions while becoming a trusted advisor to the boards and management teams of global companies.

"I built a career that links policy themes and political risk to business," he said. "I love the multidisciplinary dimensions of it."

His biggest accomplishments this year:

Mancuso represented Blackstone in its \$6.1 billion acquisition of the Tennessee-based hospital staffing firm TeamHealth, leading international trade due diligence.

He also spearheaded related filings and advocacy before the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S., the federal government's inter-agency committee responsible for reviewing national security consequences of foreign investments in American businesses. That process included providing notice to and coordination with the Defense Security Service, a federal security agency within the U.S. Department of Defense.

"Providing advice to a smart client and thinking about national security issues in the context of an industry that is not obviously related to national security — for example, the health industry — was very satisfying," he said.

Mancuso also represented VWR International, a portfolio company of Madison Dearborn Partners, in its \$6.4 billion sale to New Mountain Capital in a deal signed in May 2017. He advised on international trade due diligence and CFIUS risk of potential strategic and sponsor buyers under consideration, negotiating the largest CFIUS reverse termination fee offered at signing in a public deal.

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He said the case was challenging in that it involved completing complex regulatory analysis and meeting client needs under tight deadlines.

"What was complicated about it was trying to fit the regulatory analysis into the context of a transaction timeline that both parties wanted to meet while accommodating the commercial needs of the client," he said. "We were able to negotiate a significant reverse termination fee that was warranted under the particular circumstances."

What he's most proud of:

Mancuso, who is based out of Kirkland's Washington, D.C., and New York offices, invests significant time and energy in developing his

team in the firm's international trade and national security practice, which he described as a "mini-State Department embedded into this global law firm." Next to developing solutions to clients' problems, it is his top professional priority, he said.

"I encourage these young lawyers to grow and learn every day, and we spend a lot of time pushing them to be leaders," he said. "It's not enough to be right — you have to be helpful."



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