Joint Statement of the United States of America and the Kingdom of the Netherlands on the Scenario Based Policy Discussion Apex Gold
March 31, 2016

On January 28, 2016, the Department of Energy of the United States and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands jointly hosted *Apex Gold*, a Scenario-Based Policy Discussion (SBPD) on nuclear security, at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, USA.

*Apex Gold* fostered international dialogue and cooperation through interactive discussion to resolve a fictional, transnational nuclear terrorism threat involving highly enriched uranium. This event built upon the successful SBPD at the 2014 Hague Nuclear Security Summit (NSS).


The fictional scenario featured an evolving crisis requiring urgent senior-level Government decision-making in order to address an international threat with implications for interagency and international coordination, leading to the following key takeaways:

1. In a nuclear security emergency, leaders will need to prioritize prevention, protection, and prosecution, in that order.

2. In a nuclear security emergency, the ability to swiftly and effectively cooperate with international partners to identify and respond to threats is essential; in addition to urgently needed national and international technical capabilities, relationships and trust are “capacities” that must also be developed in advance of a crisis through frequent engagement, including exercises such as *Apex Gold*. 
3. In a nuclear security emergency, leaders would face relentless demands for information from many stakeholders, including senior leadership, other government agencies, other nations, the media, and the public. Meeting this challenge requires advance planning and coordination. It is inevitable that the time for decisions by government leaders will outpace the availability of reliable information and analysis. In addition, decisions about how to inform the public about the threat may present significant challenges.

4. Leaders must support and advance the international legal framework that serves as the foundation for nuclear security commitments, including ratification and entry-into-force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

5. Exercising regularly at national, regional, and international levels will generate cumulative improvements and foster the interagency and international coordination that would be essential to responding successfully in a nuclear security emergency.

The United States and the Netherlands would welcome future scenario-based policy discussions involving different levels of responsibility and across multiple communities that would be affected by a nuclear or radiological event. International cooperation will continue to be essential to meeting the global nuclear security and proliferation challenge so long as weapons-useable fissile materials exist.