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Nevada National Security Site Welcomes International First Responders to Counter-Terrorism Training Courses

Las Vegas, Nevada – First responders from 11 nations took part in the first international training at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) focusing on how to prevent and respond to radiological and nuclear emergencies. The emergency response personnel participated in a four-day counter-terrorism training course that is currently available to first responders here in the United States, marking the first time that international first responders have participated. Participants learned how to detect radiation, how to operate a variety of sensors, how to find hidden source of the radiation, and how to care for those who may be injured and contaminated by a radioactive event.

INTERPOL organized the training, bringing together 35 first responders from 11 countries, including: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. INTERPOL's primary objective was to prepare the participants to prevent or respond to terrorist use of radiological or nuclear weapons. The course also addressed the need to develop a methodology for conducting effective, intelligence-driven and prevention-orientated investigations into incidents involving nuclear and other radioactive sources.

The training is offered by the NNSS Counter-Terrorism Operations Support (CTOS) program. The course focuses on training emergency personnel to respond to radiological or nuclear emergencies, such as "dirty bombs" or other terrorist acts. The NNSS provides the most realistic environment in the United States for this type of training. From 1951 to 1992, the U.S. tested nuclear weapons at the NNSS. Today, the 1,360-square-mile Site provides an environment where background radiation is sufficient to help first responders learn how to detect radiation, but under lower levels of exposure than doses found in a traditional chest X-ray or cross-country airline flight. Participants learn to locate hidden sources of radiation, assess the threat, and to treat victims who may have been exposed. Nearly 190,000 first responders from across the U.S. have participated in the CTOS training since its inception in 1998.

"Law enforcement, fire fighters, paramedics and hospital workers from across the country participate in

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NNSS TRAINING (Continued)

the training to ensure that U.S. first responders are prepared in the event of a radiological or nuclear emergency. Our staff is the best in the world at responding to those incidents,” said Rhonda Hopkins, CTOS manager. “We’re pleased that INTERPOL has chosen to bring a contingent of international first responders here for this one-of-a-kind training experience.”

The Nevada National Security Site and its related facilities help ensure the security of the United States and its allies by: supporting the stewardship of the nation’s nuclear deterrent; providing nuclear and radiological emergency response capabilities and training; contributing to key nonproliferation and arms control initiatives; executing national-level experiments in support of the National Laboratories; working with national security customers and other federal agencies on important national security activities; and providing long-term environmental stewardship of the NNSS’s Cold War legacy.

The NNSS falls under the jurisdiction of the National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The Site’s operations are government-controlled and contractor-operated. They are overseen by DOE’s Nevada Field Office, headquartered in North Las Vegas.

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