

# **European Foot-Dragging on Conversion is Endangering Mo-99 Supply**

Alan J. Kuperman

Associate Professor, LBJ School of Public Affairs  
University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX 78705 – USA

## **ABSTRACT**

Europe is delaying in two ways its conversion to Mo-99 produced without HEU. First, the Dutch government is failing to fulfill its commitment, made at the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, to ensure that Netherlands-based Mallinckrodt eliminates by 2015 its use of HEU to produce Mo-99. Second, European regulators have failed to authorize the use of Mo-99 produced with LEU by South Africa's NTP, a step the United States took nearly four years ago. Continued European dependence on HEU-based production endangers the reliable supply of Mo-99 in two ways. First, because HEU-based production is less expensive, it creates barriers to entry for other prospective producers of Mo-99, thereby restricting supply and increasing vulnerability to outages. Second, because the Dutch are violating their pledge to end HEU use by 2015, the United States may be forced to terminate HEU exports for Mallinckrodt, thereby interrupting its production of Mo-99. To ensure a reliable supply of Mo-99, it is essential that existing European producers convert expeditiously from HEU to LEU, and that European regulators authorize on a timely basis the use of Mo-99 produced without HEU in other countries, including the long overdue approval of South Africa's NTP.