1 PURPOSE AND NEED

This Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment (ACWA) environmental impact statement (EIS) analyzes the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action to pilot test[1] one or more alternative systems for the destruction of assembled chemical weapons (ACWs) at one or more alternative Army installations with stored ACWs. This EIS was prepared by the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment (PMACWA) of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). It was prepared to comply with (1) the *National Environmental Policy Act* of 1969 (NEPA), *United States Code* (USC) 4321 et seq.; (2) applicable NEPA implementing regulations promulgated by the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 1502; and (3) the U.S. Department of the Army (DA) NEPA implementing regulation, Army Regulation (AR) 200-2 (32 CFR Part 651). The preparation of this EIS was announced in a Notice of Intent (NOI) in volume 65, pages 20139–20140 of the *Federal Register* (65 FR 20139–20140) on April 14, 2000 (Attachment 1).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Congress established the ACWA program as part of the *Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act* of 1997 (Public Law [P.L.] 104-208). This authorizing legislation instructed DOD to "demonstrate not less than two alternatives to the baseline incineration process for the demilitarization of assembled chemical munitions." Congress also directed DOD to designate a program manager for ACWA (the PMACWA) who was independent of baseline incineration management (i.e., independent of the Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization [PMCD]). Subsequently, P.L. 105-261 (1999) specified the continued management of the development and testing of technologies that are potential or demonstrated alternatives to the baseline incineration process for the destruction of assembled ACWs.

The primary purpose of ACWA is to pilot test alternative systems for destroying ACWs. (The actual destruction of chemical munitions is not the primary function of the ACWA program. The PMCD, as mandated under P.L. 99-145, is charged with the systematic construction and operation of facilities or processes to reduce the chemical weapons stockpile.) DOD has determined that a pilot test would be a major federal action with the potential to significantly affect the human environment, thus requiring preparation of an EIS as defined in NEPA. Because a decision on pilot testing is both a broad agency action, setting the course of a program, and an action that would result in site selection, facility construction, and facility

[1] A pilot test models a full-scale operation. The facility used may be a smaller version of a full-sized facility or constrained to operate at a throughput rate lower than that of a full-sized facility or both. A pilot test facility can range from a small fraction of the size of an actual facility to the full size of an actual facility. The actual size of a pilot plant is designed so that data obtained by pilot operations can be scaleable to full-size operation. For purposes of analysis, this EIS assumes full-scale operation. Using this assumption provides information for the assessment of a reasonable worst-case scenario.

operation, this EIS addresses both programmatic and site-specific issues. This EIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the alternative destruction systems that the PMACWA could pilot test at individual installations, and it also analyzes the environmental impacts that would result from a PMACWA decision to take no action. PMCD is also preparing EISs for stockpile destruction at Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD) and Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD).

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

DOD defines assembled chemical weapons or ACWs as munitions containing both chemical agents and energetic materials (explosives and propellants) that are stored in the U.S. unitary chemical weapons stockpile.[2] This definition includes rockets, projectiles, and mines. Chemical agents include blister agents (e.g., H, HD, and HT) and nerve agents (e.g., GB [Sarin] and VX) (Chemical and Biological Defense Command [CBDCOM] 1997).[3] Also included are the associated materials such as shipping and firing tubes and packaging materials (PMACWA 1999).

The purpose of the proposed action is to pilot test alternative systems that do not involve incineration for destroying the ACWs stockpiled in the United States. Such testing is necessary to adequately respond to the *National Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1999*. In this legislation, Congress directed the PMACWA to plan for the pilot-scale testing of alternative technologies.

The United States must destroy its stockpile of chemical weapons also to comply with the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction* (January 13, 1993; 32 *International Legal Materials* 800 [ILM]). This convention, commonly known as the Chemical Weapons Convention or CWC, is an international treaty that entered into force[4] on April 29, 1997, the same day that the U.S. Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification. The CWC (Article IV, Paragraph 6) established the date for the destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles as 10 years from entry into force of the convention; in other words, destruction of the U.S. stockpile must be completed before April 29, 2007. The CWC also contains a provision for submitting a request to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to extend the destruction completion date for five years, until April 29, 2012.

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[2] The term "unitary" refers to the use of a single hazardous compound (i.e., chemical agent) in the munitions. In contrast, "binary" chemical weapons use two relatively nonhazardous components that are mixed together to form a hazardous or lethal compound after the weapon is fired or released.

[3] For more information on chemical agents, see http://www.sbccom.apgea.army.mil/RDA/msds/index.htm and http://www.mitretek.org/mission/envene/chemica/chem_back.html.

[4] CWC Article XXI establishes entry into force as 180 days after the sixtieth country ratifies the treaty; it has now been ratified by 65 countries.

1.3 SCOPE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Scope refers to the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered in an EIS. An agency usually determines the scope in a two-part process: internal scoping and public scoping. Internal scoping refers to the efforts within the agency to identify potential alternatives, identify important issues, and determine the analyses to be included in the EIS. As described in detail later in this chapter, public scoping refers to the request for public involvement in the decision making on the proposed action. Public scoping includes consultation with federal, state, and local agencies as well as requests for comments from stakeholder organizations and members of the general public.

DOD proposes to design, construct, and operate one or more facilities for pilot testing ACW destruction systems at one or more chemical weapons stockpile installations. The systems analyzed in this EIS are those four that have completed successfully the demonstration phase of development: neutralization/biological treatment (Neut/Bio), neutralization/supercritical water oxidation (Neut/SCWO), neutralization/gas-phase chemical reduction/transpiring wall supercritical water oxidation (Neut/GPCR/TW-SCWO), and electrochemical oxidation (Elchem Ox). Potential locations for pilot testing include Anniston Army Depot (ANAD) in Alabama, Pine Bluff Arsenal (PBA) in Arkansas, PCD in Colorado, and BGAD in Kentucky. At PCD, however, the technologies considered in this EIS are limited by P.L. 106-398 to those demonstrated by ACWA on or before May 1, 2000. These are Neut/Bio and Neut/SCWO. For PBA, Neut/Bio was not considered as it is not appropriate for the inventory at this installation. This EIS also addresses a no action alternative: continued storage at the stockpile installations until a destruction system can be constructed and implemented (PCD and BGAD) or until the ACW stockpile can be destroyed at the baseline incineration facility already being used for other demilitarization activities (ANAD and PBA). The process used to arrive at the proposed action and alternative systems and installations is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

The scope of this EIS addresses the impacts from constructing and operating each of the destruction systems successfully demonstrated by ACWA as a pilot at each of the four installations under consideration. These activities would occur simultaneously with any existing chemical demilitarization programs and schedules at these installations. Appropriate ACWA destruction systems could be piloted at more than one installation. However, whether a particular system is appropriate for initial consideration at an installation is determined by the system’s applicability to the components of the installation's ACW stockpile. Table 1.3-1 links the alternative destruction systems proposed for pilot testing to the types of agent at each installation. The substantive impact areas that are considered in this EIS include the following broad categories: land use, infrastructure, waste management, air quality, noise, human health and safety, visual resources, water use and quality, soils, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, environmental justice, accidents, agriculture, and cumulative effects.

TABLE 1.3-1 Appropriate Destruction Systems at the Four Installations[a]

Installation and Agent	Neut/Bio	Neut/SCWO	Neut/GPCR/ TW-SCWO	Elchem Ox
ANAD				
Blister	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nerve	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
PBA[b]				
Blister	No	No	No	No
Nerve	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
PCD				
Blister (mustard)	Yes	Yes	NC	NC
Nerve	No	No	No	No
BGAD				
Blister	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nerve	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes

[a] Yes = this site has ACWs with this agent. No = this site does not have ACWs with this agent. NA = technology is not applicable. NC = technology is not considered on the basis of P.L. 106-398.

[b] PBA has bulk quantities of blister agents but no ACWs containing blister agents.

Because the size of the pilot facility has not been determined, for purposes of the analysis in this EIS, a full-sized facility is assumed. A full-sized facility is considered to be comparable in size to the baseline incineration facilities being constructed by PMCD at ANAD and PBA. This size facility was specified in the request for proposals (CBDCOM 1997) for ACWA systems. This EIS also assumes that the pilot tests will be operated at design throughput (which is the maximum capacity of the overall destruction process); these parameters allow for the assessment of a reasonable worst-case scenario.

For the analysis in this EIS, it would be premature to assume that a proposed technology would be used to destroy the entire inventory at an installation. Any use of a proposed technology beyond pilot testing is beyond the scope of this EIS. For this reason, decontamination/decommissioning and closure of pilot test facilities are also addressed in this EIS.

1.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1.4.1 General Public Involvement

DOD has invited full public participation and has promoted open communication with the public in order to facilitate better decision-making. All persons and organizations that have a potential interest in the proposed action, including minority, low-income, disadvantaged, and Native American groups, have been urged to participate. The scoping process and public comment process helped DOD focus the EIS on issues of importance to the public and other interested agencies and organizations.

The public participation process for this EIS is guided by (1) the President's CEQ implementing regulations; (2) DOD Directive 6050.1, *Environmental Effects in the United States of DOD Actions*; and (3) AR 200-2, *Environmental Effects of Army Actions*. These three regulations provide for public participation and notification through (1) the NOI, (2) public scoping, (3) public review of the draft EIS (DEIS), (4) public meetings on the DEIS, (5) public release of the final EIS (FEIS) and a 30-day waiting period, and (6) publication of the Record of Decision (ROD). These steps are discussed in Sections 1.4.3 through 1.4.7.

1.4.2 ACWA Dialogue

In addition to receiving guidance from the general public participation process established by NEPA implementing regulations, DOD received perspectives on the ACWA program, development of ACWA technologies, and the NEPA process from the ACWA Dialogue. The goal of the Dialogue is to draw on a wide range of experience, perspectives, and expertise to help identify and demonstrate effective and broadly acceptable methods for destroying chemical munitions and for disposing of the resulting materials or waste streams (see Section 2.4). Participants in the Dialogue include representatives from affected communities, state regulators and tribal representatives, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff, DOD staff from affected sites and headquarters, representatives from national citizens groups that regularly work on the chemical demilitarization issue, and other concerned entities.

1.4.3 Notice of Intent

The NOI is the first formal step in the NEPA public involvement process. The public was initially notified of DOD's intent to prepare this EIS in the NOI published in the April 14, 2000, issue of the *Federal Register* (Attachment 1).

1.4.4 Scoping Process

The scoping process is designed to solicit public comment on issues or concerns that should be addressed early in the EIS process. For this EIS, comments from persons thought to be potentially interested or affected by the planned action were solicited through mailings, media advertisements, and public scoping meetings. These venues were used to ensure that the public was informed and given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. While informal comments were welcome throughout the preparation of the DEIS, the scoping period and scoping meetings provided formal opportunities for the public to participate in and comment on the environmental impact analysis process.

1.4.4.1 Public Scoping Process

A 45-day scoping period followed the issuance of the NOI. During this time, written comments on the scope of the EIS were obtained. Scoping meetings were held in May 2000 in Pueblo, Colorado; Pine Bluff, Arkansas; Anniston, Alabama; Richmond, Kentucky; and Washington, D.C. Legal notices of these public scoping meetings were published in newspapers serving the regions surrounding the installations being considered in the proposed action. Press releases inviting the public to express their views at the referenced scoping meetings were distributed to local and regional television stations, radio stations, and newspapers. Announcements or "scoping fliers" were mailed to the agencies, organizations, and individuals on the project mailing list. The fliers contained a description of the purpose of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting and to submit written comments identifying key items for consideration in the EIS. A separate comment sheet, with return mailing address, was included with the flier.

1.4.4.2 Scoping Results and Key Areas of Concern

The written comments received during the scoping process covered the areas summarized below. Comments in these areas were taken into consideration in developing the scope of this EIS.

- *Range of technologies considered as alternatives:* These comments suggested including in this EIS technologies currently undergoing demonstration testing, baseline incineration, combinations of demonstrated technologies, technologies for retrofitting incineration facilities, and other technologies that exist in the private sector. There were also comments on the definition of the no action alternative for each of the installations.

- *Installations considered in the EIS:* These comments contained suggestions to include some installations that were not included and to exclude some installations that were included.

- *Need for two EISs:* These comments included statements on integrating this ACWA EIS with another EIS that is being prepared on the destruction of the stockpile at PCD (the PCD EIS).

- *Releases and by-products associated with technologies and their health impacts on workers and the public:* These comments included suggestions that the affected public should include fetuses, infants, children, adults, the elderly, and those with infirmities and chronic diseases. Some comments suggested that the impacts of chronic low-level exposures (below standards) as well as any exceedances of standards should be addressed. It was also stated that the analysis must include dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and other persistent organics.

- *Risks associated with each alternative system and with continued storage:* Comments stated that these risks should be analyzed.

- *Impacts on plants, animals, and ecosystems:* Comments stated that these impacts should be considered. Both cumulative and direct impacts were mentioned, as was the uptake of contaminants by plants.

- *Impacts on agriculture and agricultural markets:* Comments mentioned that these impacts should be considered.

- *Demands of alternative technologies on installation resources:* The comments said that the analysis should cover water use and water rights, natural gas, and electricity.

- *Post-pilot-test activities of the pilot plant:* Comments stated that these activities must be considered and that a discussion of the fate of the facility after pilot testing should be included in the analysis.

- *Environmental justice:* Comments stated that this issue must be included in the analysis.

- *Adequacy of installation emergency planning capabilities:* Comments indicated that this topic should be addressed in the discussion.

1.4.5 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Copies of the DEIS were made available for public review and comment. A Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the *Federal Register* on 9 May 2001 to inform the public that the DEIS was released. A similar notice was also placed in the legal sections of local and regional newspapers. These notices identified a point of contact for obtaining more information on the EIS process; listed several public libraries where the DEIS could be reviewed; provided an address to which to submit requests for copies of the DEIS; provided the address of the ACWA web site where the EIS can be found; listed the locations, dates, and times for public meetings; and provided an address to which to send written comments on the DEIS. In addition, copies of the DEIS were mailed to everyone on the ACWA program's mailing list. A 45-calendar-day comment period (starting with the publication of the NOA in the *Federal Register*) was established to give all agencies, organizations, and individuals the opportunity to comment on the DEIS. The comment period was extended for 45 days in response to a public request, and it ended on 9 August 2001. During this comment period, DOD collected written comments and held public comment meetings at the four installations. The documents received during the public comment period are continued in Section 3 of Volume 2 of this FEIS.

1.4.6 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

DOD assessed and considered the comments on the DEIS provided by agencies, organizations, and individuals. This FEIS incorporates changes suggested in these comments, as appropriate, and contains responses to the written comments received during the DEIS review period. The comment/response document is Volume 2 of this FEIS. The FEIS contains a line in the right margin where changes have occurred between the draft and final. The NOA for the FEIS was published in the *Federal Register* and in local and regional newspapers to inform the public that the FEIS had been released. The notices identified locations where the FEIS would be available and informed people how they could obtain copies.

1.4.7 Record of Decision (ROD)

At least 30 days from the publication of the FEIS NOA, a ROD will be signed and published in the *Federal Register* by the Army. The ROD will describe DOD's decision regarding the proposed action, identify potential problems, explain any uncertainties, and identify the type and extent of impacts that might occur. The ROD will also describe actions to be taken by DOD to reduce or mitigate any significant adverse impacts associated with its decision.

1.5 RELATED NEPA REVIEWS AND SUPPORTING STUDIES

DOD has prepared, or is in the process of preparing, other NEPA reviews that are related either to ACWA technologies or to stockpile destruction at the installations considered in this ACWA EIS. These reviews are described briefly below.

1.5.1 PMCD Programmatic EIS

In 1988, the DA issued the *Chemical Stockpile Disposal Program Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (U.S. Army 1988). This PEIS evaluated the environmental impacts of alternative approaches to disposing of lethal chemical weapon stockpiles throughout the continental United States. Eight installations and two types of chemical agent — nerve and blister — were included. The PEIS was programmatic rather than site-specific because the proposed action was national in scope and involved a number of complex, interrelated actions. Critical site-specific issues were analyzed in sufficient detail to allow for comparisons of each alternative in the national program, the selection of a preferred alternative, and completion of a ROD. This EIS was a tiering document, and subsequent site-specific NEPA documents focused on the individual installations. The alternatives considered were: (1) continued storage of the stockpile at each existing location, (2) on-site destruction at existing storage installations, (3) regional destruction at centers located at ANAD and Tooele Army Depot (TEAD), (4) national destruction at a center located at TEAD, and (5) partial relocation. On the basis of the analysis, the on-site destruction option was preferred, and this decision was documented in the ROD.

1.5.2 Anniston Army Depot

The DA is proceeding with the construction and operation of a chemical agent destruction facility at ANAD. In 1991, the DA issued the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Disposal of Chemical Agents and Munitions at Anniston Army Depot, Anniston, Alabama* (U.S. Army 1991). This EIS assessed the potential environmental impacts of on-site destruction using incineration.

1.5.3 Pine Bluff Arsenal

The DA is proceeding with the construction and operation of a chemical agent destruction facility at PBA. In 1997, the DA issued the *Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement for Disposal of Chemical Agents and Munitions Stored at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas* (U.S. Army 1997). This EIS assessed the potential environmental impacts of on-site destruction using incineration.

1.5.4 Pueblo Chemical Depot

PCD was designated for realignment by the 1988 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC). In 1991, the DA issued the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Realignment of Pueblo Depot Activity Colorado with Transfers to Tooele Army Depot, Utah and Red River Army Depot, Texas* (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [COE] 1991). This EIS evaluated the environmental consequences of alternatives for future use of this installation. Such uses include chemical demilitarization and site restoration.

On April 14, 2000, the DA issued an NOI to prepare an *Environmental Impact Statement for the Design, Construction, and Operation of a Facility for the Destruction of Chemical Agent at Pueblo Chemical Depot*. This EIS, referred to in this document as the PCD EIS, was published as a draft in May 2001 (U.S. Army 2001) and as a final at about the same time that this Final ACWA EIS was published. It covers the design, construction, operation, and closure of a facility for the destruction of chemical agent at PCD, Colorado. The focus of the PCD EIS is on what technology should be used to destroy the chemical weapons stockpile at PCD. The PCD EIS covers incineration technologies as well as two of the ACWA technologies (Neut/Bio and Neut/SCWO) that are evaluated in this ACWA EIS.

1.5.5 Blue Grass Army Depot

On December 4, 2000, the DA issued an NOI to prepare an *Environmental Impact Statement for the Design, Construction, and Operation of a Facility for the Destruction of Chemical Agents and Munitions at Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky*. This EIS, referred to in this document as the BGAD EIS, is in process. It will cover the design, construction, operation, and closure of a facility to destroy all of the chemical agents and munitions currently stored at BGAD. The BGAD EIS will examine the environmental impacts of a baseline incineration facility, full-scale facility to pilot test an alternative technology successfully demonstrated by the ACWA Program, and no action alternative of continued storage of the chemical agents and munitions at BGAD. The BGAD EIS will include the four ACWA technologies evaluated in this ACWA EIS: Neut/Bio, Neut/SCWO, Neut/GPCR/TW-SCWO, and Elchem Ox.

1.5.6 Technology Testing

The DA is planning to conduct pilot tests of certain technologies for the destruction of bulk agents. In 1998, the DA issued the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Pilot Testing of Neutralization/Biotreatment of Mustard Agent at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland* (U.S. Army 1998a). In 1998, the DA also issued the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Pilot Testing of Neutralization/Supercritical Water Oxidation of VX Agent at Newport Chemical Depot, Indiana* (U.S. Army 1998b). The technologies covered in those two EISs are similar to the technologies to be used in the ACWA pilot test facilities addressed in this ACWA EIS.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

This EIS addresses four installations and the ACWA destruction systems under consideration for pilot testing at each installation. It is organized to reflect the distinctions among the installations. Chapter 1 focuses on the purpose and need for the proposed action and the purpose and scope of the EIS. Chapter 2 describes the proposed action and alternatives, including why certain alternatives were selected for consideration. Chapter 2 also provides a comparative summary of the impacts of alternative destruction systems and the no action alternative at each installation. Chapter 3 describes the alternative ACW destruction systems.

Location-specific considerations for each installation, including infrastructure requirements, resource requirements, employment needs, and alternative siting locations, are described in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 for ANAD, PBA, PCD, and BGAD, respectively. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 also describe the affected environments for each of the four installations. Each installation is described in terms of the same environmental categories. In addition, Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 describe the consequences of the siting, construction, and operation of the alternative ACW destruction systems at each of the four installations. These four chapters conclude with a summary of certain issues that are multidisciplinary: impacts of accidents, cumulative impacts, and mitigation and monitoring. Decommissioning and closure are discussed in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 describes the federal and state permits, regulations, and executive orders that govern the construction and operation of the facilities. To assist the reader, an index is provided at the end of the main text of the EIS. Finally, a series of appendixes are attached that address specific impact areas in greater detail. The responses to the comments received on the DEIS during the public comment period are provided in Volume 2 of this FEIS.

1.7 REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 1

CBDCOM, 1997, *Solicitation No. DAAM01-97-R-0031*, U.S. Army Chemical and Biological Defense Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., Aug.

COE: see U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

PMACWA, 1999, *Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment Program: Supplemental Report to Congress*, U.S. Department of Defense, Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., Sept. 30.

U.S. Army, 1988, *Chemical Stockpile Disposal Program Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement*, Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., Jan.

U.S. Army, 1991, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Disposal of Chemical Agents and Munitions Stored at Anniston Army Depot, Anniston, Alabama*, Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., May.

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U.S. Army, 1998b, *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Pilot Testing of Neutralization/ Supercritical Water Oxidation of VX Agent at Newport Chemical Depot, Indiana*, Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., Dec.

U.S. Army, 2001, *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Destruction of Chemical Munitions at Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colorado*, Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., May.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1991, *Final Environmental Impact Statement, Realignment of Pueblo Chemical Depot Activity, Colorado, with Transfers to Tooele Army Depot, Utah, and Red River Army Depot, Texas*, prepared by COE, Omaha, Neb., Aug.