



U.S. Army Element, Assembled
Chemical Weapons Alternatives

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Acceleration Assessment Overview

In fall 2007, the Department of Defense (DoD) began a formal assessment to examine options for accelerating the destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile across the entire U.S. chemical demilitarization program, inclusive of both organizations charged with chemical weapons destruction responsibilities: the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency and the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA). The following outlines the legislation that prompted this assessment and its current status as it relates to the ACWA program and ACWA's mission to destroy the chemical weapons stockpiles in Colorado and Kentucky.

Background

The purpose of the acceleration assessment was to define alternatives for destroying the entire U.S. chemical weapons stockpile by 2012, and no later than 2017. It was initiated as a result of two laws:

- Public Law 110-116: DoD Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2008
- Public Law 110-181: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008

These laws mandate that the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile must be destroyed by the deadline established by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) (April 27, 2012), and under no circumstances later than December 31, 2017. The laws also require the submission of semi-annual reports to designated members of Congress and committees describing DoD's progress to destroy the U.S. chemical stockpile by the mandated deadlines.

Assessment Status

The third report to Congress was delivered on June 30, 2008. The report presented three options and confirmed that achieving the 2012 CWC deadline would not be possible under any circumstances. The three options are as follows:

OPTION 1: Maintain the program on its current track under the April 2007 Acquisition Program Baseline and the FY 2009 President's Budget request, with complete destruction slated for Colorado and Kentucky in 2020 and 2023, respectively.

OPTION 2: Transfer the Colorado and Kentucky stockpiles to operational U.S. chemical weapons destruction facilities. This option requires a change in law to address Federal and State environmental requirements and modification of hazardous waste permits for the operational chemical weapons destruction facilities. This also requires a change to Public Law 103-337, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, which prohibits the transportation of chemical weapons across State borders.

OPTION 3: Accelerate the ACWA program by increasing staff for the construction phase, early start of the systemization phase, and to support 24/7 destruction operations. This option also involves the use of an explosive destruction technology for destroying mustard-filled munitions in Kentucky. If implemented, destruction of the Colorado stockpile by December 2017 does appear possible; however, destruction of the Kentucky stockpile would require some additional time.

The next step is for DoD to complete a schedule assessment of Option 3. The results of this review will be provided to Congress with the Fiscal Year 2010 President's Budget request.



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