NEWS RELEASE

Explosive Destruction System Selected to Augment Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – Program Executive Officer Conrad F. Whyne announced his selection today of the U.S. Army's Explosive Destruction System (EDS) to augment the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colo. The decision followed a lengthy review of several explosive destruction technologies designed for the safe destruction of chemical munitions unsuited for processing by the main plant's automated equipment.

"We looked closely at cost, schedule and technical factors," said Whyne, "and found that the EDS is fully capable of doing the work we need it to do, while offering the best overall value to the taxpayer."

The EDS was among the explosive destruction technologies evaluated last year in a formal environmental assessment. This assessment, conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, found that the installation and operation of an explosive destruction technology, to include the EDS, would have no significant environmental impact.

The utilization of an explosive destruction technology, such as EDS, has been part of the Pueblo plant's design since its inception to destroy a number of problematic chemical munitions that cannot be easily processed through the plant. These include munitions that have leaked in the past and are now overpacked, as well as "rejects," whose deteriorated physical condition does not easily allow for automated processing.

EDS has a well-documented history of safe and successful operations at various sites throughout the U.S., to include employment in Colorado at the former Rocky Mountain Arsenal where it was used to destroy a number of recovered non-stockpile chemical munitions.

The EDS uses explosive "cutting" charges to access the chemical agent inside of a munition. Neutralization chemicals are then added to destroy the chemical agent. The detonation of the cutting charge also eliminates the explosive components of the munition. The blast, vapor and fragments from this process are all contained within a heavy, sealed stainless steel vessel. Before the vessel is reopened, destruction of the chemical agent is confirmed by laboratory sampling of residual liquid and air from the interior of the vessel.

The transportable EDS will be installed near the main plant, which is in the midst of a rigorous systemization phase in preparation for the start of chemical weapons destruction operations. Selection of the EDS moves the program one step closer to the safe and environmentally compliant destruction of the entire U.S. chemical weapons stockpile.

For more information, please visit www.peoacwa.army.mil.

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