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**Alternative technology named "agency preferred alternative"
to destroy Kentucky chemical weapons stockpile**

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. -- After a comprehensive evaluation process including independent assessments for safety, environmental and operational risks, Department of Defense officials have designated neutralization followed by supercritical water oxidation, or SCWO, as the "agency-preferred technology" for full-scale pilot testing at the Blue Grass Army Depot near Richmond, Ky.

The "agency-preferred alternative" refers to the technology that the DoD believes would fulfill its mission and responsibilities, giving primary consideration to safety, environmental and technical factors and will be identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons at Blue Grass Army Depot.

The evaluation process for full-scale pilot testing considered the incineration process and three alternative technologies: 1) neutralization followed by SCWO; 2) neutralization followed by SCWO and gas phase chemical reduction; and 3) electrochemical oxidation with silver and nitric acid.

The next step in the decision process involves publishing the final environmental impact statement, or FEIS, which will set forth the agency-preferred alternative. Following that, the Defense Acquisition Executive will consider the FEIS and select the technology for full-scale pilot testing. This technology decision will be documented in a Record of Decision, which is expected in early 2003.

-30-

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Program Manager for Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment Public Affairs at 410-436-3398 or the ACWA Information Line at 1-888-482-4312. Blue Grass Army Depot Public Affairs can be reached at 859-625-6221, or call Blue Grass Chemical Activity Public Affairs at 859-625-6897. Additional information on chemical stockpile disposal is available at the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office, 370 Highland Park Drive Suite 2, Richmond, Ky. 40475, or call 859-626-8944.

Congress established the Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment program (ACWA) in 1997 in accordance with Public Law 104-208. ACWA's mission is to identify and demonstrate two or more alternative technologies to the baseline incineration process for the demilitarization of assembled chemical weapons. In 1999, Public Law 105-261 authorized ACWA to plan for a pilot facility using an alternate technology for the destruction of assembled chemical weapons. If an alternative technology is ultimately selected for destruction of the Blue Grass chemical weapons stockpile, ACWA will manage the destruction operations in accordance with Public Law 107-248.