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## Dugway plans more chemical, bio testing

### The plan also aims to expand counterterrorism training

By Dawn House  
The Salt Lake Tribune

The Army released its final plan Friday to double biological and chemical weapons defense testing and expand counterterrorism training at Dugway Proving Ground in the west desert.

The seven-year plan would expand operations substantially at the Rhode Island-size installation in Tooele County, about 80 miles southwest of Salt Lake City.

Under the proposal, counterterrorism would become a major mission component at the super-secret installation. A mock city is to be built for urban chemical and biological attack exercises and several existing facilities such as the German Village, built during World War II to test incendiary bombs, would be used for counterterrorism training for both military and civilian personnel.

Along with increased testing, a permanent annex would be built at the



An armored personnel carrier with make-shift missiles on top of it sits in the west desert area of Dugway Proving Grounds. (Steve Griffin/The Salt Lake Tribune)

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Lothar Salomon Life Sciences Test Facility, a 32,000 square-foot building used to conduct biological defense trials. A command and control facility, to serve as a control point for testing activities, and a building to test protective equipment also would be constructed. In addition, a facility would be built to provide space to prepare for upcoming tests while existing tests were in progress. The Chemical Agent Test Chamber complex also would be renovated.

The final plan from an earlier draft released in 2002 will be forwarded to the Pentagon for final approval.

Steve Erickson, director of the Citizens Education Project, a watchdog group, called the release of the plan "too little, too late."

"Changes in the 2002 plan have been piecemeal, which is still an overarching problem," said Erickson. "The public process has been turned inside out and upside down."

In the past year, the military has published expanded plans in several newspaper legal notices under so-called findings of no significant impact, a tactic Erickson says is a way to circumvent a public environmental impact statement.

Utah Sen. Gene Davis, D-Salt Lake City, is sponsoring a bill to resurrect the Utah Federal Research Committee that would monitor the Army's expansion on behalf of the state.

State lawmakers have been so eager to save Dugway and Hill Air Force \_\_\_\_\_ Base from being considered for possible closure during a \_\_\_\_\_ military realignment process scheduled for next year that the \_\_\_\_\_ Utah Legislature handed over \$2 million from sales taxes to the U.S. government last year to extend Dugway's runway.

The transaction was so unusual that it took an act of Congress to funnel the state money to the Army.

The state appropriation was used to extend the new airstrip by an additional 2,000 feet, enabling Hill Air Force base pilots to use the Army runway as an emergency landing site.

Dugway's primary mission stems from it being the only Army installation

large and remote enough to conduct "comprehensive and realistic" testing of biological and chemical systems, munitions, smoke and obscurants without posing a risk to public safety, according to the three-volume proposal.

Officials at the installation did not return telephone calls seeking comment on Friday. Col. Gary Harter, the commanding officer, was unavailable but in a letter mailed Thursday he said Army officials "carefully evaluated all comments received during the public comment period" after the 2002 draft EIS was released.

The public has 30 days to review the final plan.

Copies are available at the Whitmore Library, 2197 Fort Union Blvd., Salt Lake City; University of Utah Marriott Library, 295 S. 1500 East, Salt Lake City; Tooele City Library, 128 W. Vine St.; and Dugway Library, 5124 Kister Ave., Dugway.

For more information, contact Dugway at 435-831-3409 or e-mail [dp-pa@dpg.army.mil](mailto:dp-pa@dpg.army.mil).

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