A chemical weapons disposal plant in Colorado has been fully built and is now undergoing an extended check of its technology.

"The government officially declared completion of the facility on Dec. 12," according to Sandra Romero, spokeswoman for contractor Bechtel, which is charged with building and operating the facility at the Pueblo Chemical Depot that will eliminate 780,000 munitions and 2,611 tons of mustard blister agent.

It is expected to take about two years to fully vet the chemical neutralization plant's various systems, beginning with the boiler. Demilitarization operations are due to begin in 2015 and to wrap up by 2019.

Pueblo holds one of two remaining U.S. chemical stockpiles. The other is at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky, where the disposal plant is still being built. Elimination of 523 tons of nerve and blister agents and more than 100,000 munitions is due to be completed there by 2023.

The United States was required as a member state to the Chemical Weapons Convention to finish off its banned stockpiles by April 29, 2012. Congress had also demanded that the arsenal be eliminated no later than 2017.

Russia is also lagging behind its disposal commitment under the international accord. It has pledged to finish off its world's largest stockpile, which once stood at 40,000 tons of chemical warfare materials, in 2015.
Disposal of "complex" chemical weapons is under way at the Leonidovka plant, Interfax reported on Thursday.

"These munitions are special in that they contain not only a chemical agent, but also an explosive substance provided with an anti-disturbance device," said Col. Gen. Valery Kapashin, who heads the Federal Directorate for Safe Storage and Disposal of Chemical Weapons.

The latest development puts Russia in the home stretch of chemical weapons disposal, the officer said.

"What remains to be done yet is launching the adjusted lines for disposing of artillery munitions at the Kizner facility in Udmurtia, block No. 2 at the Shchuchye facility in the Kurgan region, and the blocks for the disposal of complex chemical munitions at the Maradykovsky facility in the Kirov region and at Shchuchye," he said.