

Yucca Mountain/Defense Fund

Yucca Mountain: Should We Pull the Plug?



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ANTIS POUNCE ON FUEL ROD ISSUE: VERMONT REVERBERATIONS EXPECTED

Friday, February 18th, 2011

February 18, 2011

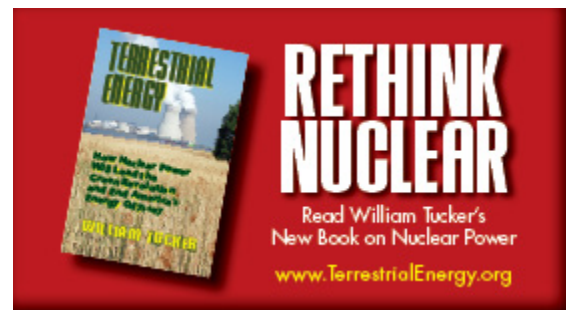
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In an announcement that will echo across the Northeast in anti-nuclear circles, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy announced it has discovered a flaw in the control rod blades that may require their more frequent replacement.

"The design life if not revised, could result in significant control blade cracking and could, if not corrected, create a substantial safety hazard and is considered a reportable condition," the company told the NRC, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Anti-nuclear groups immediately pounced on the announcement, predicting runaway reactors. "David Lochbaum of the Union of Concerned Scientists and Arnold Gunderson, a former nuclear industry engineer who now frequently consults with groups critical of the industry, said the faulty blades could make affected control rods inoperable," reports the Journal. "It could either slow down or stop the control rod from inserting" when plant operators were trying to reduce power or shut a plant down,' Lochbaum said. Gunderson said control rods 'are like the brakes on a nuclear reactor. It's almost like they have a 100,000 mile warranty on them and they need to be changed out at 40,000.'

"On closer inspection, however, the story reveals that alarmist hand-wringing over a gloom-and-doom scenario



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is not warranted. If the rods begin to crack, they release boron and tritium into the cooling water, a condition that can easily be monitored. "As long as there is no significant increase in boron or tritium observed, the recommendation would be continue operation until the end of the operating cycle," NRC spokesman Neil Sheehan, told the Journal. The list of 27 reactors that use GE's boiling water technology includes some of the oldest plants in the nation. Massachusetts' Pilgrim, Vermont Yankee, Oyster Creek, and the TVA's Browns Ferry units are among them. After 40 years of operation, none have yet reported any problems. Connecticut's Millstone 1 unit, also listed in the Journal story, closed permanently in 1998.

Read more about it in the [Wall Street Journal](#)

Tags: [Arnold Gunderson](#), [David Lochbaum](#), [GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy](#), [Neil Sheehan](#), [NRC](#), [Union of Concerned Scientists](#)

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GE-HITACHI RESURGES IN SAVANNAH RIVER, INDIA

Thursday, October 28th, 2010

After partnering with Hitachi, General Electric's nuclear program, which is still majority American-owned, is going on the offensive.

Yesterday GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy signed a memorandum of understanding with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions to explore the potential of deploying a prototype of its Generation IV PRISM reactor as part of a proposed demonstration of small modular reactor technologies at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site.

The MOU means GEH will be in the game on the increasingly crowded field of small modular reactors. GE's PRISM hasn't quite gotten the attention of newcomers such as Hyperion and NuScale (see today's interview), but as the nation's oldest and most successful electrical manufacturer, the company is sure to throw some weight around.

At the same time, GEH announced it has signed preliminary agreements in India with Tata Consulting Engineers, Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC), Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) and Larsen & Toubro for involvement in India's nuclear program. Once again,

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GEH will be joining a crowded field. Japan, Russia, Korea and France are already in the game but India has 20 reactors in the planning stage with 40 more proposed. To date liability considerations have handicapped the operation of private American companies in India, but GEH said it believed these concerns could be resolved.

A leader in the field during the 1970s and 1980s boom in American construction, GE has shown little appetite for nuclear in recent years. Legendary CEO Jack Welch was reportedly highly skeptical of nuclear, phobic with regard to its potential adverse impacts on GE's consumer products and disdainful that anyone would ever make any money at it. But with a world revival taking shape and the partnership with Hitachi in place, GE may be poised to be the nuclear comeback kid.

Read more about it at [PR Inside](#) and [SIFY Finance](#)

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