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## Nuclear power around the world

**A look at nuclear energy production and policies in selected countries around the world, as the UK government announces its long-term nuclear energy plans.**

### UNITED STATES

The United States is the world's largest supplier of commercial nuclear power, with more than 100 licensed commercial nuclear power plants. In 2006, these generated about 20% of the country's national energy production, and met 9% of the country's energy needs.

### FRANCE

France has more than 50 nuclear power plants, which produce 79% of its electricity output. The nuclear fleet meets just under half of the nation's energy needs. France is a substantial exporter of nuclear electricity to other European countries. France's energy policy stems from its reaction to the oil crises of the 1970s, when the government decided to pursue nuclear power as a means of assuring its energy security.

### AUSTRALIA

Australia produces no nuclear power. Plans to review whether the country should develop nuclear power were abandoned after Kevin Rudd, who opposed the move, was elected prime minister in 2007.

### CHINA

Mainland China has 11 nuclear power reactors, but China's energy needs are such that these met just 1% of the country's energy demands in 2005. The government plans to increase nuclear power generation, with construction under way on five more reactors and about to begin on several others.

### INDIA

Nuclear power accounted for just 1% of national consumption in 2005, but projections suggest nuclear power plants could eventually meet more of the nation's energy needs. A government-backed deal with the US to give India access to

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civilian nuclear fuel and foreign technology is has run into serious domestic opposition by those who say it compromises national sovereignty.

**IRAN**

Iran currently produces no nuclear power, but it is in the process of building a nuclear power plant at Bushehr, with Russian help. One of plant's reactors could go on stream in early 2008. Iran first planned the reactor with German assistance in 1974. The plan was abandoned after the Islamist revolution in 1979 but it was picked up again in 1992.

**RUSSIA**

Russia opened the world's first nuclear power plant in 1954. Industry expansion slowed down after the Chernobyl disaster. Nuclear power plants produced 6% of the energy consumed in 2005. The industry is now growing again, with the government aiming to produce more nuclear energy for export.

**GERMANY**

An estimated 12% of Germany's electricity consumption in 2006 came from nuclear power. However, Germany plans to shut down all its nuclear reactors by 2020. The government is investing in other energy sources, such as wind power, but there are concerns that the decision could propel the country into an energy crisis.

*Energy consumption figures from the International Energy Agency.*

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