The Advanced High-Temperature Reactor

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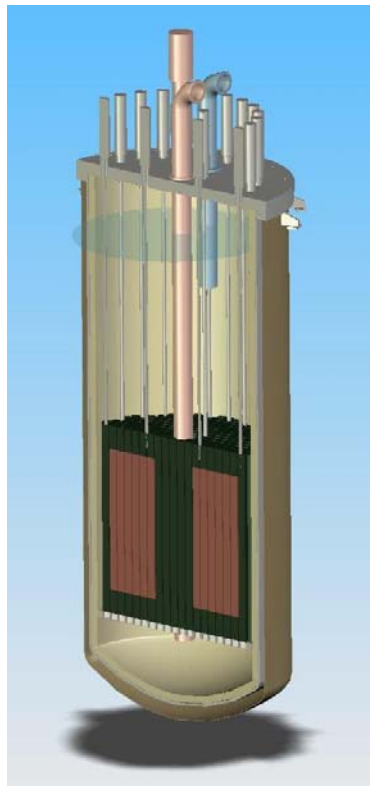

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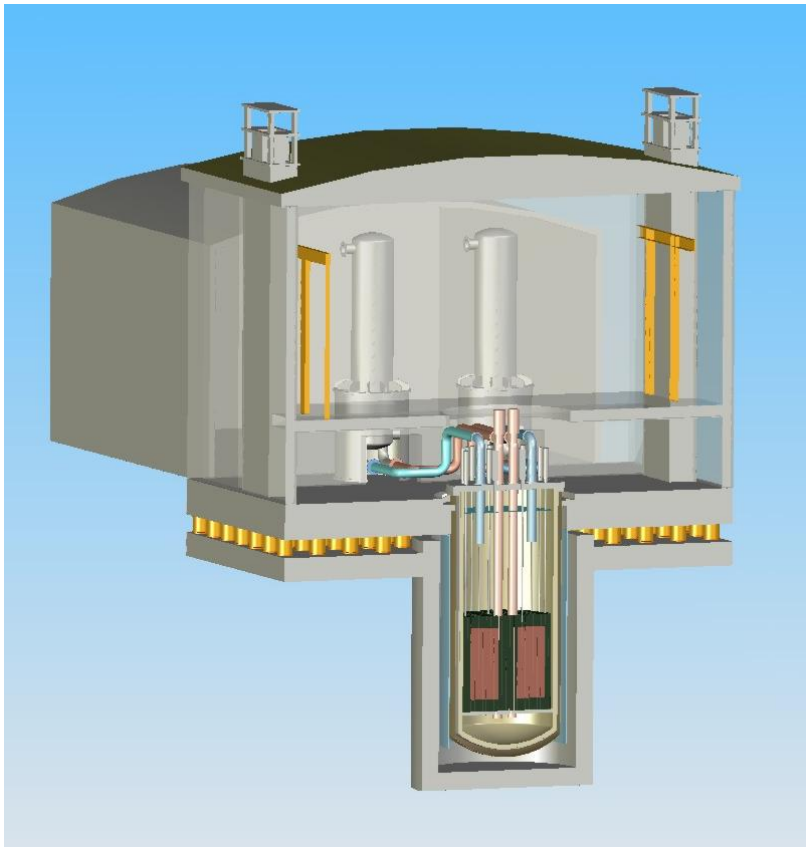
Sandia National Laboratories

UC Berkeley NUCLEAR ENGINEERING

Contents



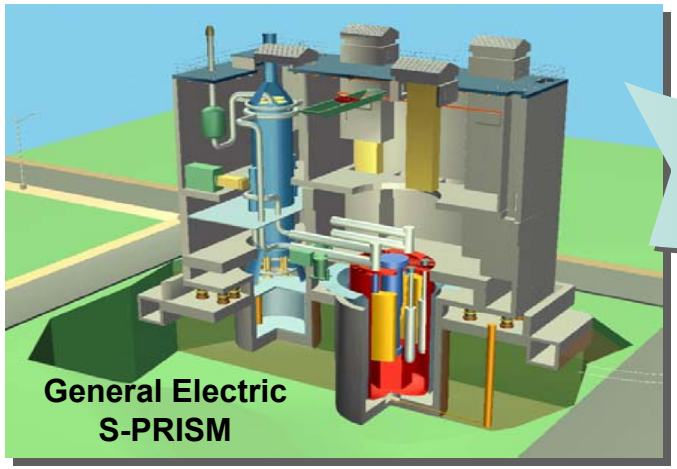
- Introduction
- Fuels
- Molten Fluoride Salt Coolants
- Materials
- Facility Design
- Reactor Core Design
- Energy Conversion
- Economics
- Research And Development

History, Characteristics, and Status: The Advanced High-Temperature Reactor

- New reactor concept that combines three characteristics in a single reactor
  - High temperature for electricity and H_2 production
  - Passive safety (same safety basis as modular gas-cooled reactors)
  - Large power output (improved economics)
- Joint effort
  - Oak Ridge National Laboratory
  - Sandia National Laboratories
  - University of California at Berkeley
- A series of studies and evaluations have been conducted, but a point design has not been fully developed

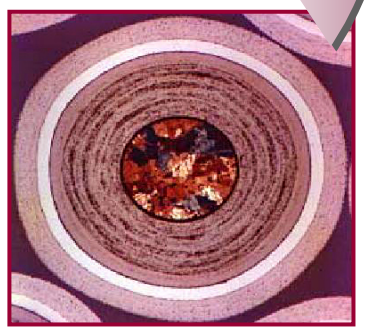
The Advanced High-Temperature Reactor

Combining Existing Technologies In A New Way



Passively Safe Pool-Type Reactor Designs

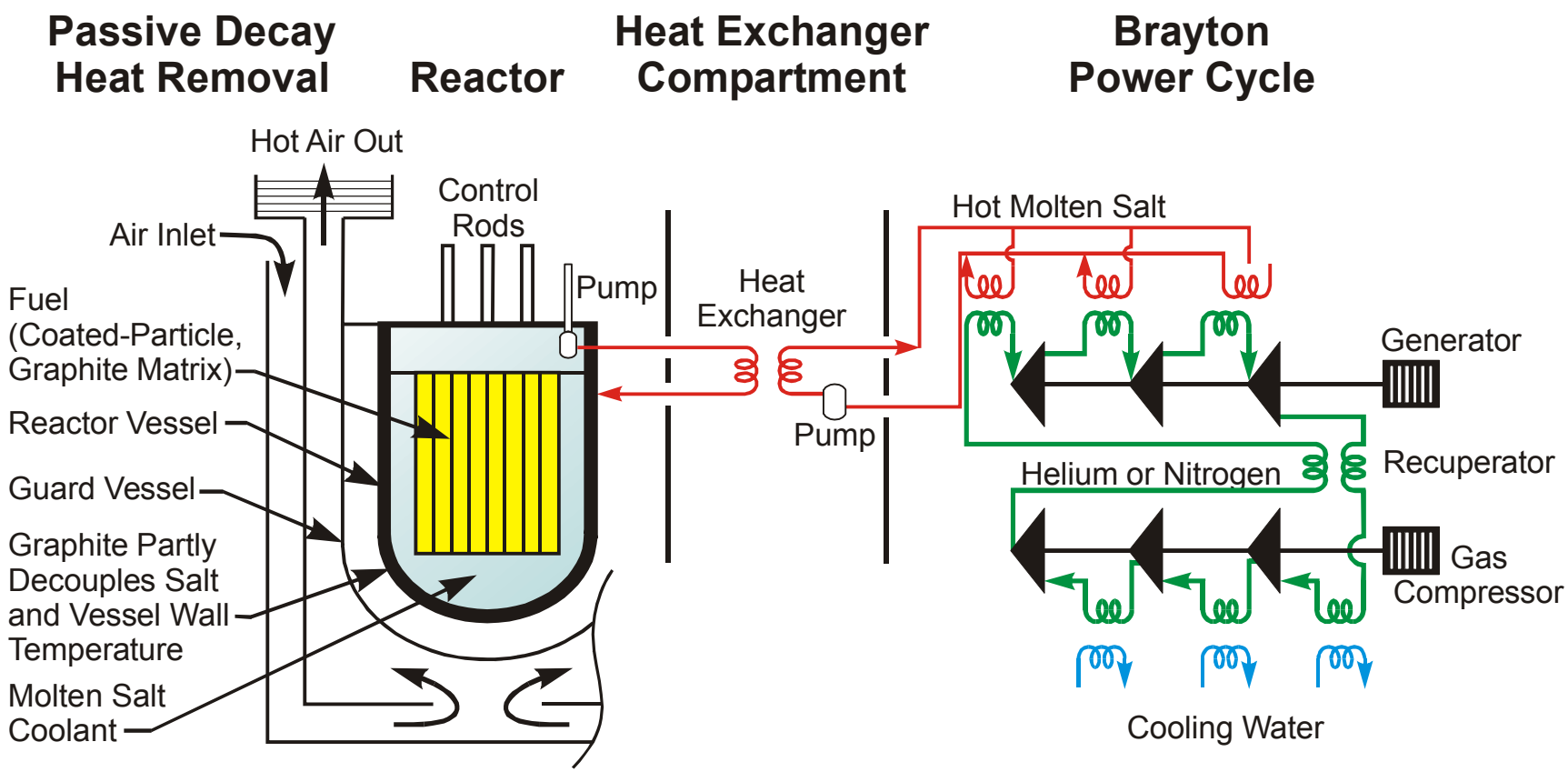
Brayton Power Cycles



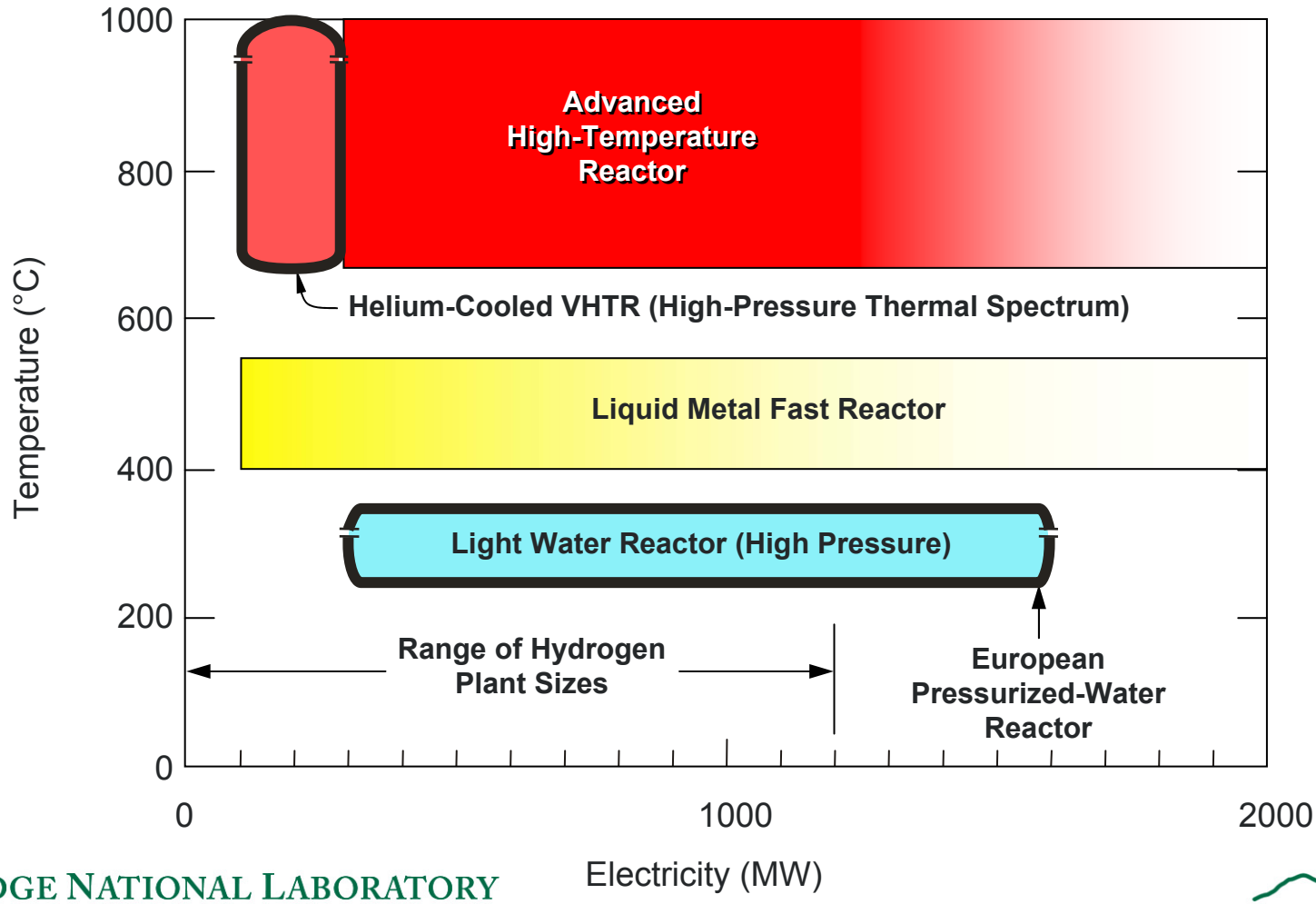
High-Temperature Coated-Particle Fuel

High-Temperature, Low-Pressure Transparent Molten-Salt Coolant

The Advanced High Temperature Reactor



The AHTR Extends High-Temperature Capabilities To Large Reactors

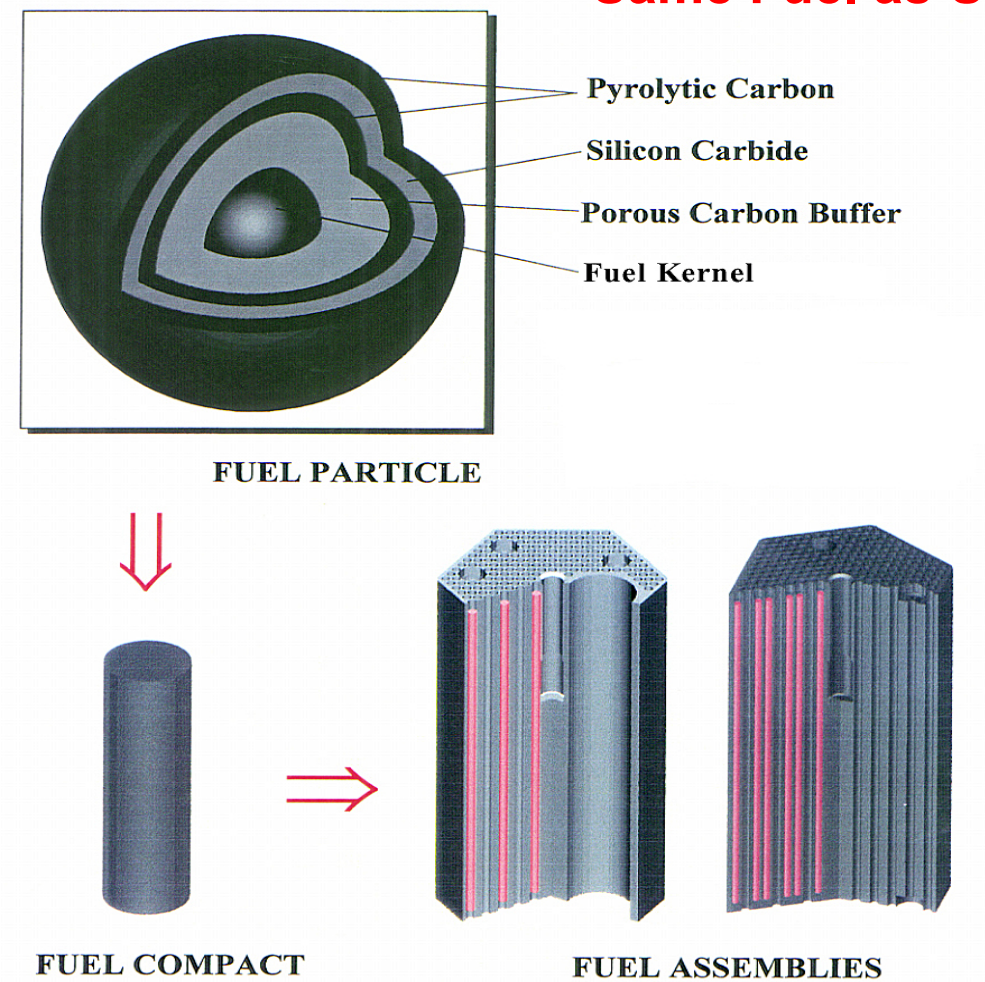


Fuels

Only One Type of High-Temperature Nuclear Fuel Has Been Demonstrated on a Significant Scale

The AHTR Uses Coated-Particle Graphite Fuel Elements
(Peak Operating Temperature: 1250ºC; Failure Temperature >1600ºC)

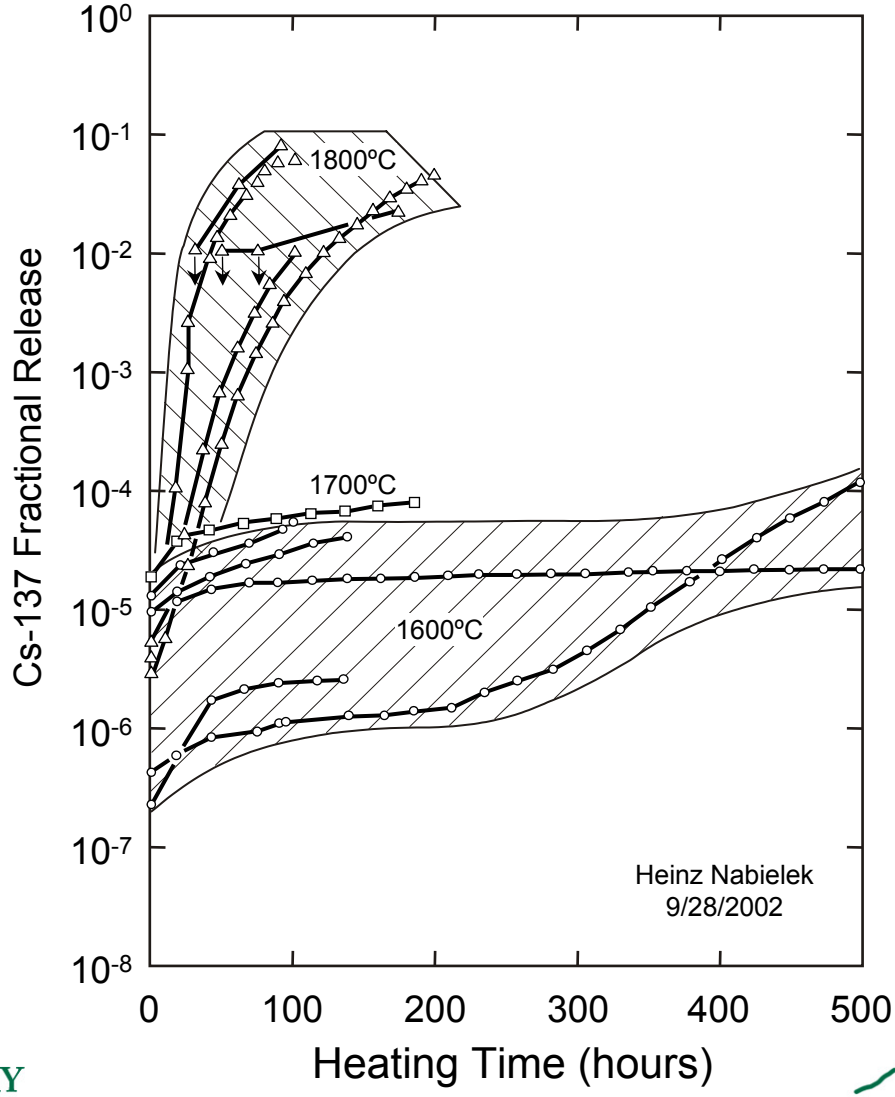
Same Fuel as Used in Gas-Cooled Reactors



- Fuel particle with multiple coatings to retain fission products
- Fuel compact contains particles
- Compacts inserted into graphite blocks
  - Several options for graphite geometry (prismatic, rod, pebble bed, etc.)
  - Base design uses prismatic; other options viable
- Graphite block supports fuel compacts in an arrangement compatible with nuclear reactions and heat transfer to coolant

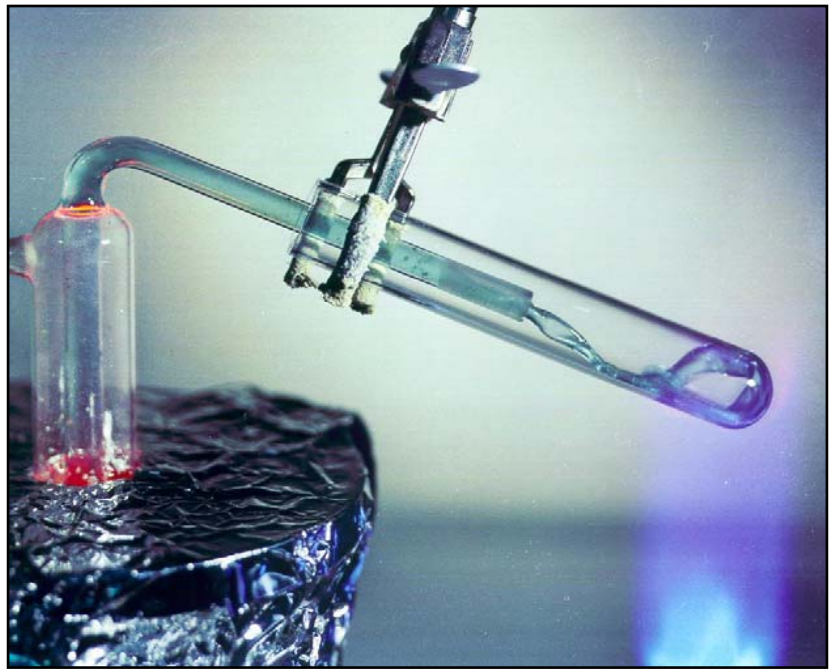
Coated Particle Fuels Have Low Radionuclide Releases Under Accident Conditions To ~1600ºC

Cesium Release Fraction From Heated Fuel Versus Time



Molten Fluoride Salt Coolants

Only Two Coolants Have Been Demonstrated As Compatible with High-Temperature Graphite Fuels



Helium

(High-Pressure/Transparent)

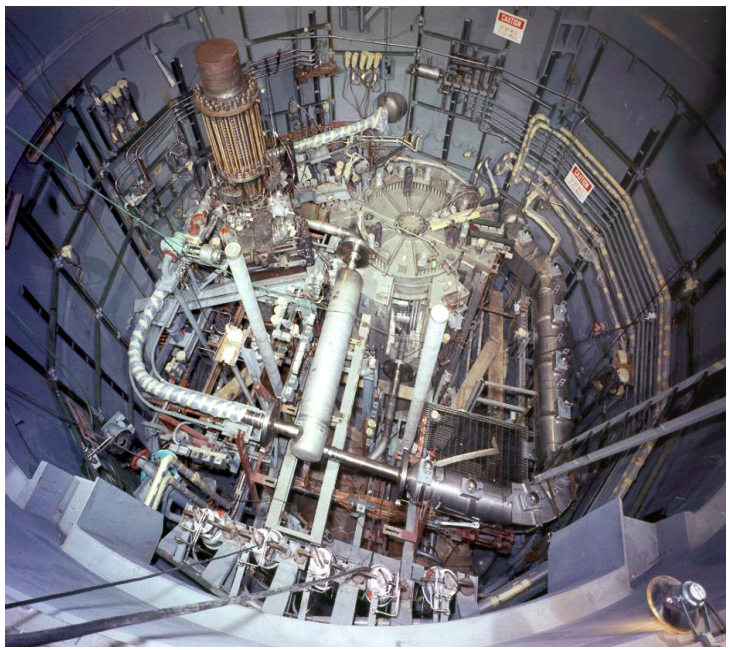
Molten Fluoride Salts

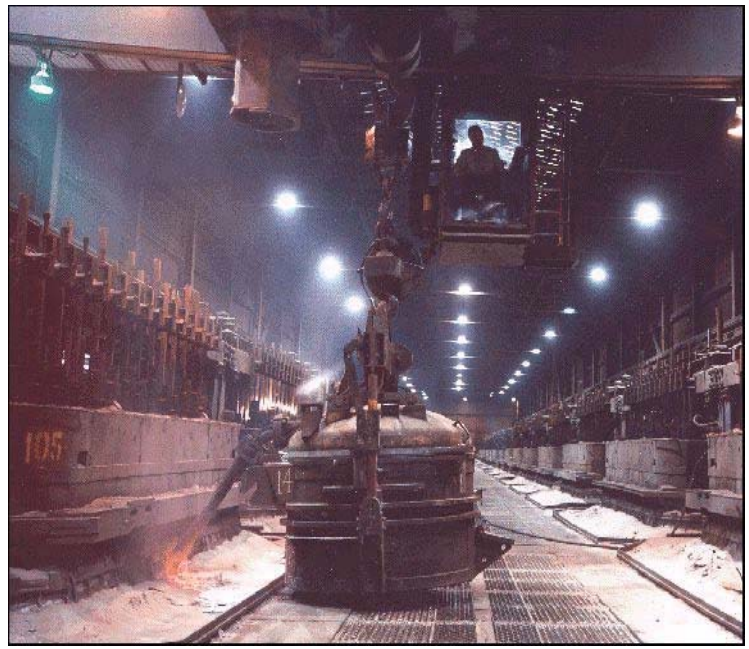
(Low Pressure/Transparent)

The AHTR Uses a *Molten Salt Coolant*

Good Heat Transfer, Low-Pressure Operation, And Transparent (In-Service Inspection)

Molten Fluoride Salts Used in Molten Salt Reactors (Fuel in Coolant; AHTR uses clean salt and solid fuel)





Molten Fluoride Salts Have Been Used for a Century to Make Aluminum in Graphite Baths at 1000°C

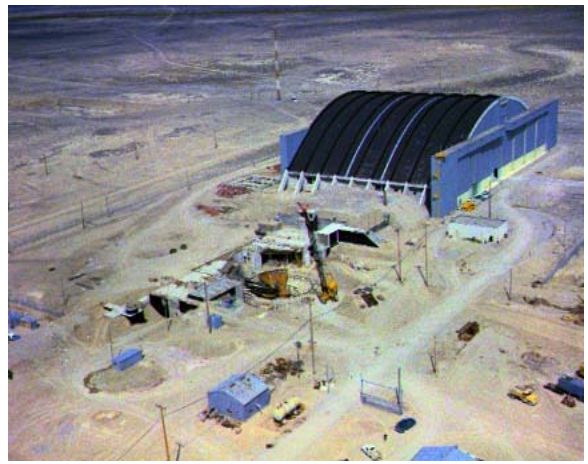
Molten Salt Technology Was Developed To Support Several Large (1950-1970) Programs

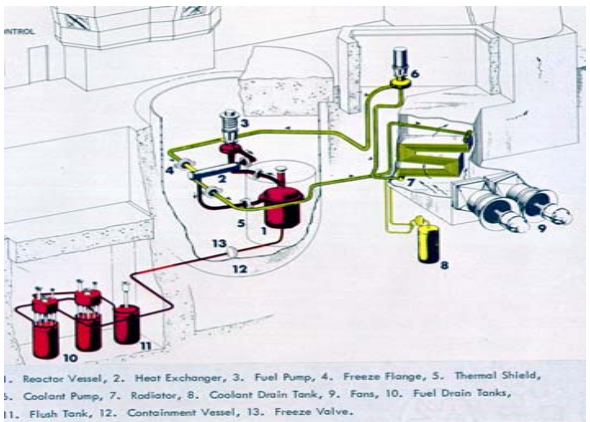
Molten Salt Reactors: Fuel Dissolved In Coolant

Aircraft Nuclear Propulsion Program

← Aircraft Reactor Experiment:
2.5 MW; 882ºC
Fuel Salt: Na/Zr/F

INEEL Shielded Aircraft Hanger→

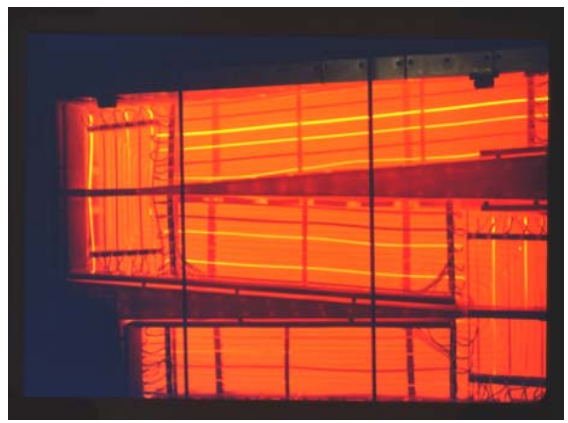




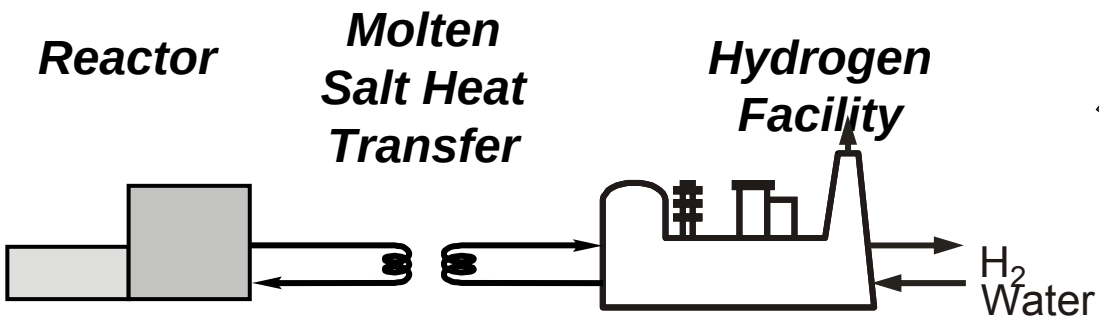
Molten Salt Breeder Reactor Program

←Molten Salt Reactor Experiment: 8 MW(t)
Fuel Salt: ^{7}Li/Be/F,
Clean Salt: Na/Be/F

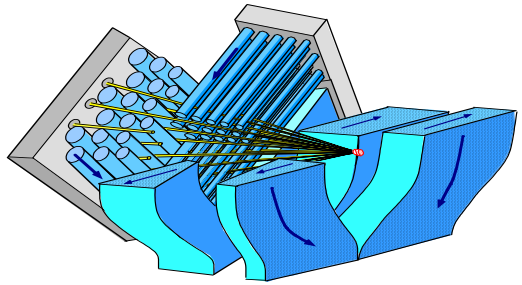
Air-Cooled Heat Exchangers→



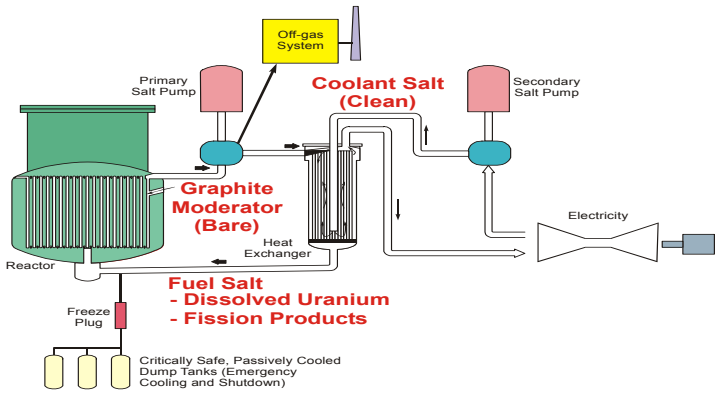
Molten-Salt Technology Is Being Developed for Multiple Future Applications



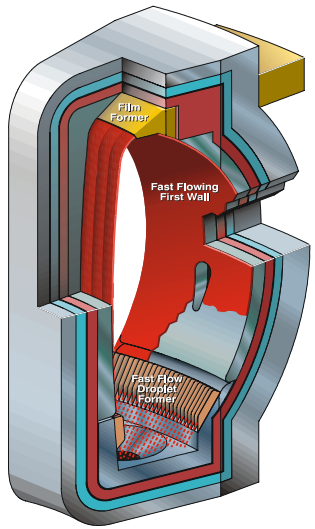
Reactor to Hydrogen Production Facility



Heavy-Ion Inertial Fusion



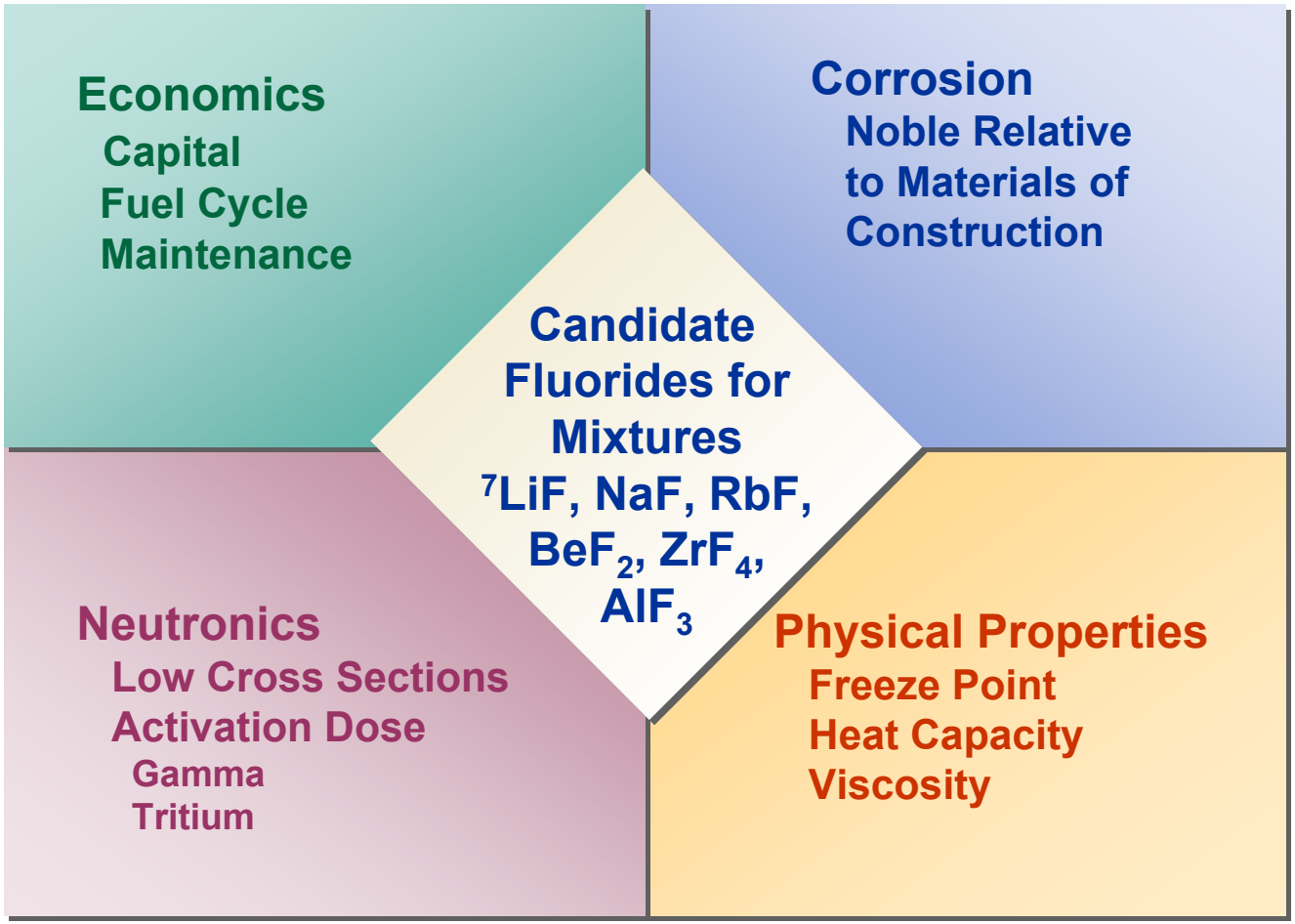
Molten Salt Reactor (EC and France)



Magnet Fusion Tokamak

Different Reactor Applications Require Different Mixtures of Molten Fluoride Salts

[Aircraft (Na:Zr), Breeder (Fuel: ^{7}Li:Be; Clean Secondary Salt: Na:B)]



Physical Properties of Demonstrated Coolants

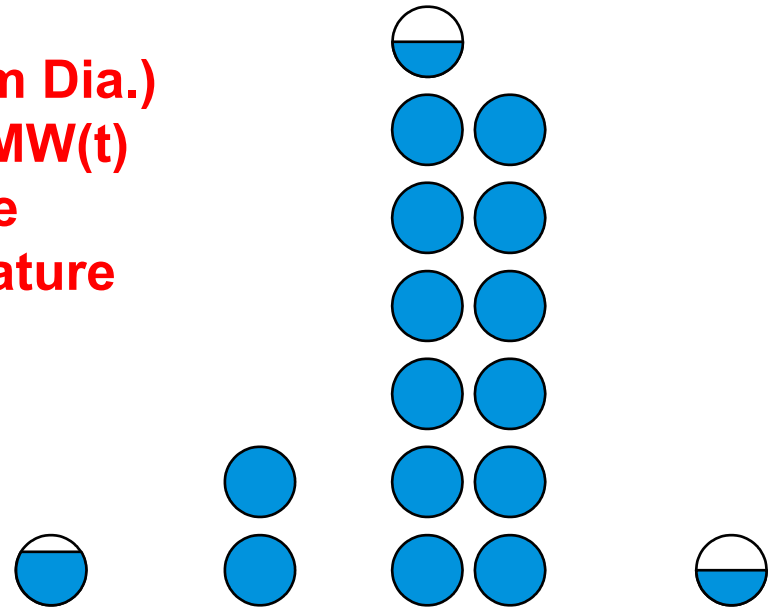
(Properties at ~700ºC, Except for Pressurized Water at 290ºC)

Coolant	T_{melt} (ºC)	T_{boil} (ºC)	ρ (kg/m³)	ρC_p (kJ/m³ºC)	k (W/mºC)	ν·106 (m²/s)
$^7Li_2BeF_4$ (MSRE)	459*	1,430	1,940	4,540	1.0	2.8
0.58 NaF-0.42 ZrF_4 (ARE)	500*	1,290	3,140	3,670	~1	1.6
Sodium	97.8	883	790	1,000	62	0.25
Lead	328	1,750	10,540	1,700	16	0.13
Water	0	100	732	4,040	0.56	0.13

*Salts Used in Reactors. Examples of fluoride salts with lower melting points: Li-Na-Be (22-44-33): ~300ºC; Na-Rb-Zr (6-46-48): 380ºC

Molten Salts Have Superior Capabilities for Transport of Heat

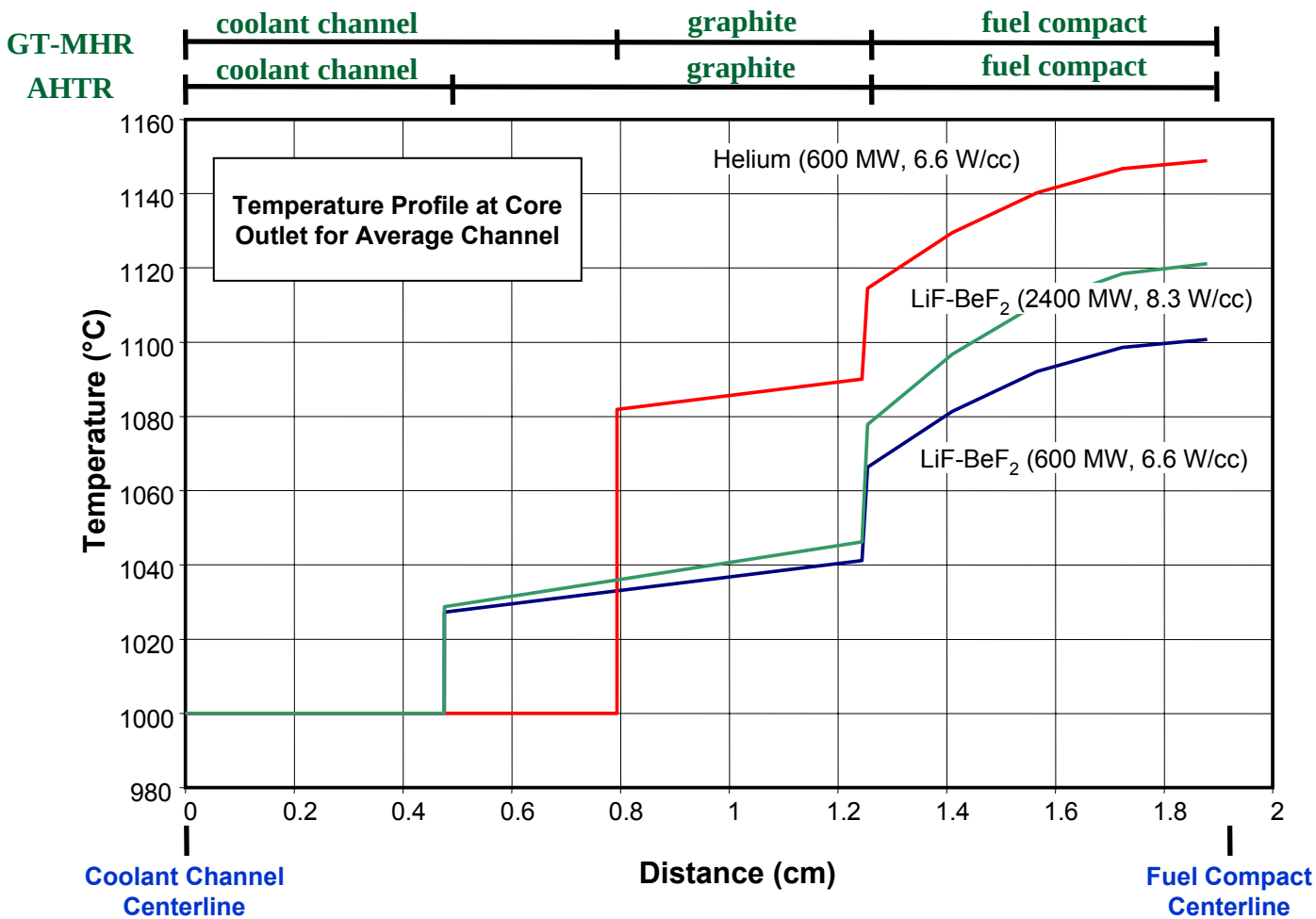
Number of Pipes (1-m Dia.)
To Transport 1000 MW(t)
With 100ºC Rise
In Coolant Temperature



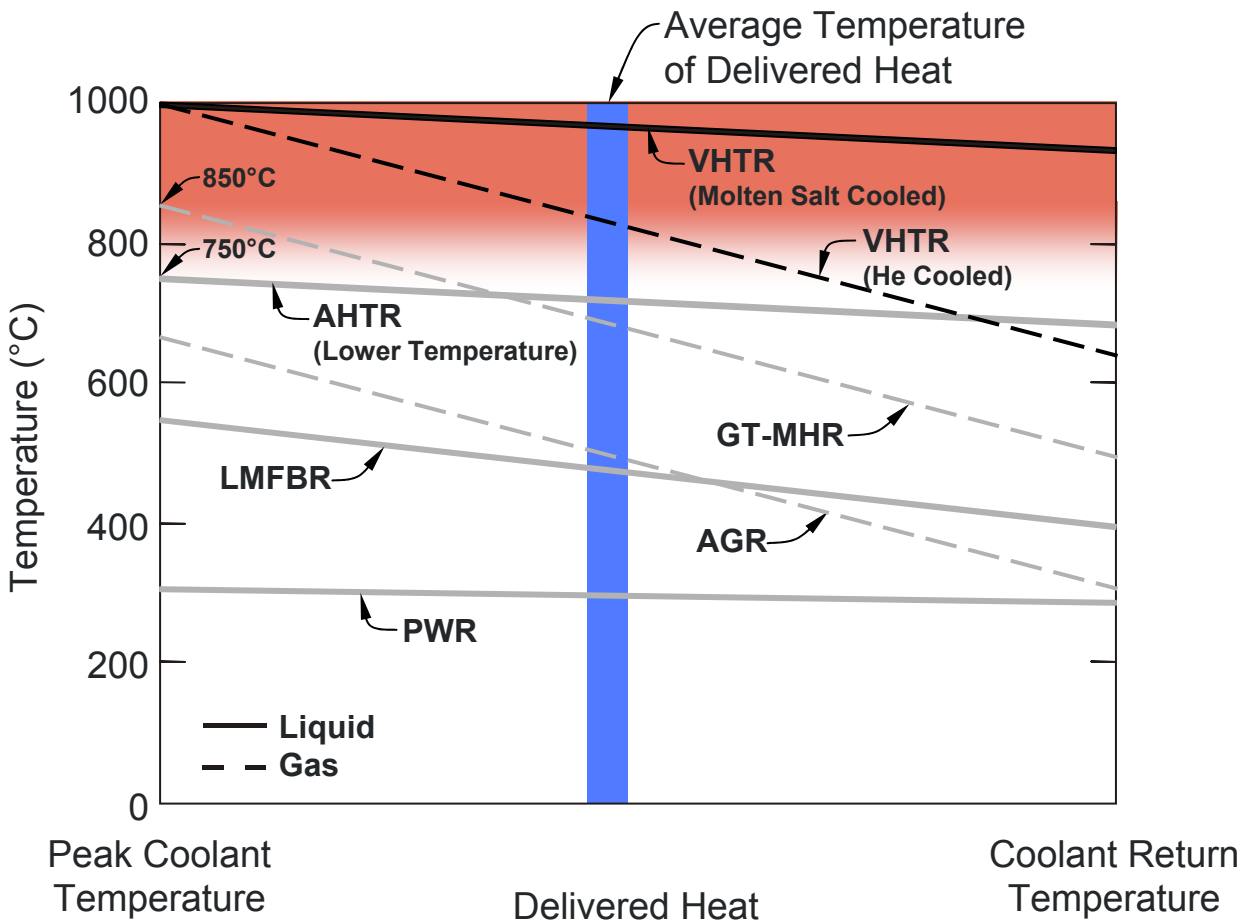
	Water (PWR)	Sodium (LMR)	Helium	Molten Salt
Pressure (MPa)	15.5	0.69	7.07	0.69
Outlet Temp (ºC)	320	540	1000	1000
Pipe Velocities (m/s)	6	6	75	6

Liquids Remove Heat More Effectively Than Gas:

Cooler Fuel For the Same Coolant Exit Temperatures



For Any Coolant Exit Temperature, the Average Temperature of Delivered Heat (the Product) Is Higher with Liquid Coolants than with Gas Coolants



Materials

Graphite and Graphite Fuels

Compatibility with Molten Salt Demonstrated

Metals

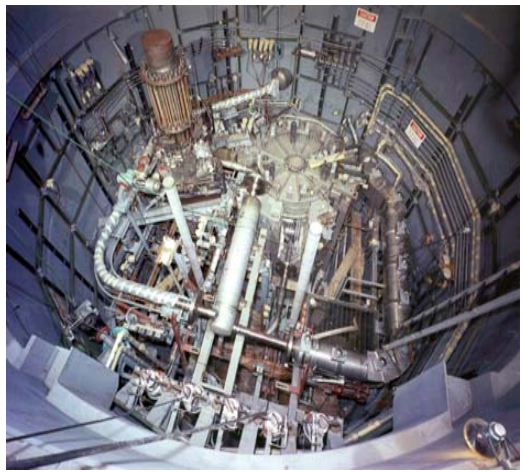
Existing Code Materials to 750ºC

Candidates For Higher Temperature Operation

Status: Similar to Helium-Cooled VHTR, Need to Qualify and Demonstrate Higher-Temperature Materials

Experience Shows that Fluoride Salts Are Compatible with Carbon-Based Materials

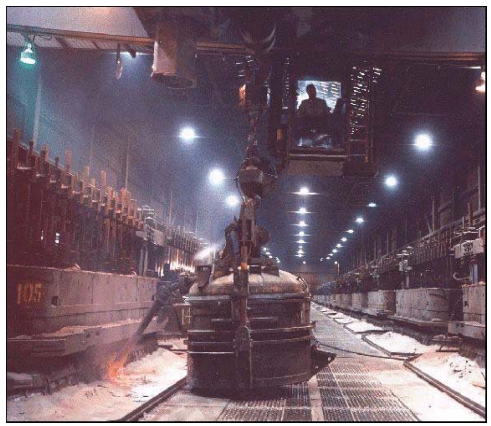
(Same Graphite Radiation Damage Issues As With Gas-Cooled Reactors)



Molten Salt Reactor Experiment (8 MW(t))

←Reactor Compartment

Graphite Core (Moderator)→



←Aluminum Plant: 1000ºC (NaF-ALF_3 Molten Salt in Graphite)

Molten Salt Reactor Experiment [8 MW(t)] Postirradiation Graphite→

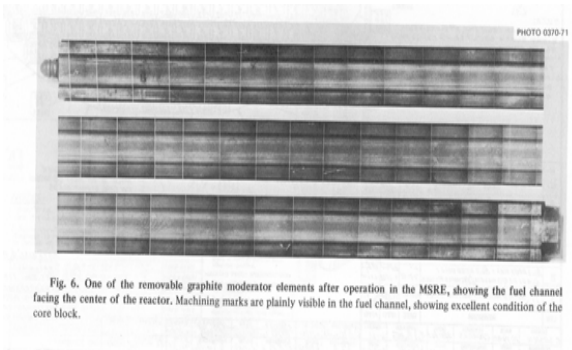


Fig. 6. One of the removable graphite moderator elements after operation in the MSRE, showing the fuel channel facing the center of the reactor. Machining marks are plainly visible in the fuel channel, showing excellent condition of the core block.

Good Candidates Exist for High-Temperature Metallic Components for AHTR

- Piping, valves, heat exchangers must function for long times at 1000°C in contact with both air and molten salt
- Pumps will need to survive to higher temperatures for short times and resist molten salt corrosion
- Materials considerations for service in AHTR
  - Corrosion, mass transfer, strength (long-term and short-term), thermal aging & embrittlement, irradiation degradation, fabricability, experience base & maturity, codification
- Stable high-strength, high-temperature materials with salt-resistant nickel coatings will likely work
  - Inconel 617, Haynes 230, Alloy 800 H, Hastelloy X or XR, VDM 602CA, HP modified, etc.
- Monolithic materials will require high nickel for salt resistance, plus sufficient high-temperature strength
  - Haynes 214, Cast Ni-based superalloys, ODS alloys (MA 754 and 956)
  - Alloys typically much less mature, hence codification will be required

Good Candidates Exist for High-Temperature Reactor Vessel Materials for the AHTR

- Pressure vessel must function for long times at 500°C
- Must survive higher temperatures (≈800°C) for short times (≈100hr) during accidents
- Considerations for service in AHTR
  - Corrosion, mass transfer, strength (long-term and short-term), thermal aging & embrittlement, irradiation degradation, high emissivity, fabricability, experience base & maturity, codification
- Stable, high-strength, high-temperature materials with salt-resistant nickel coatings will likely work
  - Advanced ferritic-martensitic steels have sufficient strength for normal operation–9Cr-1MoV
  - Excessive off-normal temperatures may require higher temperature alloys–304L, 316L, 347, Alloy 800H or HT
- Monolithic materials require high nickel for salt resistance, plus sufficient high-temperature strength
  - Alloy 800H or HT, Hastelloy N, Haynes 242
  - Codification may be required for specific product forms

Facility Design

AHTR: A Low-Pressure, High-Temperature Liquid-Cooled Reactor

Not a Point Design

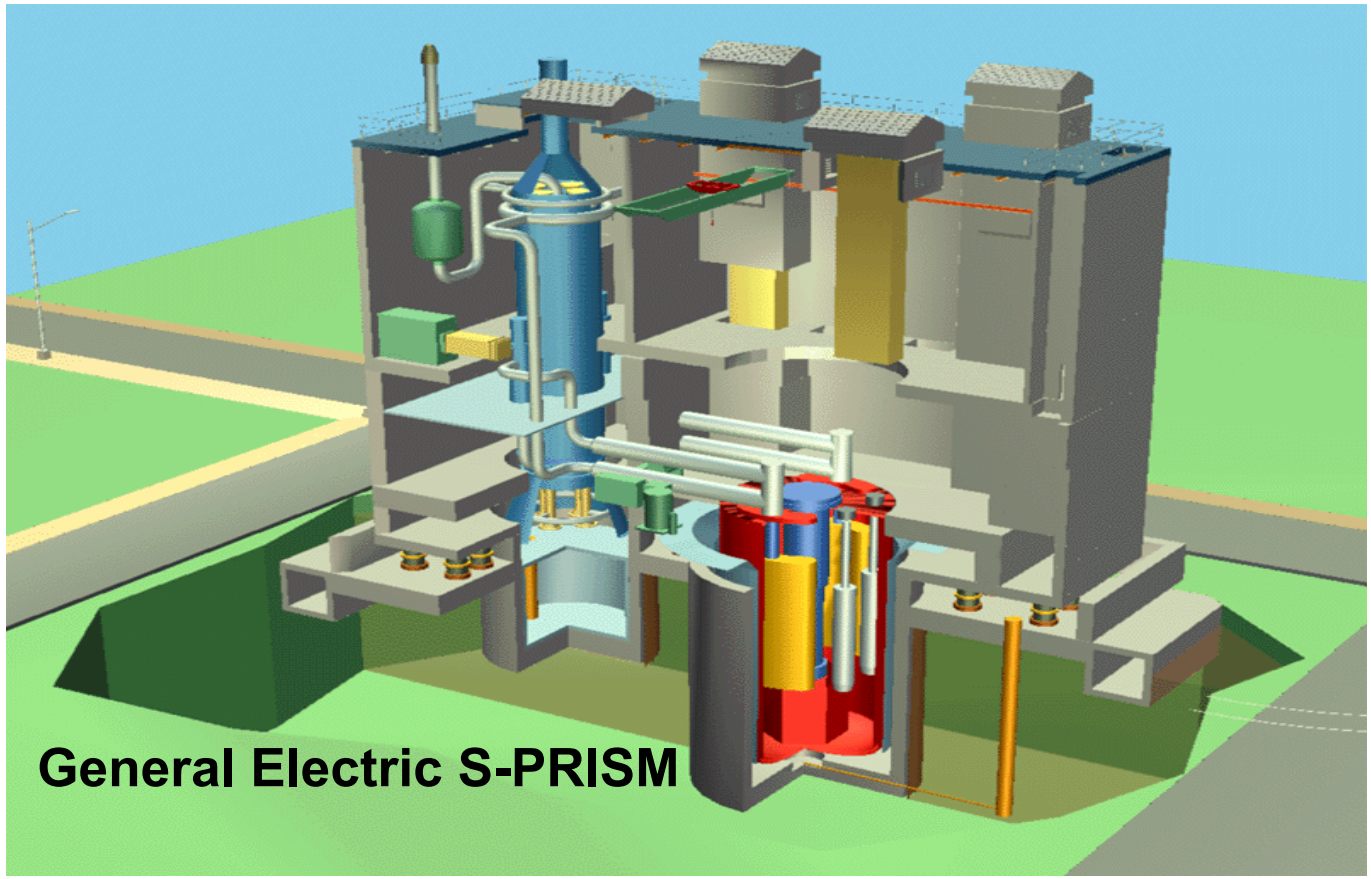
AHTR Parameters For 1000ºC Exit Temperature*

Power lever	2400 MW(t)		Core diameter	7.8 m
Core inlet/outlet temperature	900ºC/1000ºC		Core height	7.9 m
Core inlet/outlet pressures	0.230MPa/0.101 MPa		Fuel annulus	2.3 m
Core pressure drop	0.129 MPa (18.7 PSI)		Number of fuel columns	324
Coolant (several options)	$2LiF\text{-}BeF_2$		Number inner reflector columns	55
Coolant mass flow rate	12,070 kg/s (20% bypass)		Number outer reflector columns	138
Coolant volumetric flow rate	5.54 m^3/s		Fuel kernel	UCO
Coolant channel diameter	0.95 cm		Fuel enrichment	10.36 wt% ^{235}U
Coolant fraction (active core)	6.57%		Mean core power density	8.3 W/cm^3
Coolant velocity	2.32 m/s (7.6 ft/s)		Peak core power density	TBD W/cm^3
Core pumping power	716 kW		Reactivity, temperature	Negative Doppler
Vessel Pressure	~0.1 MPa		Reactivity, void (whole core)	TBD
Vessel external temperature			Mean fuel temperature	1050ºC
Vessel outside diameter	9.2 m		Peak fuel operating temperature	1168ºC
Vessel wall thickness	5-10 cm (material dependent)			
Net electric output	~1200 MW(e)			
Net plant efficiency	48-59%			

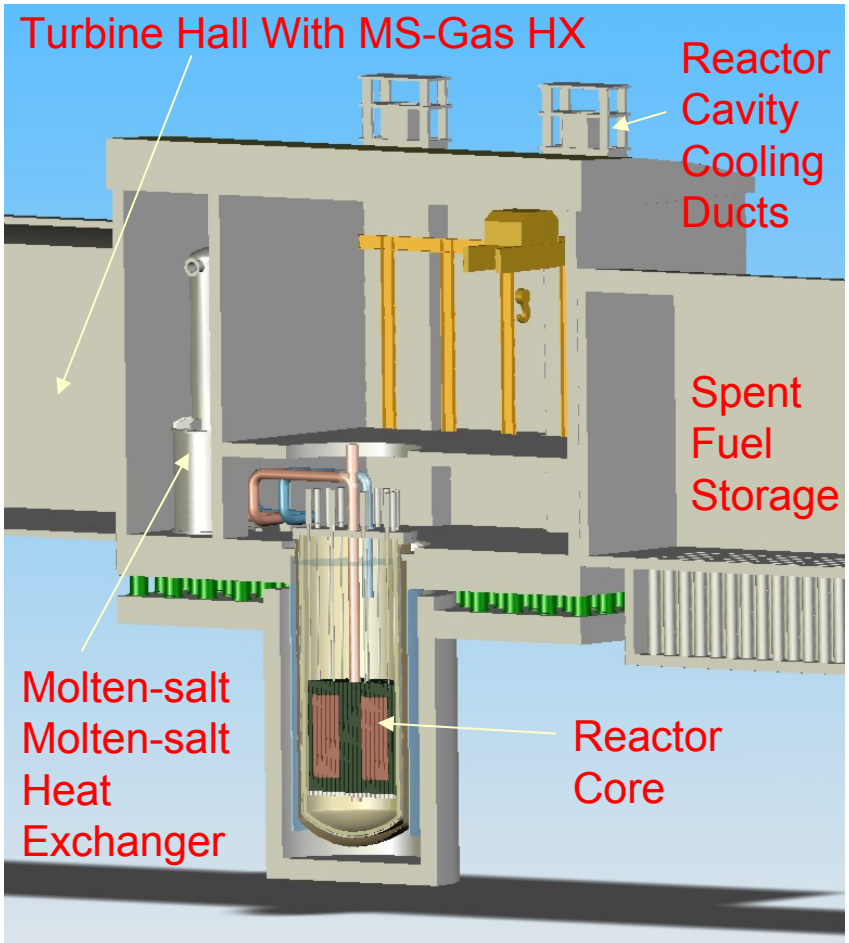
*Exit temperature dependent upon goals.
Range: 700 to 1100ºC

Proposed AHTR Facility Layouts Are Based on Sodium-Cooled Fast Reactors

Low-Pressure, High-Temperature, Liquid-Cooled

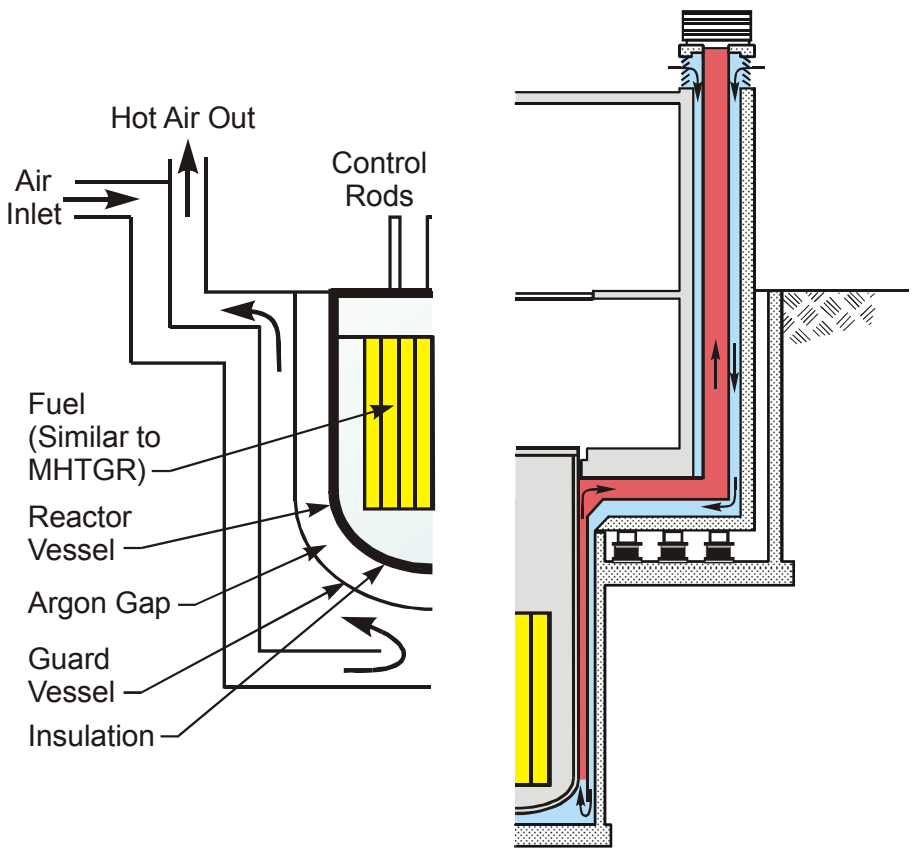


AHTR [2400 MW(t)] Nuclear Island Is Similar Size To S-PRISM [1000 MW(t)]



- **Differences from S-PRISM facility layout:**
  - **No SNF storage in vessel**
  - **No heat exchanger inside vessel**
  - **Molten salt-to-gas heat exchanger in turbine hall**
- **Same vessel size**
  - **Space for 2400 MW(t) AHTR core with low power density**
- **Similar Equipment Size**
  - **Molten salt (MS) volumetric heat capacity > sodium**
- **Higher capacity decay heat removal system**
  - **Higher vessel temperatures**
- **Higher electrical output**
  - **S-PRISM: 380 MW(e)**
  - **AHTR: >1200 MW(e) Higher temperatures)**

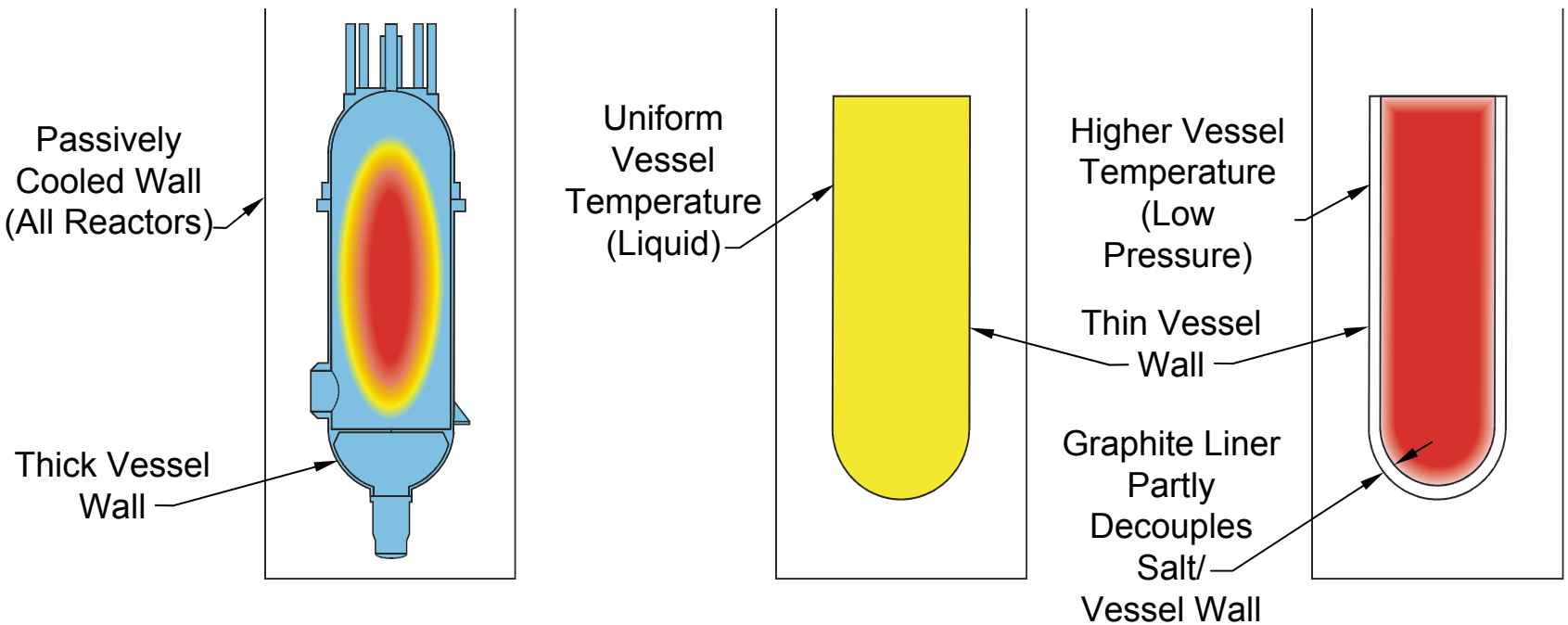
In an Emergency, Decay Heat Is Transferred to the Reactor Vessel and Then to the Environment



- Similar to GE S-PRISM (LMR)
- Argon Gap
  - Heat Transfer ~T^4
  - Thermal Switch Mechanism
- Heat Rejection: Temperature Dependent
  - LMR: 500-550ºC [~1000 Mw(t)]
  - AHTR: 750-1000ºC [>2000 Mw(t)]
- High Heat Capacity
  - Molten Salt and Graphite
  - High Temperature (Limited-Insulation of Vessel from Hot Salt)

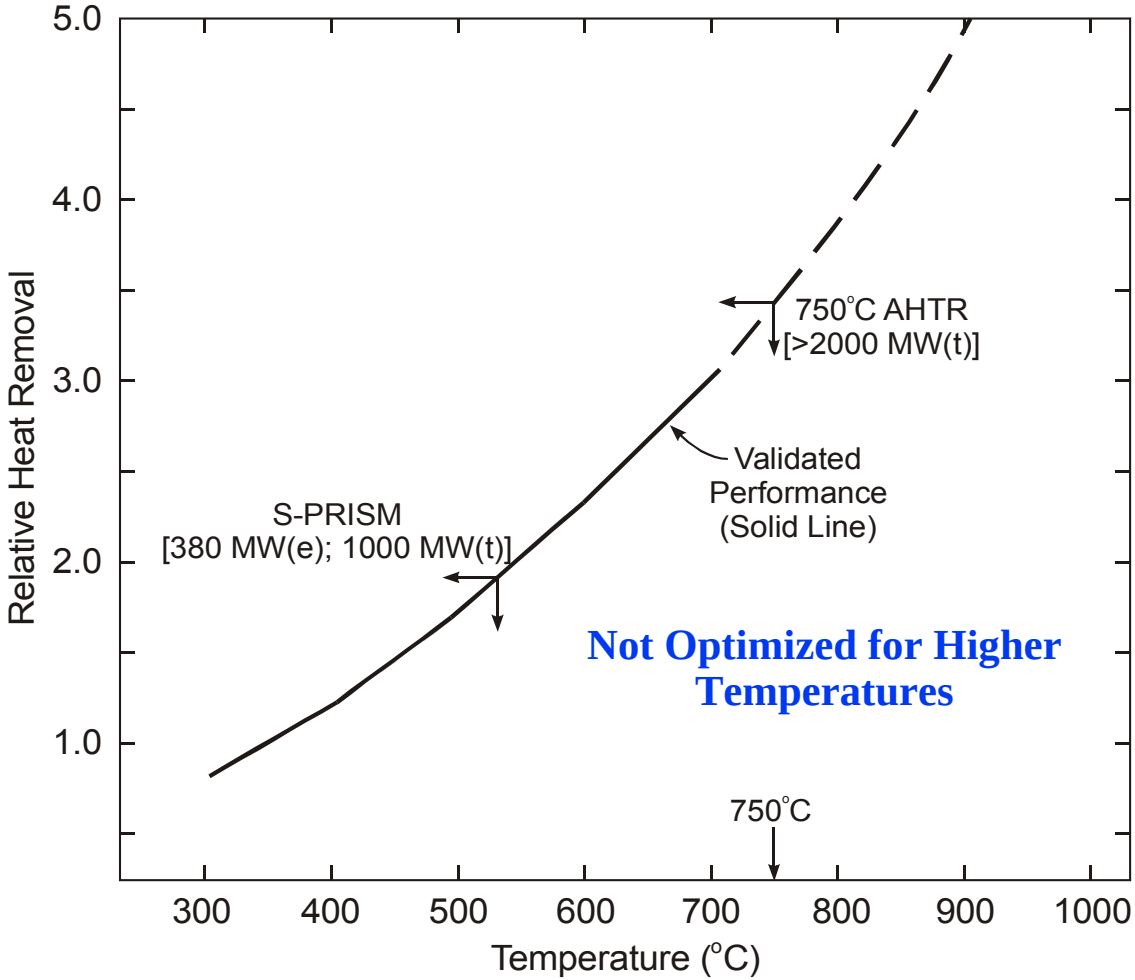
High-Temperature Low-Pressure Liquid Coolants Enable the Design of Large Reactors with Passive Safety

Reactor	MHTGR	S-Prism	AHTR
Coolant	Helium	Sodium	Molten Salt
Power	600 MW(t)	1000 MW(t)	>2000 MW(t)
Limitation	Conduction	Sodium Boiling Point	Vessel

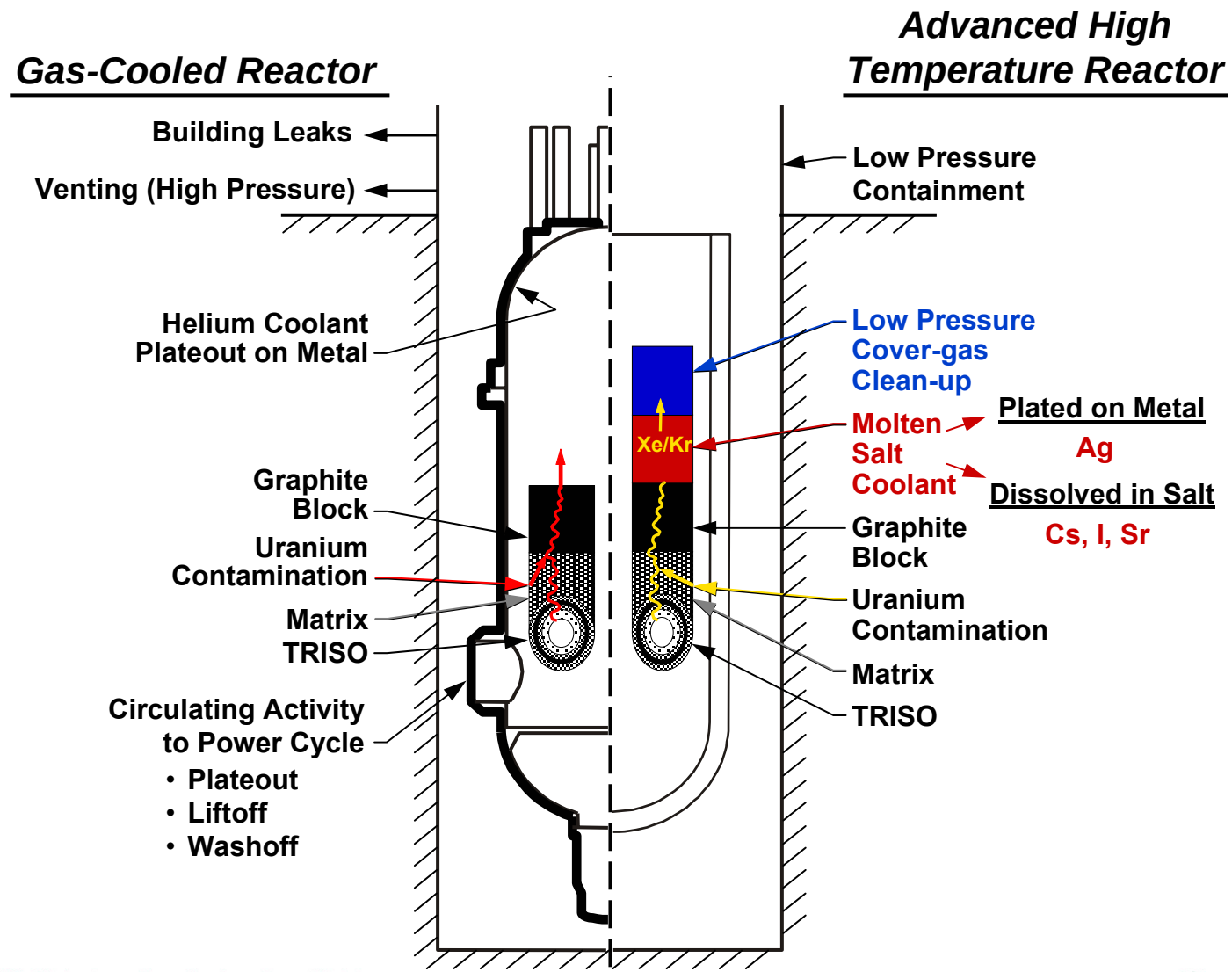


Decay Heat Removal Increases Rapidly with Temperature

(S-PRISM Vessel with Air-Cooled System)

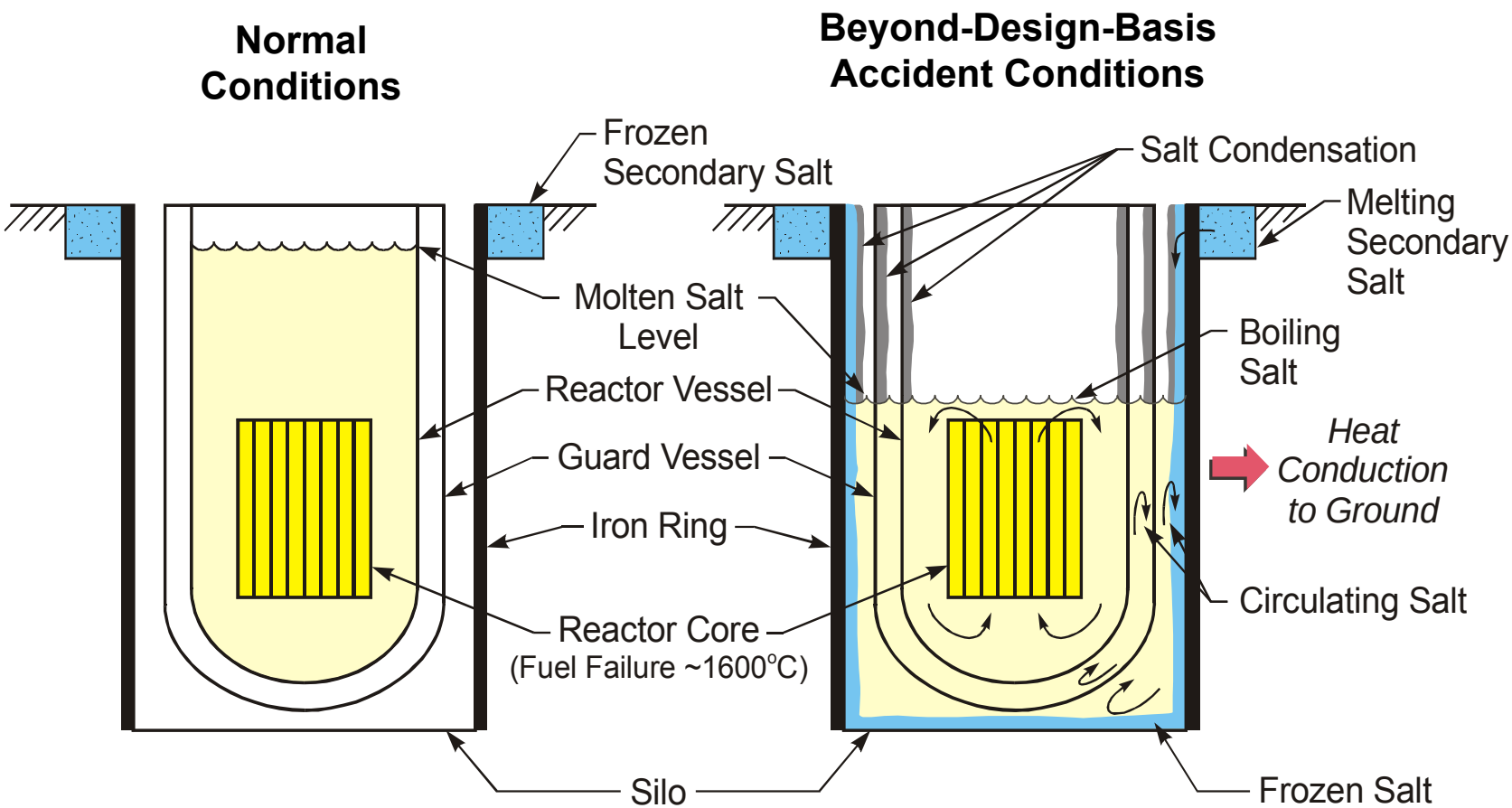


The AHTR Offers Potentially Superior Fission Product Containment Compared To Gas-Cooled Reactors



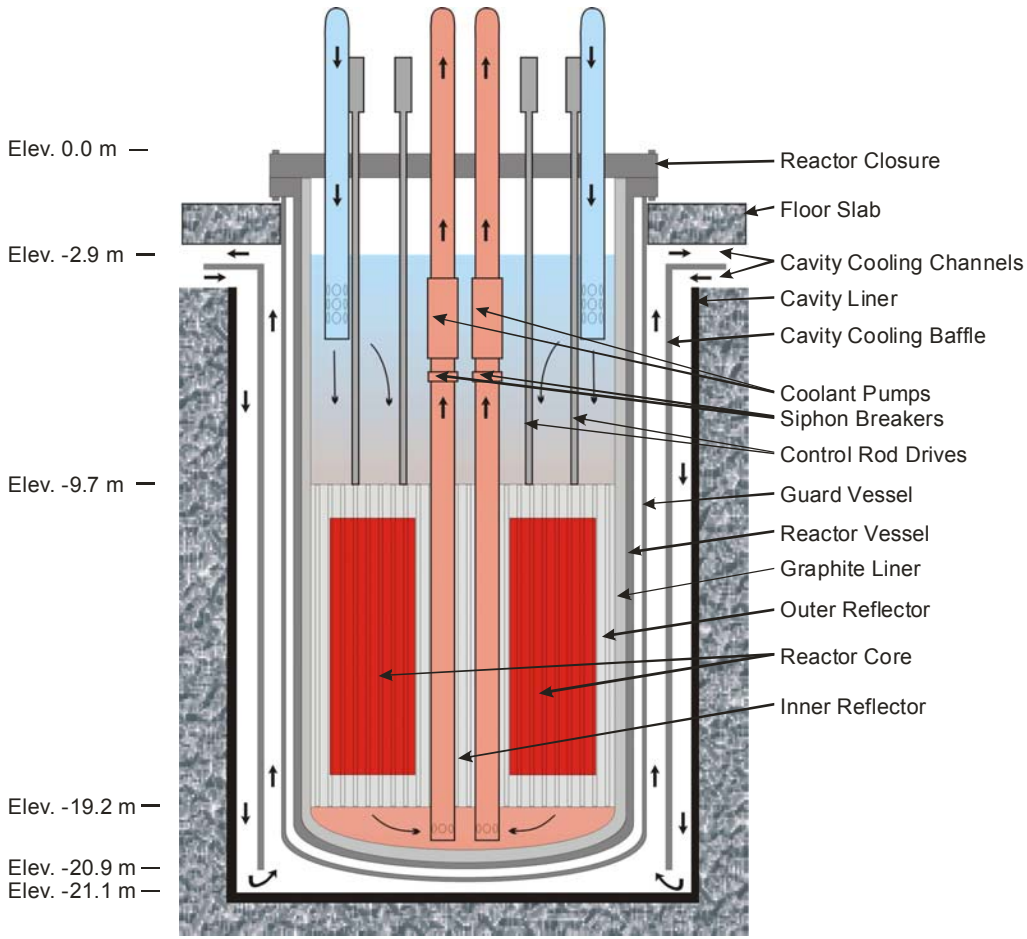
Beyond-Design-Basis Accident Avoids Radionuclide Release By Multiple Mechanisms

Molten Salts Trap Radionuclides (Including Cs and I) in the Salt, Isolate SNF from Air, Can Not pressurize Containment, and Transfer Heat to the Silo If Vessel Failure

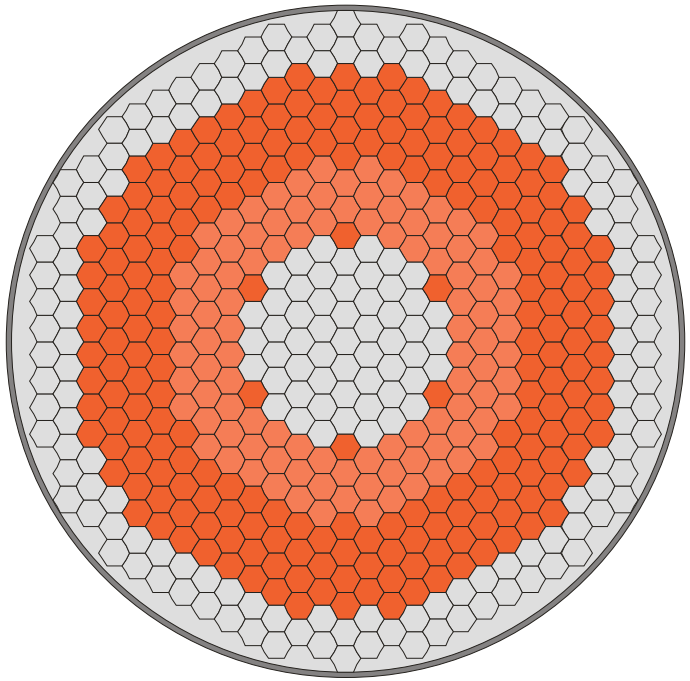


Reactor Core Design

AHTR 9.0m Vessel Allows 2400 MW(t) Core

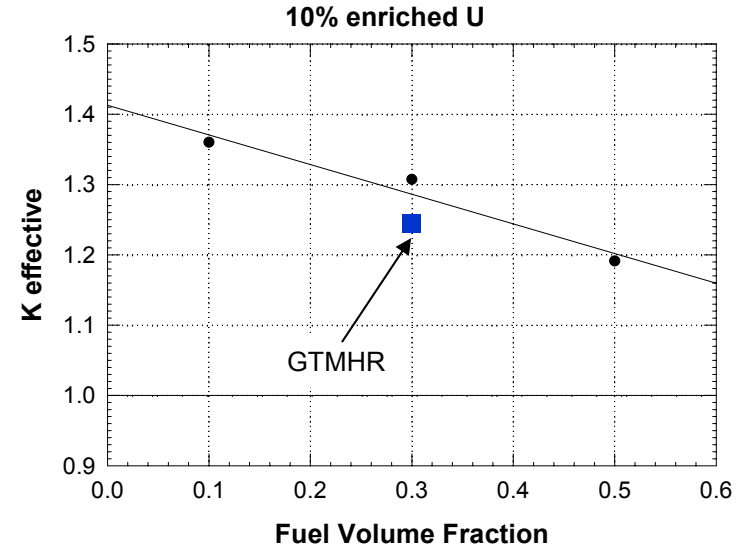


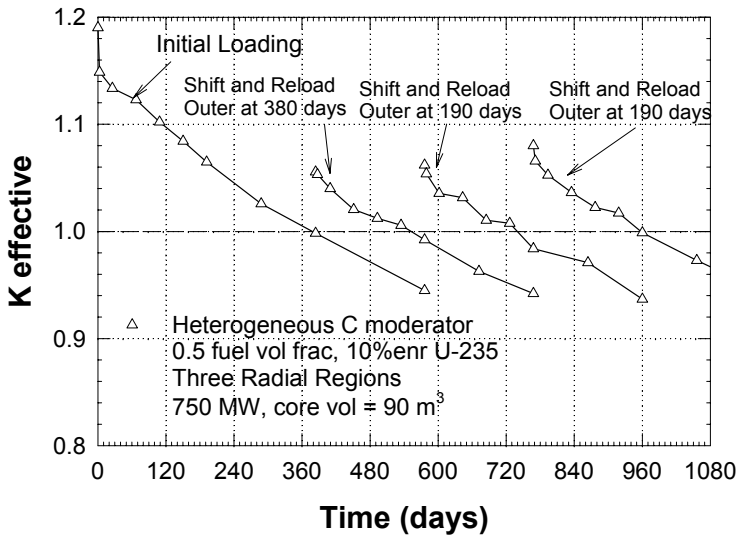
102 Original fuel columns
222 Additional fuel columns
324 Total fuel columns



Power density = 8.3 MW/m^3
(26% larger than 600 MW GT-MHR)

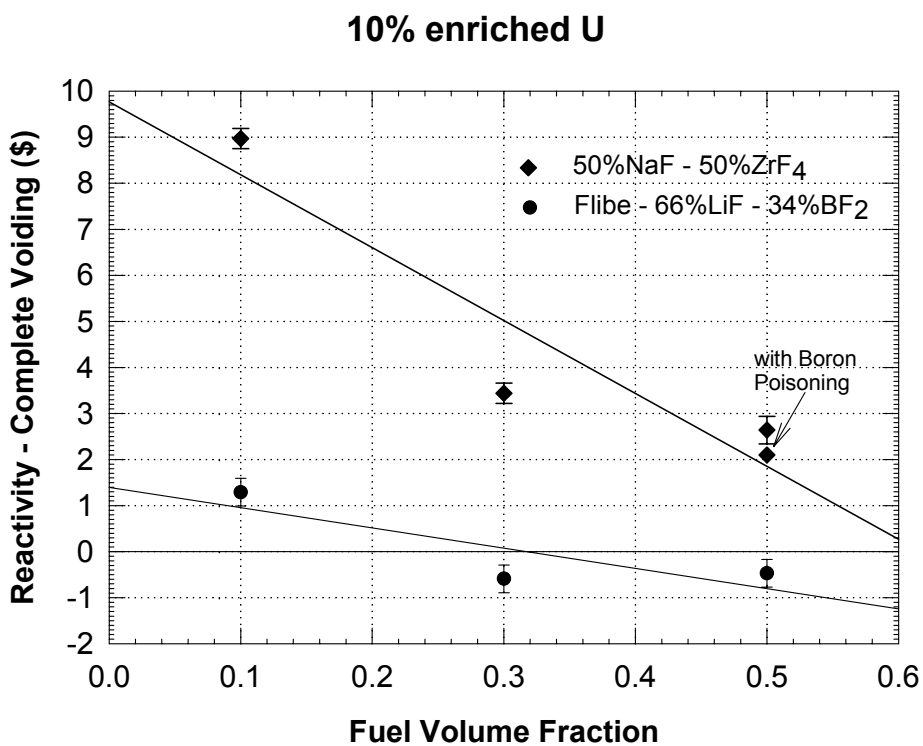
AHTR And Gas-Cooled Reactors Have Similar Neutronics





- Excess reactivity similar for given core loading
- Lower coolant volume fraction
- Neutron lifetime ~1ms
- k_{eff} increases with higher moderator to fuel ratio (undermoderated in design region)
- Large negative temperature feedback due to Doppler effects (~ -$0.01/K)
- Similar fuel burnup/ fuel cycle options
- At 8.3 W/cm^3, core life is ~ 580 days
  - 10% enrichment
  - 0.5 fuel volume fraction

AHTR Void Coefficient Depends on Salt Composition and Configuration

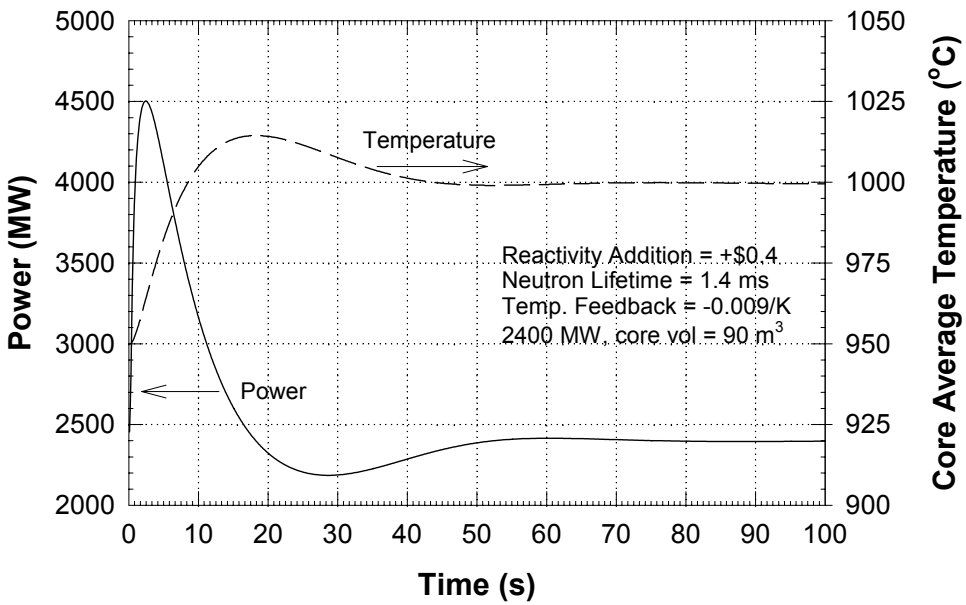


SNL Model

- Void coefficient ranges from negative to positive, depending on coolant fraction and salt choice
- 66%^{7}LiF/33%BeF_2 negative for higher fuel fractions
- 50%NaF/50%ZrF_4 most positive of salt options
- 1st order effect is absorption, 2nd order effect is moderation
- Ranking – Be,^{7}Li, Mg, Zr, Na
- Design options may allow use of several salts
  - Coolant fraction
  - Heterogeneous core design
  - Burnable absorbers
  - Isotopic purity
  - Fuel loading/enrichment

Implications of AHTR Designs With Positive Void Coefficients

Example: Na-Zr Salt (worst salt) with 20% Flow Blockage: +$0.40 Instantaneous Reactivity Insertion



- Core power increases but is mitigated by increase in fuel temp of ~60°C.
- Relatively slow transient (10's of sec).
- Core reaches lower equilibrium power – issue is heat-up of blocked fuel columns (~9 °C/sec)

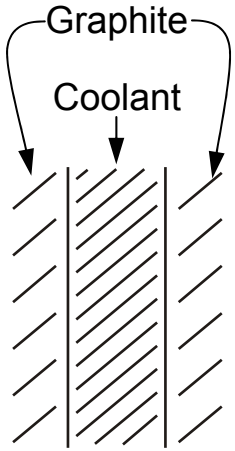
- Effects can be mitigated by:
  - Salt Composition
  - Coolant Volume
  - Burnable Poison
  - Fission Product Poisoning
  - Fuel Fraction
  - Enrichment
  - Core Geometry
    - Parfait
    - Heterogeneous cores

- Positive effects are limited in reactivity, and would be confined to local effects due to coolant channel blockage

Void Coefficients Can Be Reduced or Made Negative By Several Methods

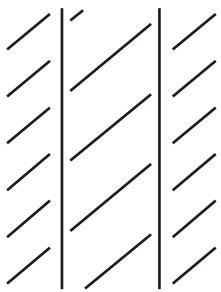
(Example: Addition of Neutron Absorbers to the Graphite Moderator)

Potential for Positive Void Coefficient



$$\left(\frac{\text{Absorber}}{\text{Moderator}}\right)_{\text{Coolant}} > \left(\frac{\text{Absorber}}{\text{Moderator}}\right)_{\text{Graphite}}$$

Negative Void Coefficient



$$\left(\frac{\text{Absorber}}{\text{Moderator}}\right)_{\text{Coolant}} < \left(\frac{\text{Absorber}}{\text{Moderator}}\right)_{\text{Graphite}}$$

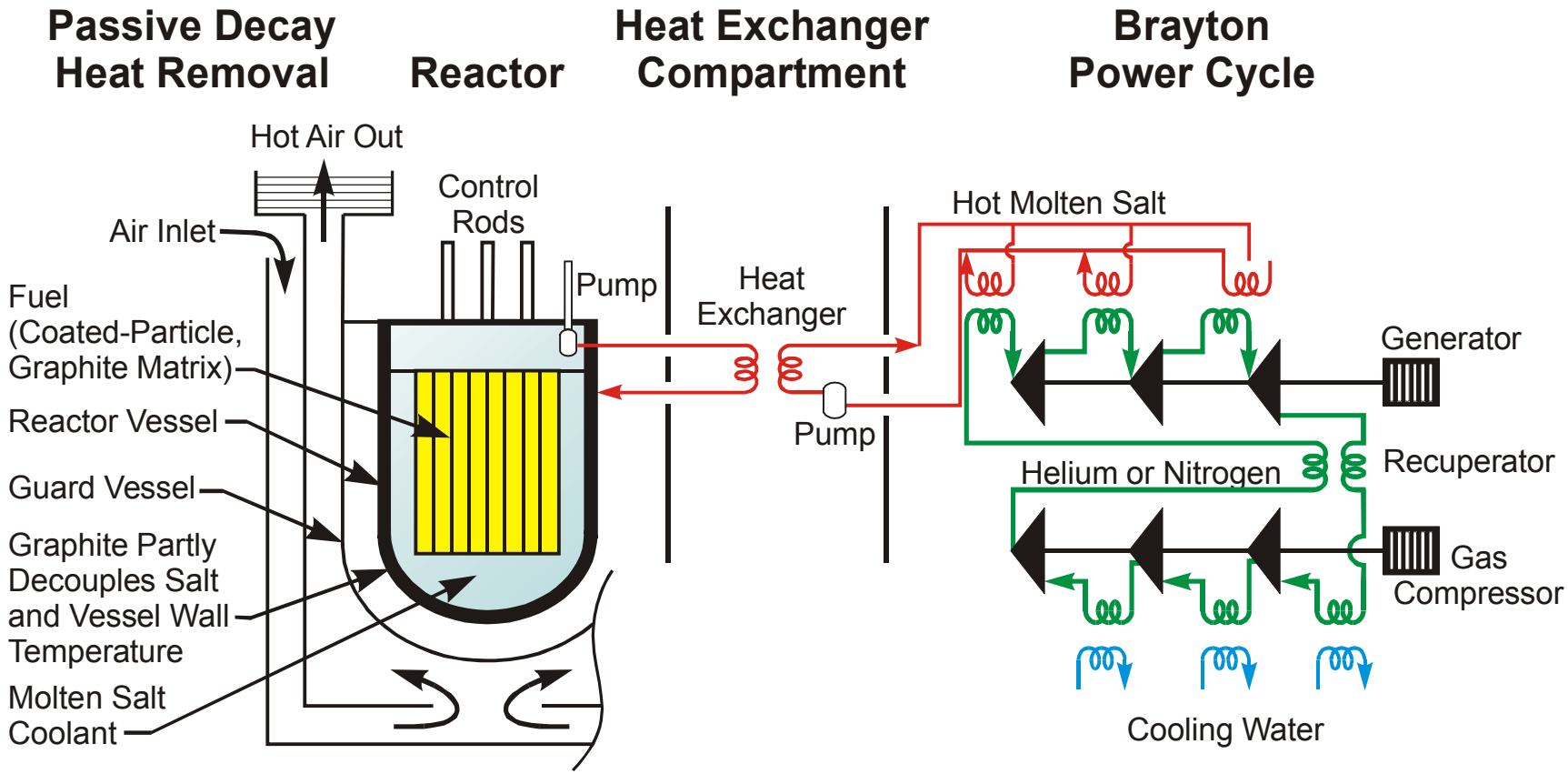
- Positive void coefficients can occur when the neutron absorption to scattering ratio is higher in the liquid than the graphite
  - Salt dependent
  - Geometry dependent
- Addition of neutron absorber to graphite increases graphite absorption/scattering ratio
- Penalty in enrichment but AHTR is thermally more efficient than an LWR
- Complex geometric effects that strongly impact void coefficient

Energy Conversion

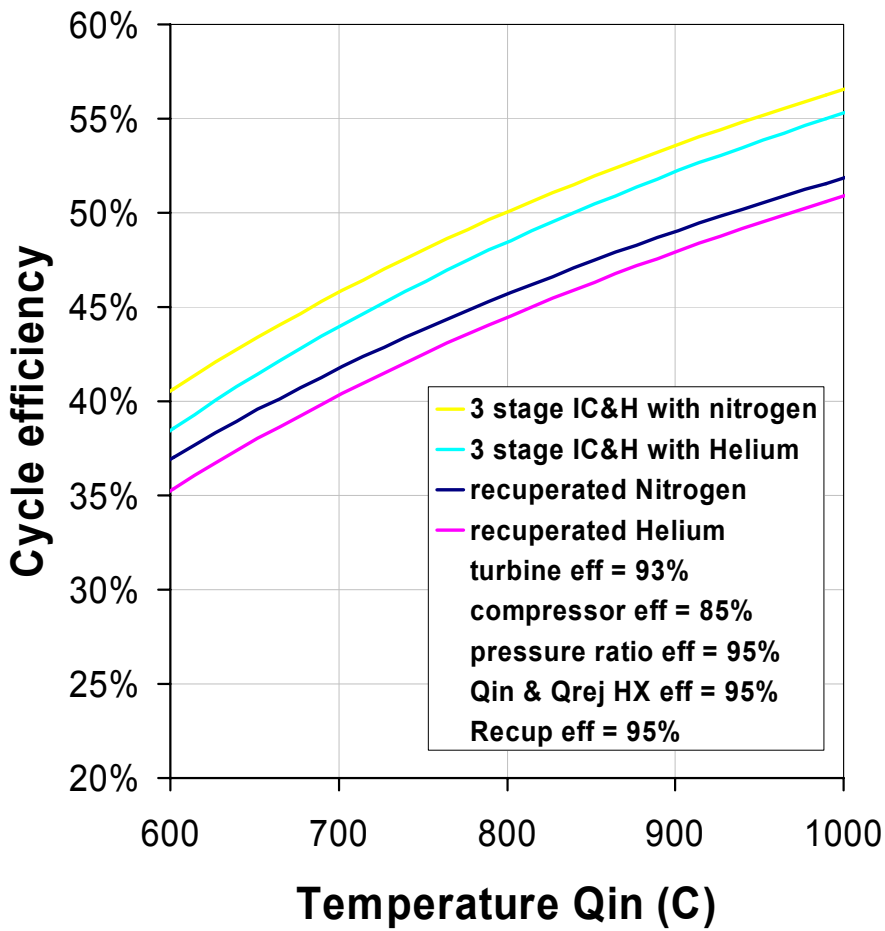
Electricity

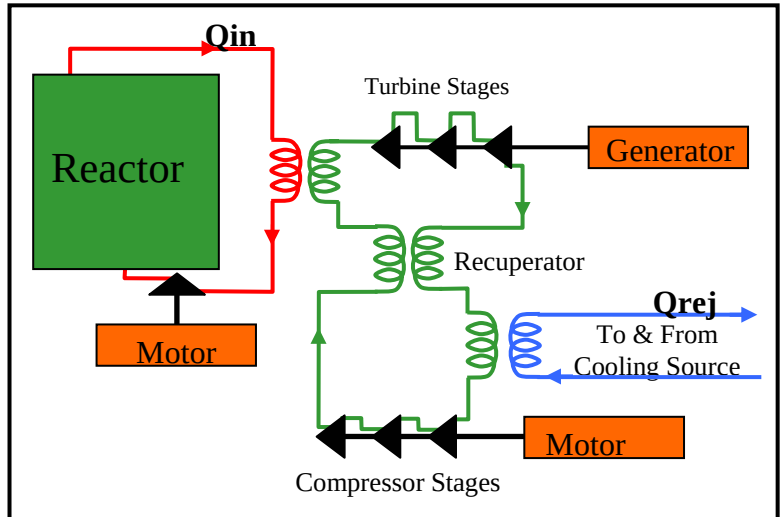
Hydrogen

A *Multi-Reheat* Brayton Cycle Is Used for Efficient Electricity Production

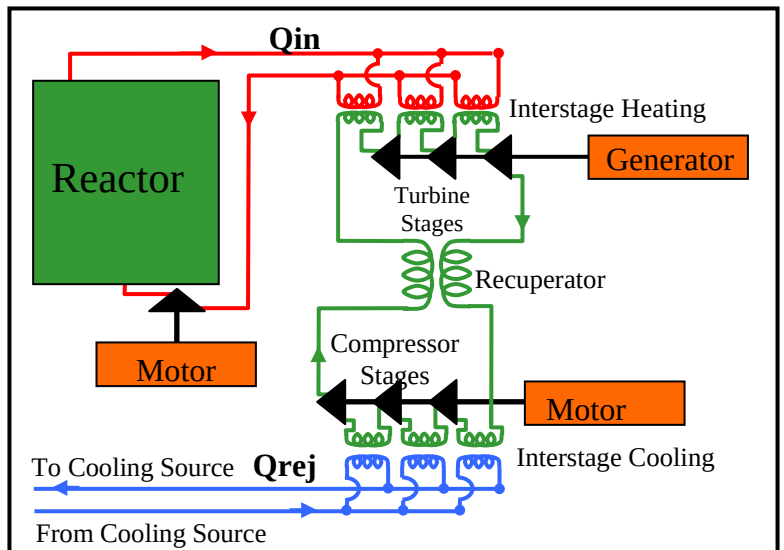


Nitrogen and Helium Brayton Cycle Options Can be Considered for AHTR





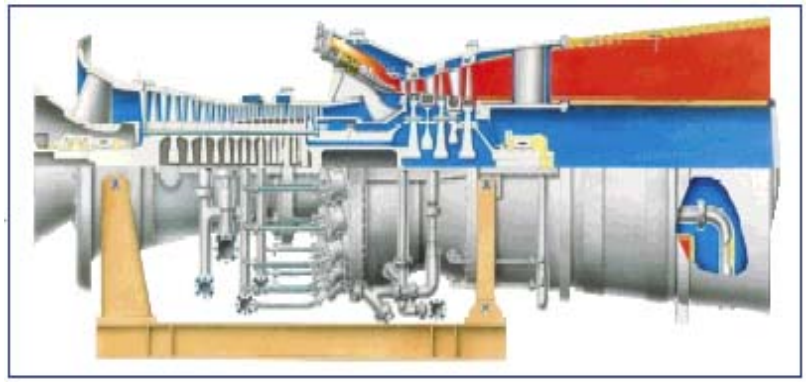
Recuperated Brayton cycle

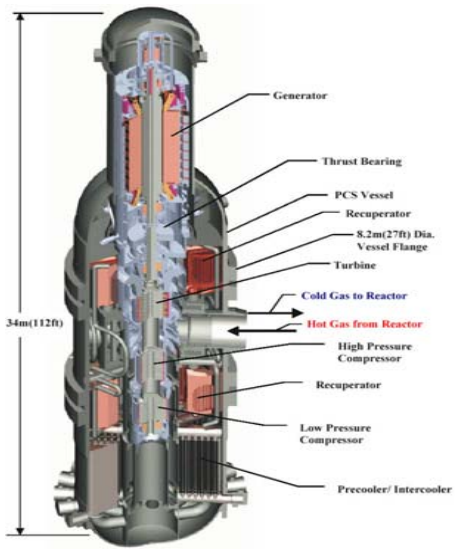


Interstage heated & cooled cycle

Near Term: Use Nitrogen (with Minor Amounts of Helium) Brayton Cycle

- Same turbine technology as existing natural-gas-fired turbines
  - Lower temperatures than current commercial units
  - Option for small amounts of helium to improve thermal properties (reduce heat exchanger size)
  - Higher power density because low pressure (0.5-1.0 MPa) in the power cycle is not at 1 atm. (0.1 MPa)
- Helium Brayton Cycle
  - Second-generation option
  - Use if developed for helium-cooled reactor
- Minimize technical risk and development cost with little penalty

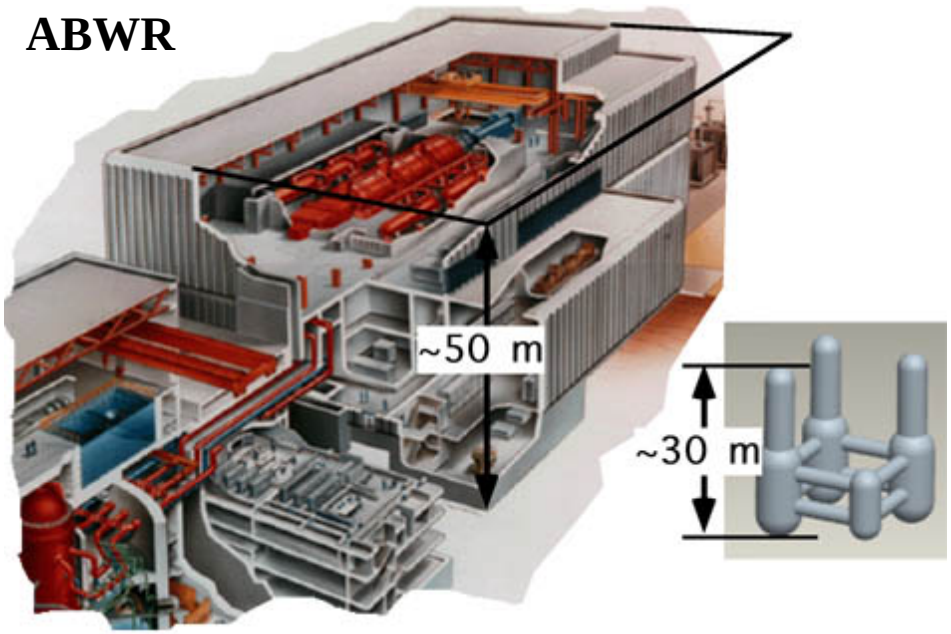




Above: GE Power Systems MS7001FB

Left: GT-MHR PCU (Russian Design)

Scaled Comparison of the 1380 MW(e) ABWR Turbine Building and ~1300 MW(e) AHTR



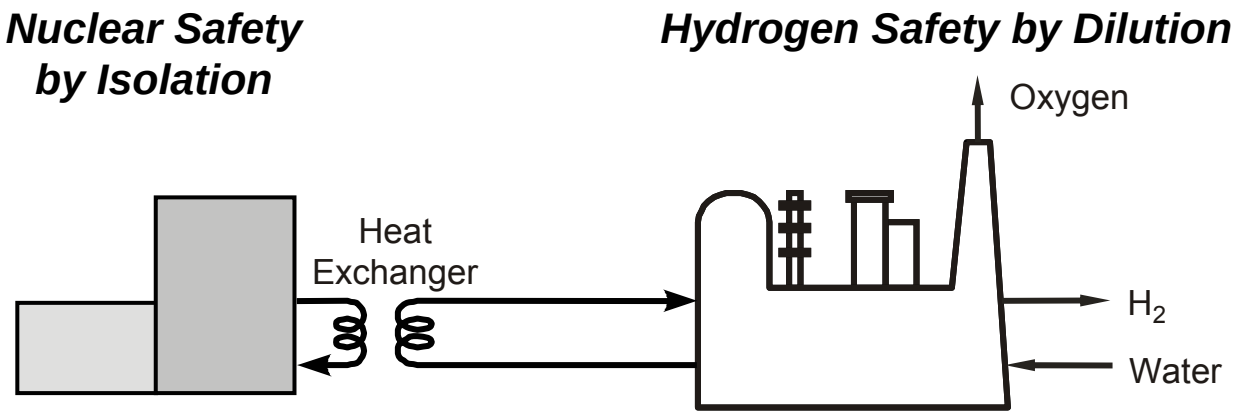
Advanced helium Brayton cycles can likely achieve a substantial reduction of the turbine building volume

He-Brayton Cycle With 3 Power Conversion Units Similar to GT-MHR

- **AHTR turbine building must also contain crane, turbine lay-down space, compressed gas storage, and cooling water circulation equipment**
- **AHTR requires ~1100 MW(t) of cooling water capacity, compared to 2800 MW(t) for ABWR; no low pressure turbines (steam)**

Hydrogen Production May Require Development of Molten Salt Coolant Technology

(AHTR Better Couples to Such Systems)



- **Smaller system (1 molten salt loop = 25 Helium loops)**
  - **Lower heat loses**
  - **Lower costs**
- **Chemical plant safety (German chemical industry evaluation)**
  - **No compressed-gas energy**
  - **Avoid toxic chemical release if heat exchanger failure**

ECONOMICS

Larger Reactors Have the Potential for Lower Capital and Operating Costs

Initial Cost Analysis Shows That AHTR Economics Is Favorable

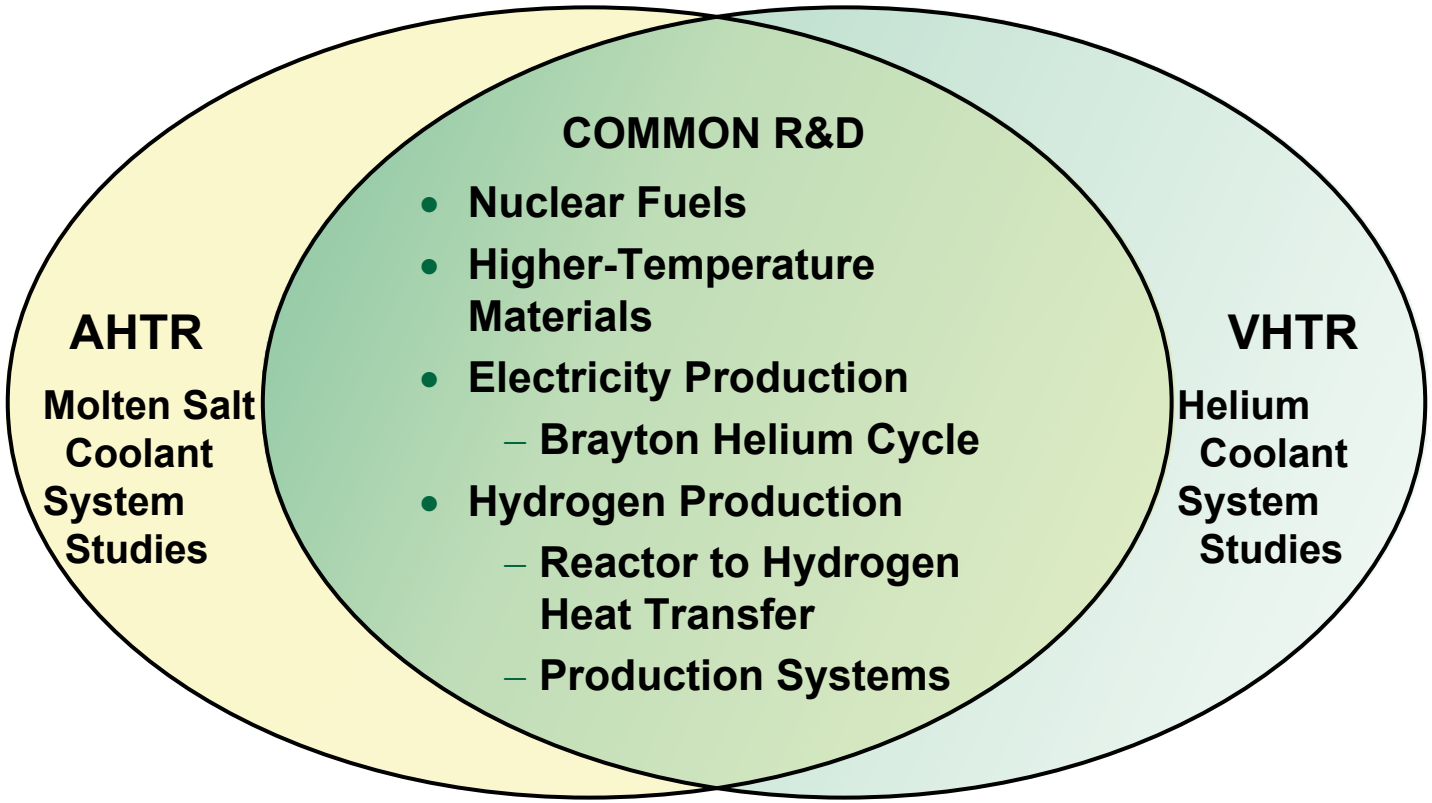
- Used scaled cost data from S-PRISM and GT-MHR
  - S-PRISM for reactor, construction, engineering, and contingency
  - GT-MHR for power conversion and heat rejection systems
- Included several cost elements for reactor, power conversion, and balance of plant systems
- Standard scaling laws used to normalize all three reactors to 2400 MW(t)
- Indicates that AHTR will be 60 to 75% of S-PRISM costs (large uncertainties) and potentially even better economics than MHTGRs.

Research And Development

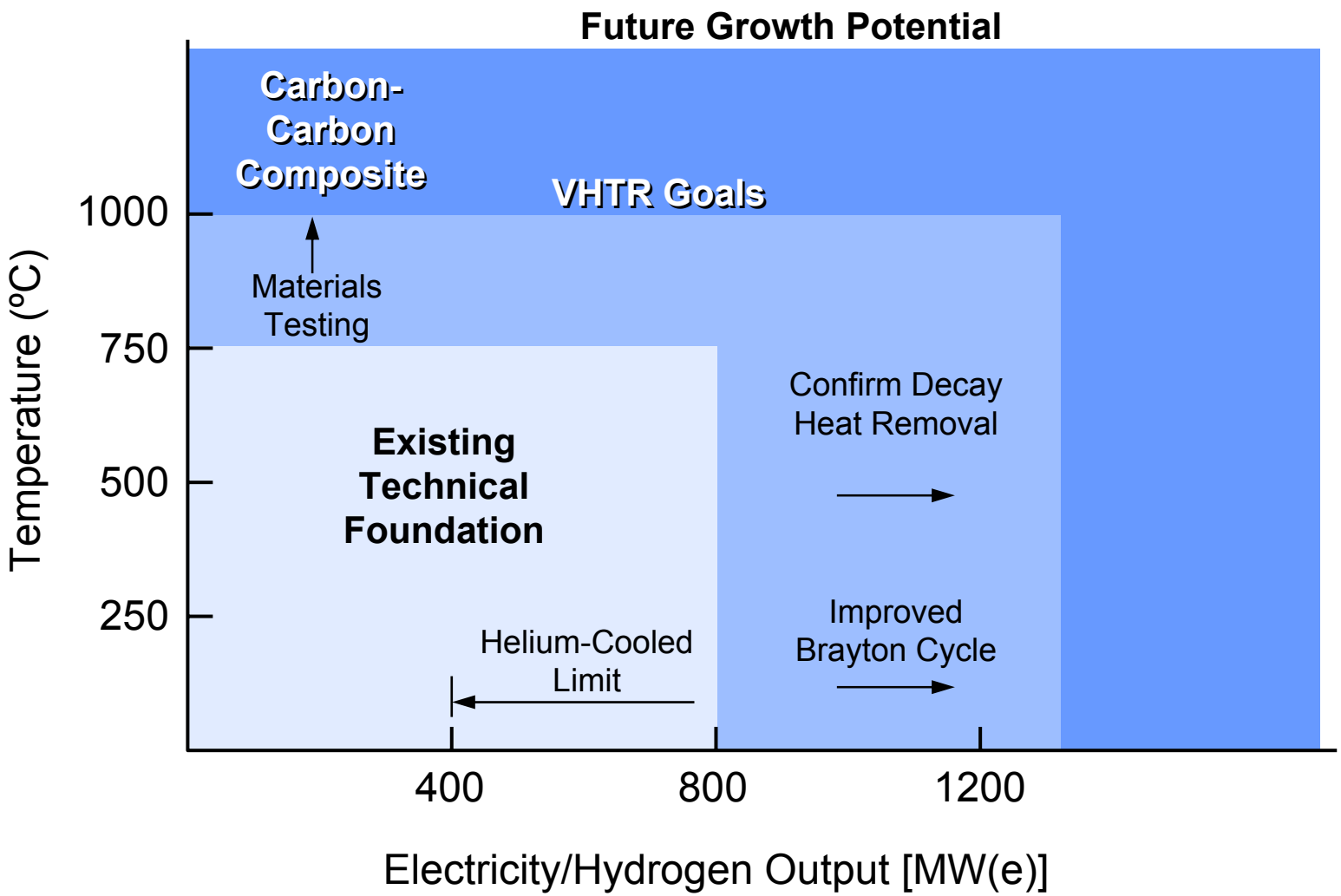
Massive Overlap with Other High-Temperature Reactors

Some Unique Issues

The R&D Requirements for the Molten-Salt-Cooled AHTR and Helium-Cooled VHTR Have Much In Common: Short List of Unique Issues

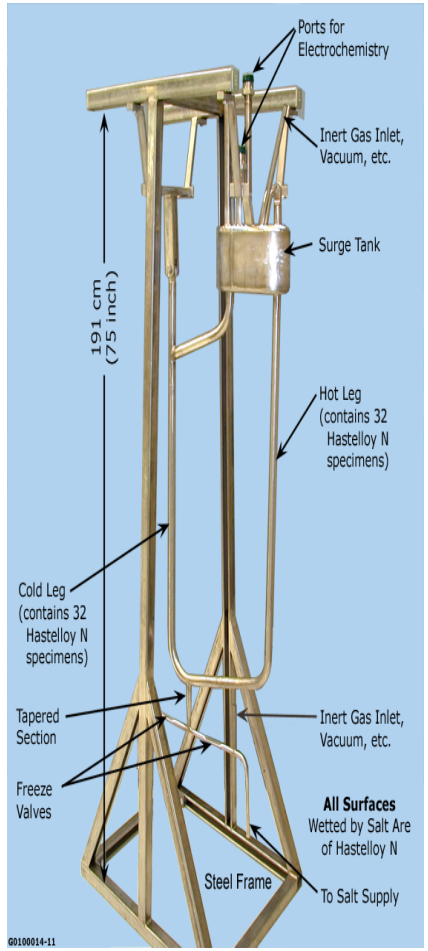


Global AHTR R&D Perspective



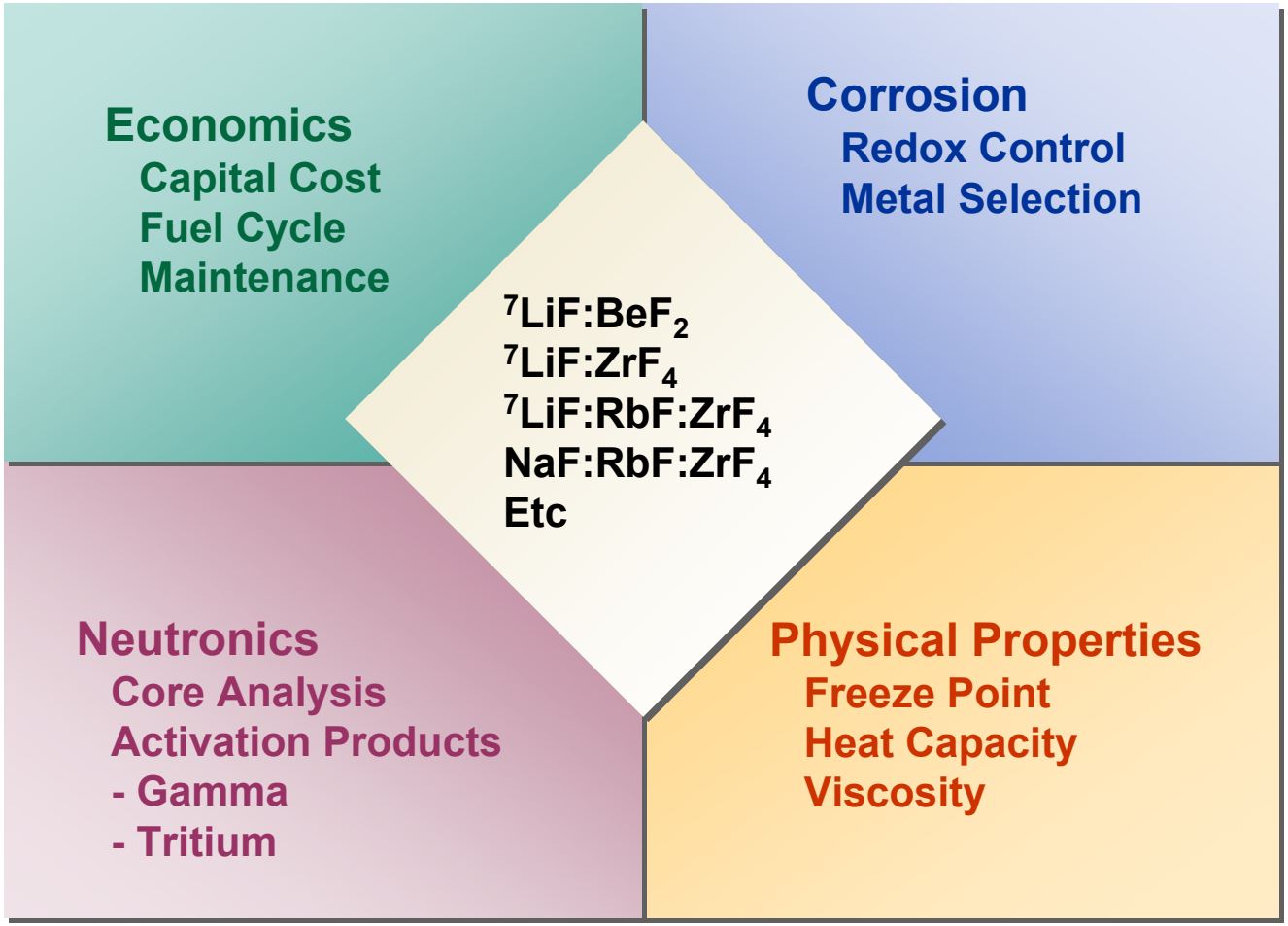
Materials Are the Primary Challenge

- **Metals**
  - **Available to 750°C**
  - **Require testing and qualification of materials to >1000°C in molten salt flow loops**
  - **Multi-year effort**
- **Carbon-carbon composites**
  - **Option for heat exchangers?**
- **Fuels**
  - **Same developmental issues as for helium-cooled VHTR**



3000 hours at 815°C with minimal corrosion by fluoride salt (Williams: Global 2003)

Molten Salt Trade Studies Required To Define The Optimum Composition



Several Other Unique R&D Areas

- High-temperature performance of decay-heat cooling systems
  - Controls ultimate size of the reactor
  - Several options
- Systems to avoid salt freezing
  - Chemical industry practice
  - Molten-salt-fueled reactor experience and testing
  - Lead- and sodium-cooled reactor practice
- Plant design (Integration of multiple technologies)
- Choice of demonstration plant size

AHTR Conclusions

- Attractive features compared to gas-cooled reactors
  - Increased power output (economics)
  - Improved compatibility with hydrogen production
  - Increased flexibility in choice of Brayton cycles
  - Reduced fuel temperatures and requirements
  - Improved capture/retention of fission products
- Challenges
  - Point design
    - Salt selection
    - Decay heat removal system
    - Core design
  - Materials for higher-temperature operations
  - High melting temperatures

NOTES/BACKUP

Notes In Same Sequence As Talk

Project Team

Principal Investigators:

Charles Forsberg, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Per Peterson, University of California-Berkeley
Paul Pickard, Sandia National Laboratories

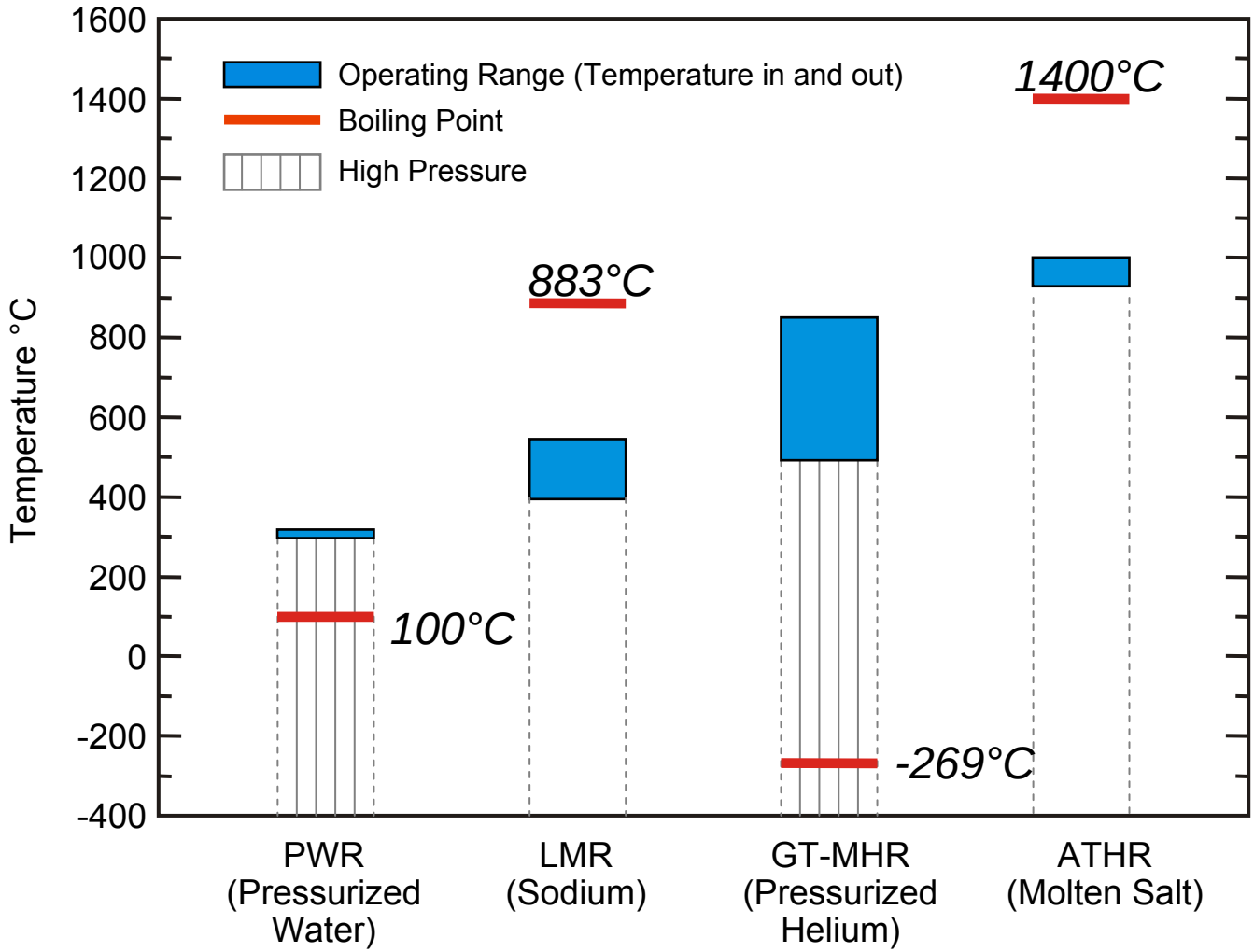
Contributors:

Oak Ridge National Laboratory: Dan Ingersoll, Dave Williams, Dane Wilson, Bill Corwin, Lowell Reid, John-Paul Renier, Larry Ott, Syd Ball, Joel Chesser

Sandia National Laboratories: Ed Parma, Milton Vernon

University of California-Berkeley: HaiHua Zhao

The AHTR Operates at Atmospheric Pressure with Small Temperature Drops across the Reactor Core



Molten Fluoride Salt Coolant Data

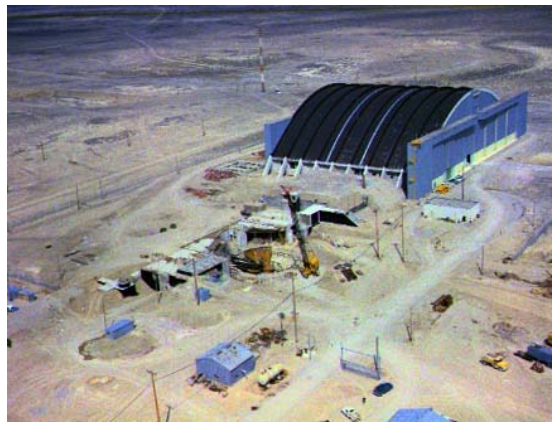
The Billion-Dollar (1950s) Aircraft Nuclear Reactor Propulsion Program Developed Molten Salt Systems for Reactor Applications

[Molten Salt Reactor (Fuel Dissolved In Coolant) For Jet Bomber]

INEEL Shielded Aircraft Hangar

←Hot Cell

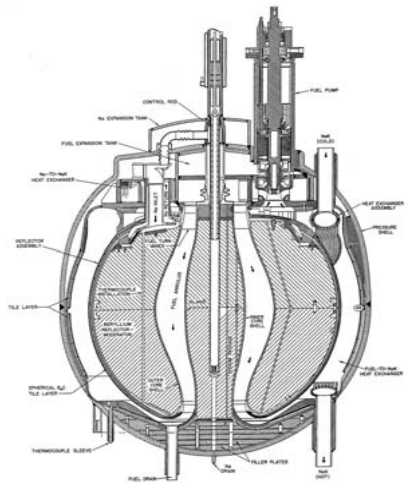
External Views→



ORNL Nuclear Reactor

Aircraft Reactor Experiment: First Molten Salt Reactor; 2.5 MW; 882ºC Fuel Salt: Na/Zr Fluoride

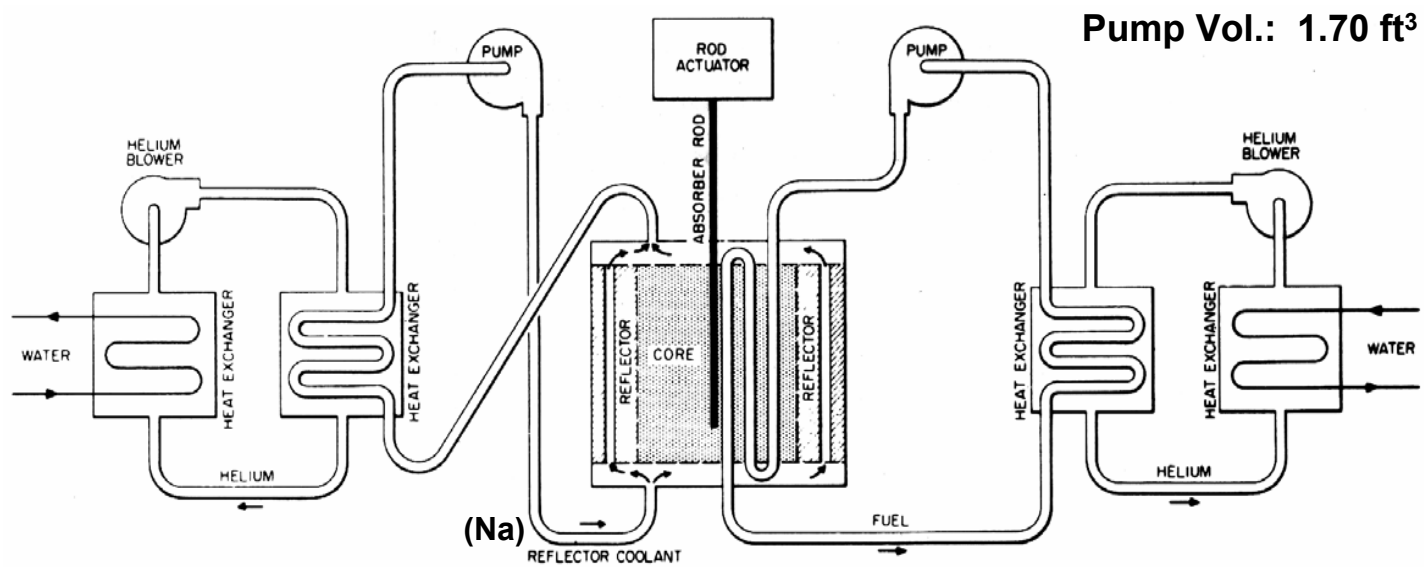
Goal: 60 MW(t); 873ºC; Diameter: 56 inch→



Aircraft Reactor Experiment (ARE) Successfully Demonstrated Molten Salt Reactor Technology in 1954

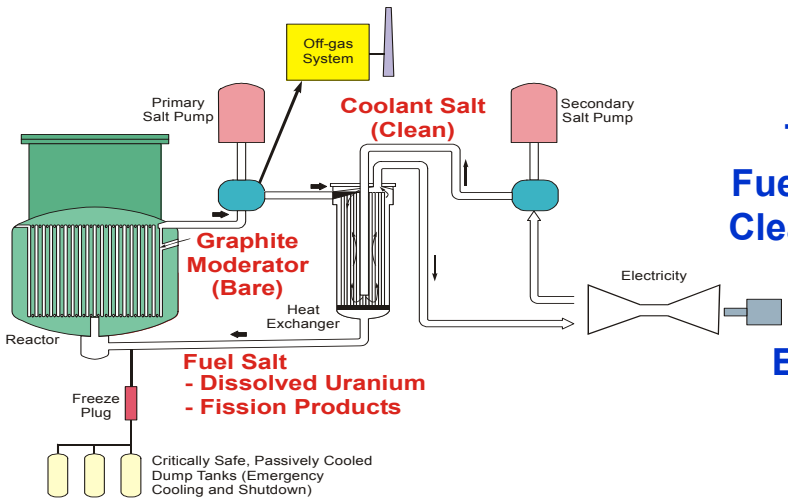
- Fuel: $NaF-ZrF_4-UF_4$ (53-41-6) (mole %)
- Sodium intermediate heat transfer loop
- Operated > 100Mw-h (2.5 MW(t)) for 2 months
- Max. fuel temp. 882°C; Material - Inconel
- Very large neg. temp. coeff (-6.1E-5)

Core Vol.: 1.37 ft^3
Loop Vol.: 3.60 ft^3
Pump Vol.: 1.70 ft^3



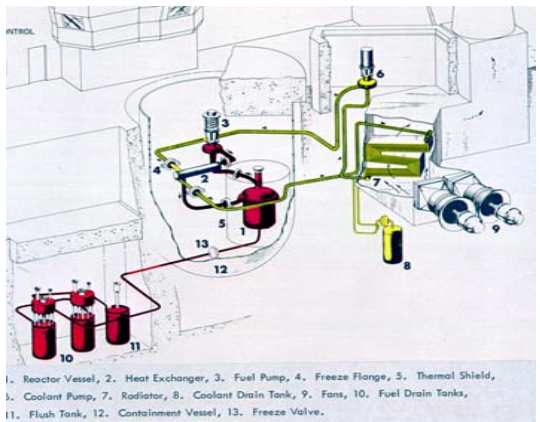
The Molten Salt Breeder Reactor Program Further Developed Molten Salt Technology

(Included Clean Molten Salt Intermediate Heat Transfer Loop)



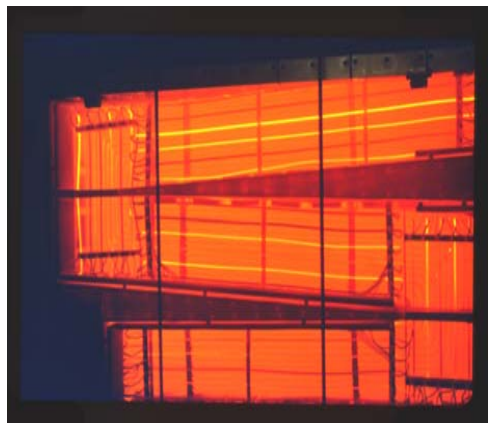
←Concept
T_{exit} = 705ºC
Fuel Salt: ^{7}Li/Be/F
Clean Salt: Na/B/F

Reactor Experimental Building→



←Test Reactor Layout
Operated at 8 MW(t)
18,000 Hours Critical

Air-Cooled Heat Exchangers during Operation→



The Molten Salt Reactor Experiment Demonstrated Molten Salt Fueled Reactors And Intermediate Clean-Salt Heat-Transfer Loops

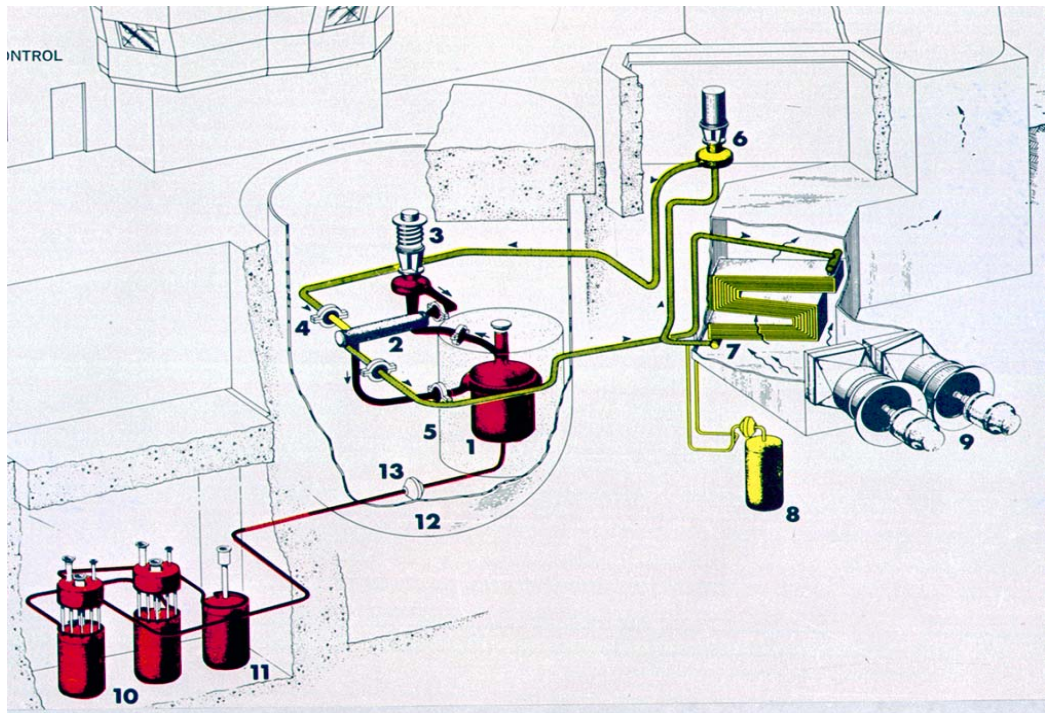
Hours critical	17,655
Circulating fuel loop time hours	21,788
Equiv. full power hrs w/ ^{235}U fuel	9,005
Equiv. full power hrs w/ ^{233}U fuel	4,167

U-235 fuel operation

- Critical — June 1, 1965
- Full power — May 23, 1966
- End operation — Mar 26, 1968

U-233 fuel operation

- Critical — Oct 2, 1968
- Full power — Jan 28, 1969
- Reactor shutdown — Dec 12, 1969



1. Reactor Vessel, 2. Heat Exchanger, 3. Fuel Pump, 4. Freeze Flange, 5. Thermal Shield, 6. Coolant Pump, 7. Radiator, 8. Coolant Drain Tank, 9. Fans, 10. Fuel Drain Tanks, 11. Flush Tank, 12. Containment Vessel, 13. Freeze Valve.

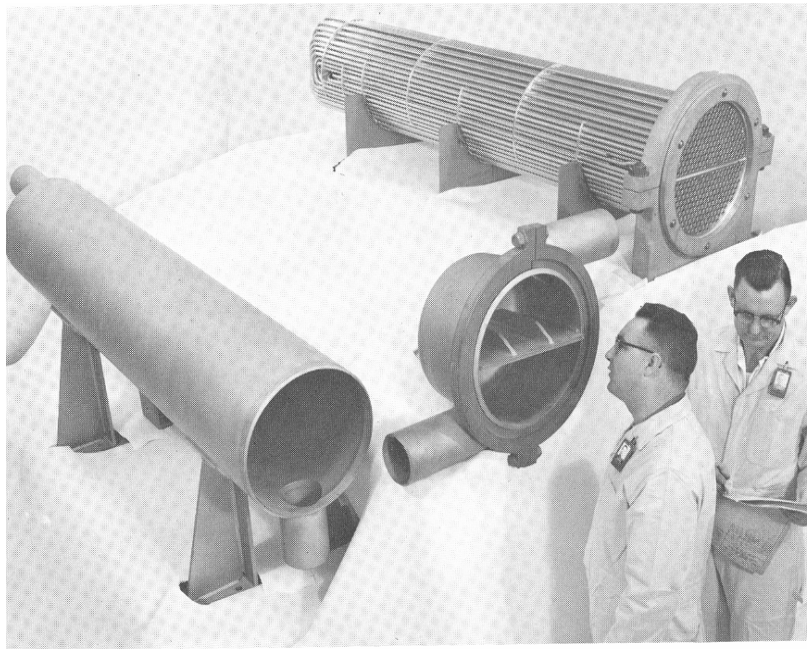
MSRE power = 8 MW(t)
Core volume <2 cubic meters

Molten Salt Reactor Experiment

Graphite Core

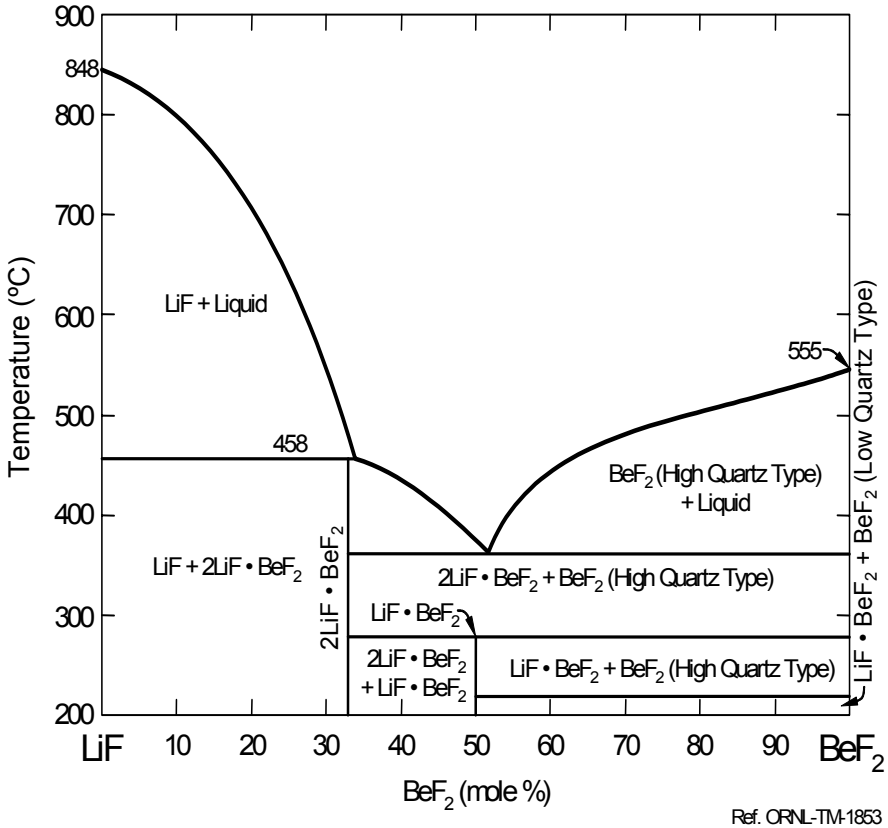
Intermediate Heat Exchanger

(Fuel Salt to Clean Salt)



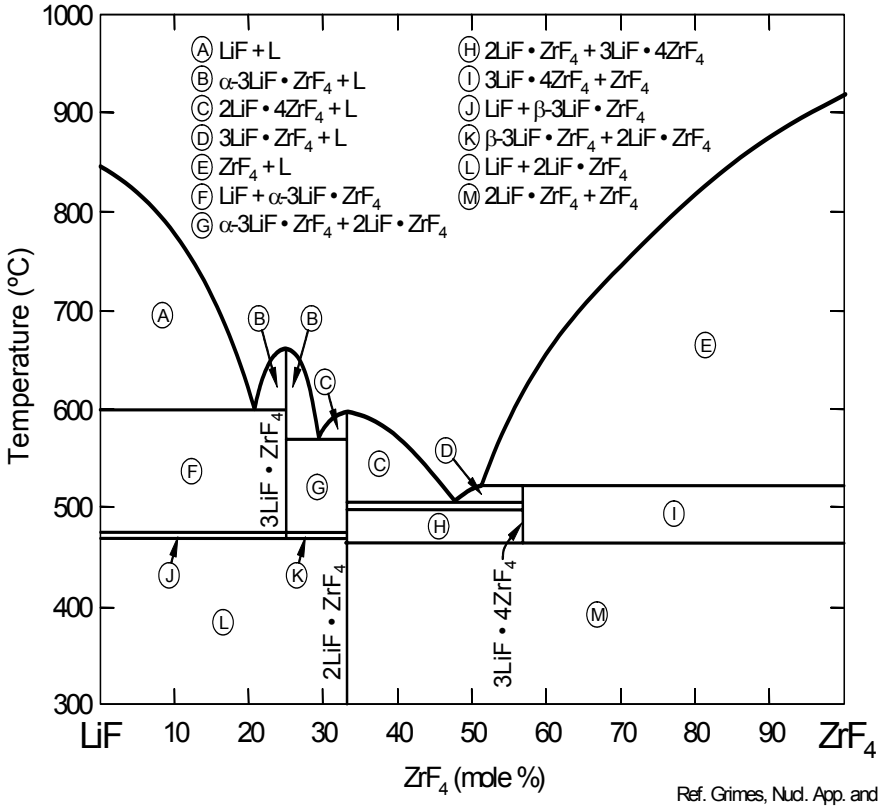
Multi-Component Salts Improve Physical Properties, Such As Lowering Freezing Points

The System LiF-BeF_2



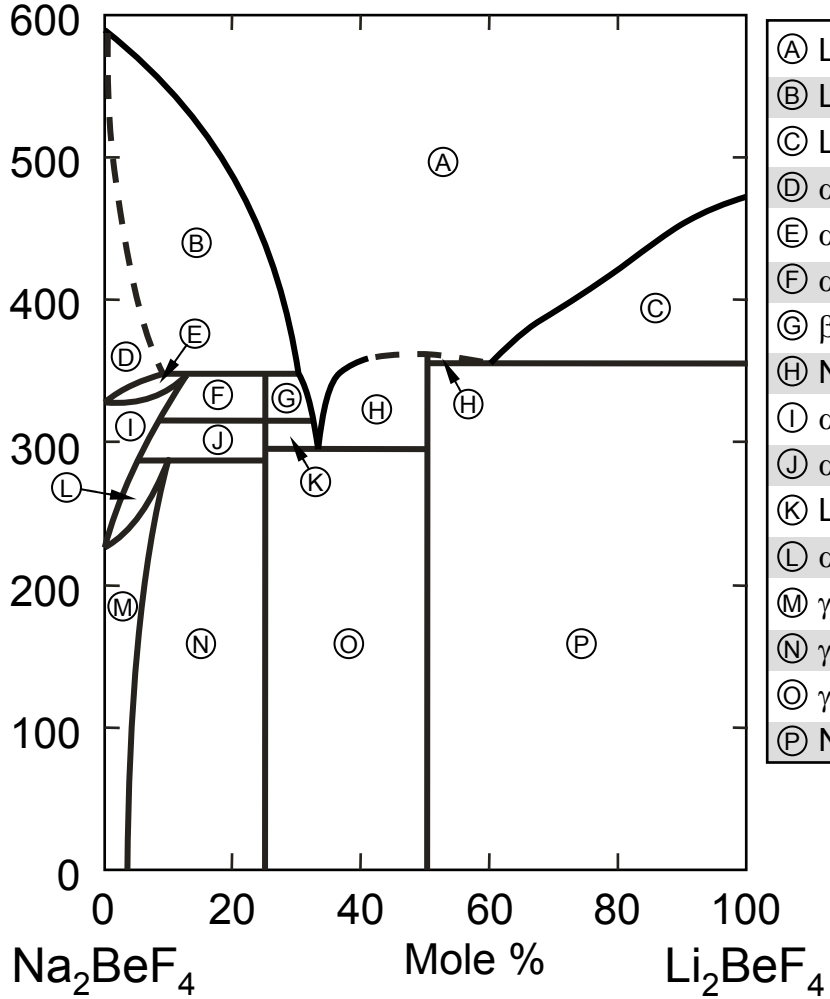
Ref. ORNL-TM-1853

The System LiF-ZrF_4



Ref. Grimes, Nucl. App. and Tech., Feb 1970

Freezing Points Can Be Further Lowered Using More Complex Salts (3 or 4 Components)

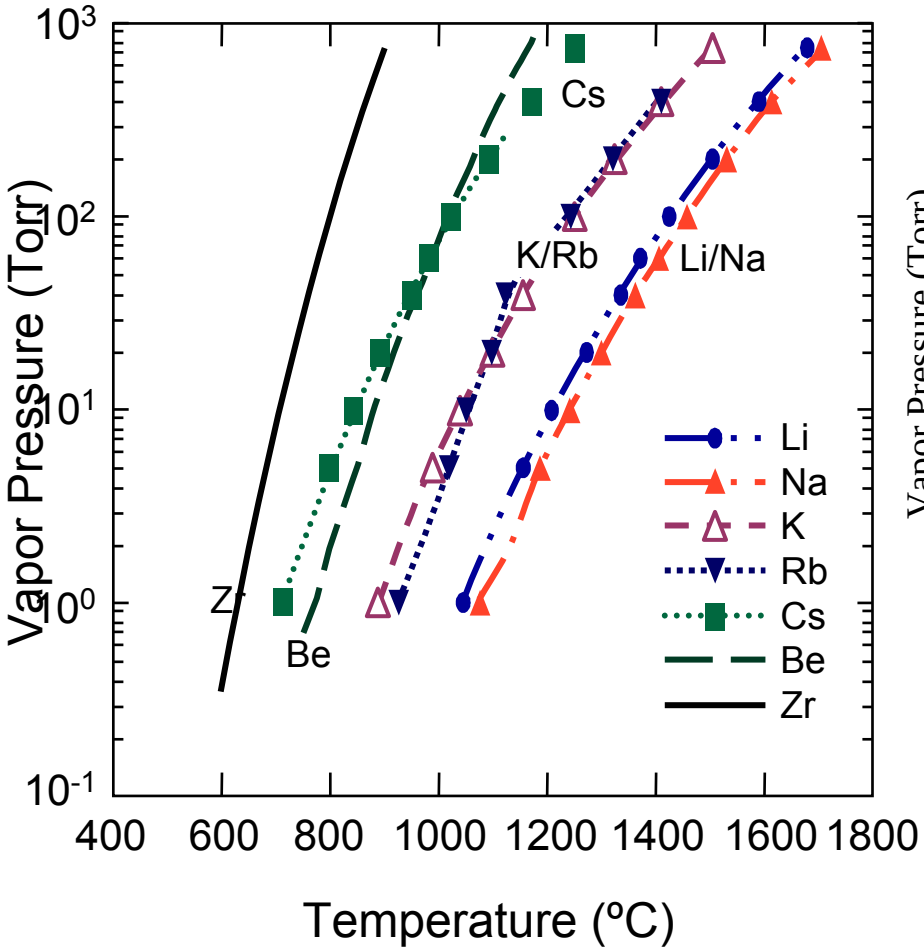


Ⓐ	Liquid
Ⓑ	Liquid + α-Na_2BeF_4
Ⓒ	Liquid + Li_2BeF_4
Ⓓ	α
Ⓔ	α' + α
Ⓕ	α'-Na_2BeF_4 – β-$Na_3(BeF_4)_2$
Ⓖ	β-$Na_3Li(BeF_4)_2$ + Liquid
Ⓗ	$NaLiBeF_4$ + Liquid
Ⓘ	α'
Ⓙ	α'-Na_2BeF_4 + γ-$Na_3Li(BeF_4)_2$
Ⓚ	Liquid + γ-$Na_3Li(BeF_4)_2$
Ⓛ	α' + γ
Ⓜ	γ
Ⓝ	γ-Na_2BeF_4 + γ-$Na_3Li(BeF_4)_2$
Ⓞ	γ-$NaLi(BeF_4)_2$ + $NaLiBeF_4$
Ⓟ	$NaLiBeF_4$ + Li_2BeF_4

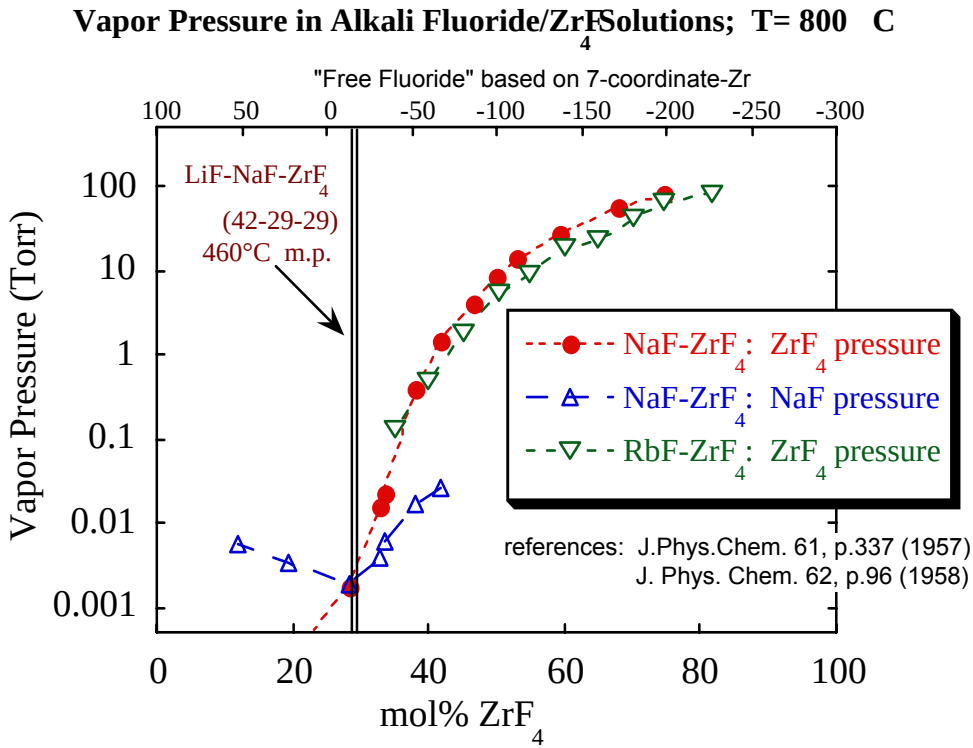
Ref. ORNL-TM-5325

Multi-Component Salts Suppress Vapor Pressure

Pure Fluoride Salts

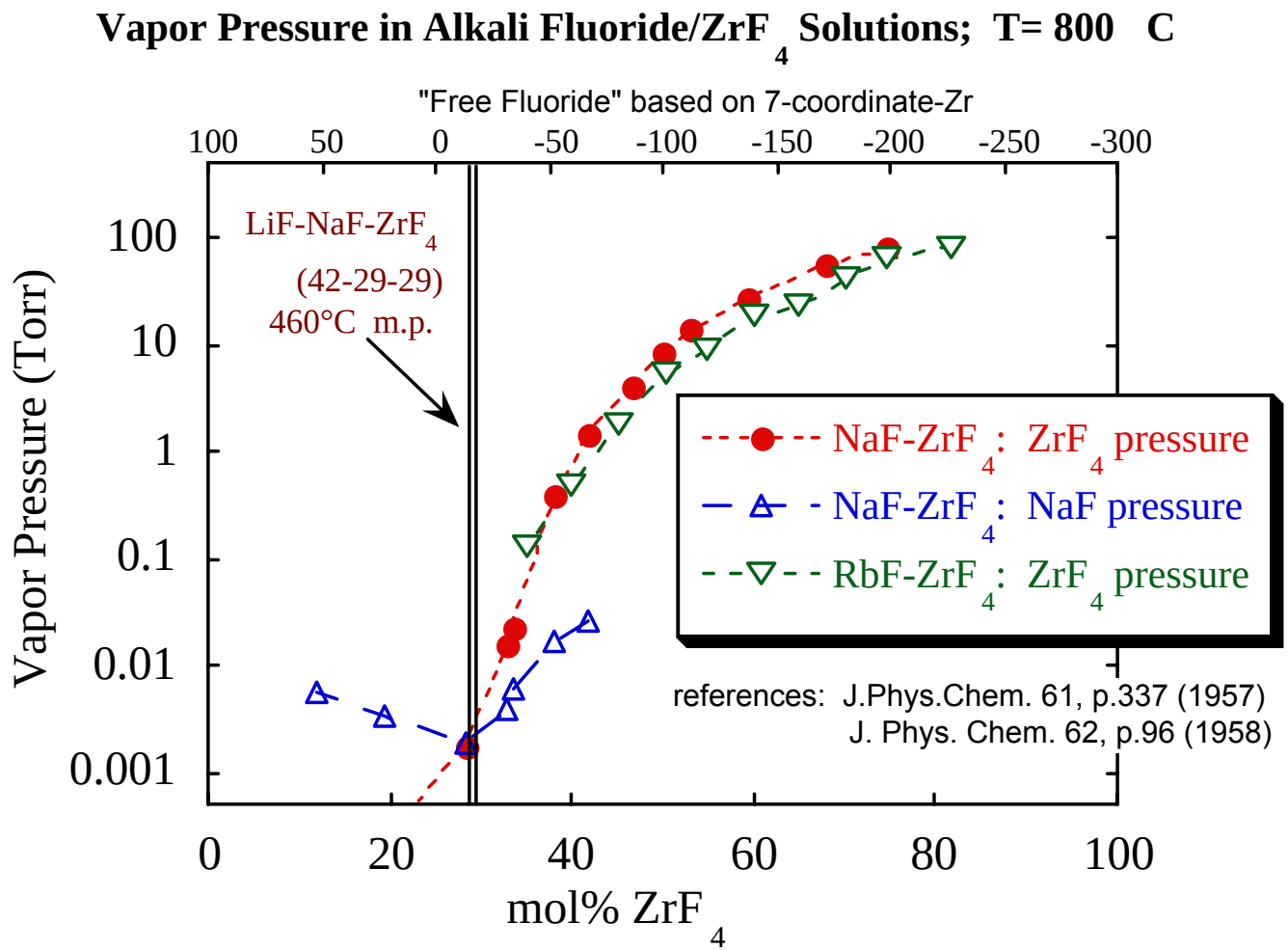


Multicomponent Mixtures

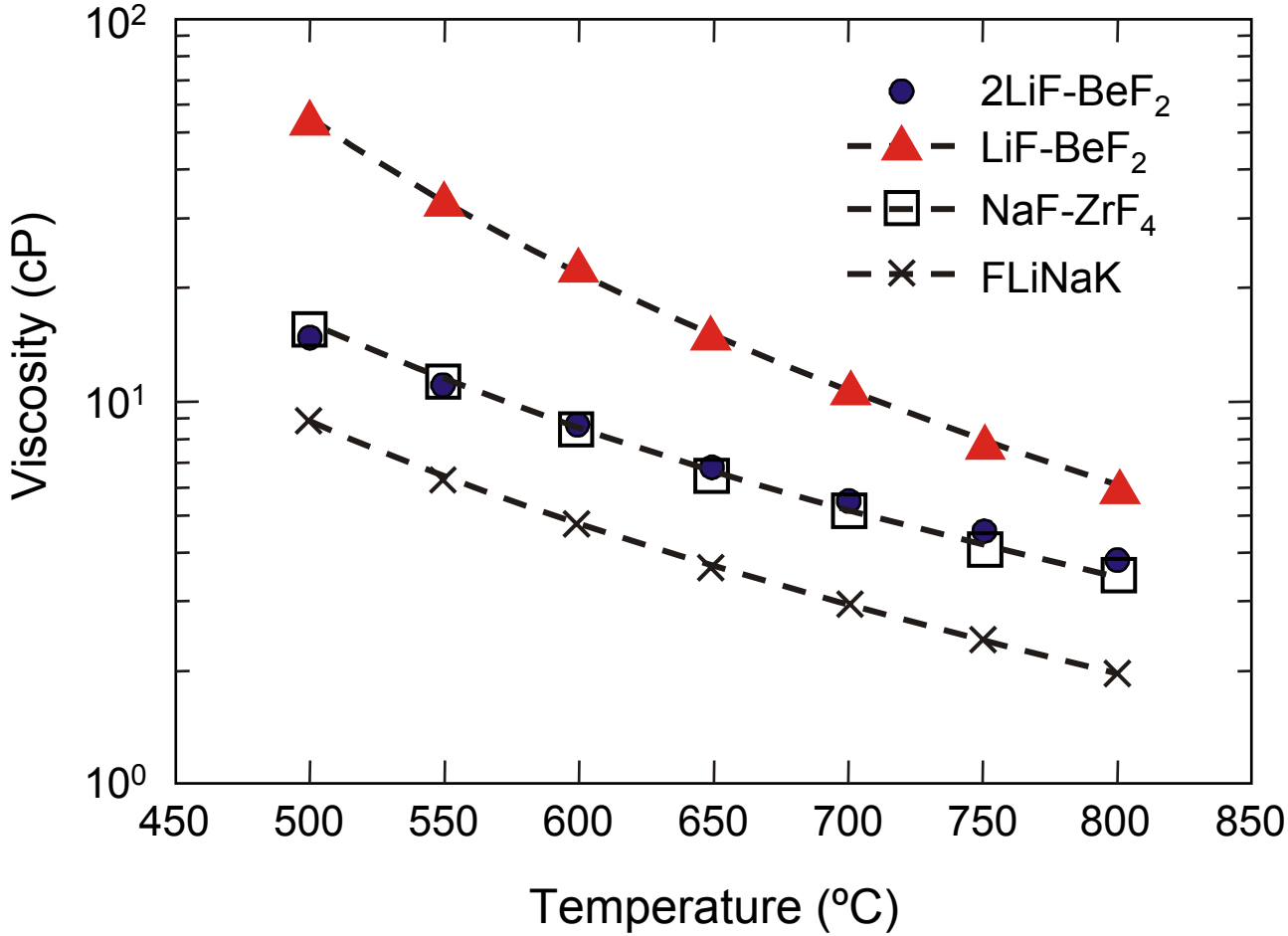


Mixture Vapor Pressure↑
←Pure Component Vapor Pressure

Complex Salts [LiF-NaF-ZrF_4 (42-29-29 mol %)] Can Further Lower Vapor Pressure



Viscosity of Molten Fluoride Coolants

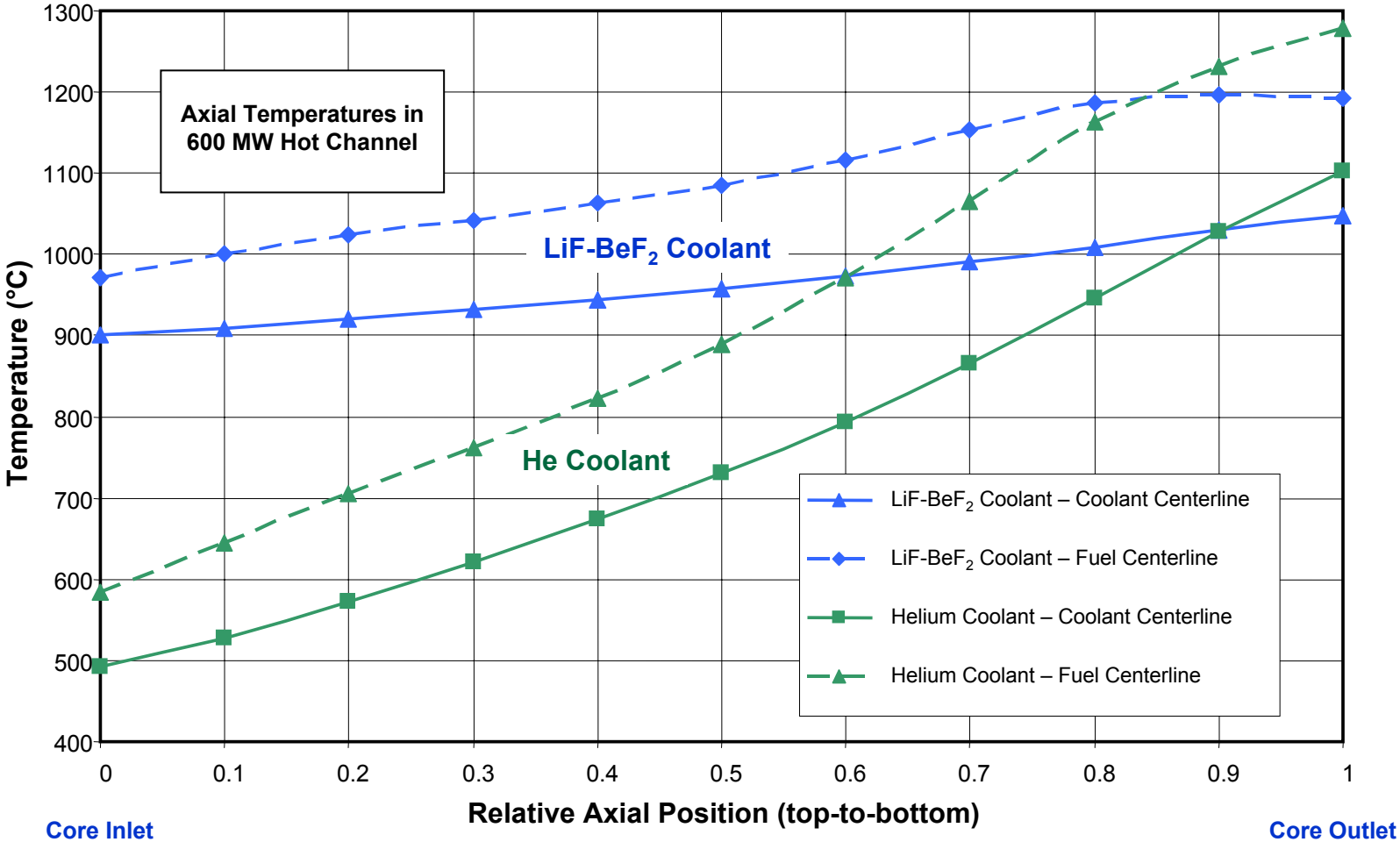


Molten Salts Have Superior Capabilities To Transport Heat At Reactor Conditions

	Water	Sodium	Helium	Molten Salt
Pressure, MPa	15.5	0.69	7.07	0.69
Outlet Temp, ºC	320	545	1000	1000
Velocity, m/s (ft/s)	6 (20)	6 (20)	75 (250)	6 (20)
Number of 1 m dia. pipes required to transport 1000 MW(t) with 100ºC rise at reactor outlet coolant conditions	0.6	2.0	12.3	0.5

Liquid Transports Heat More Effectively Than Gas

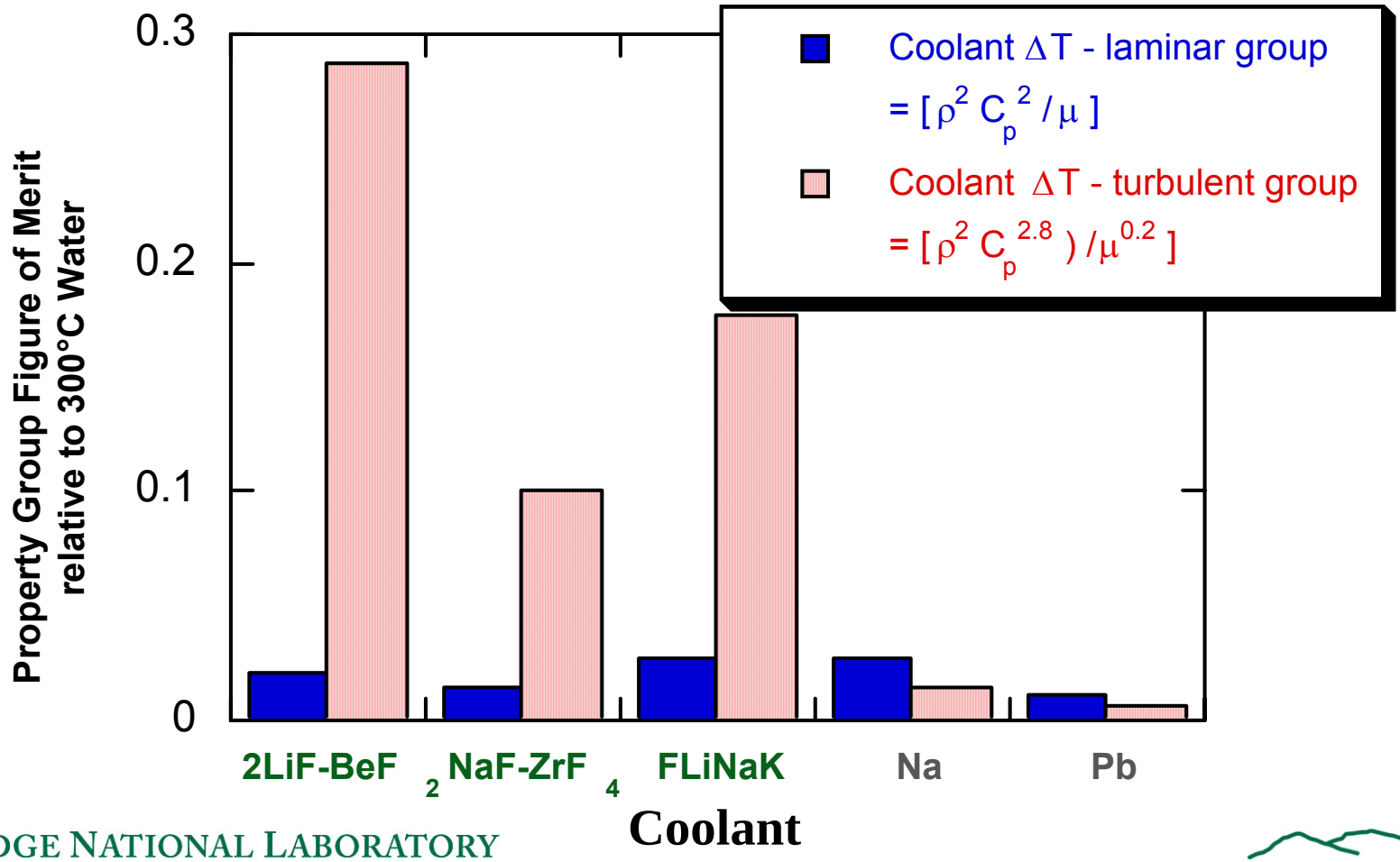
Smaller Temperature Differential Across Core



Coolant Figure of Merit For Forced Cooling of Reactor Core

(Pumping Power per ΔT Across Core: 700ºC Coolants Relative to 300ºC Water)

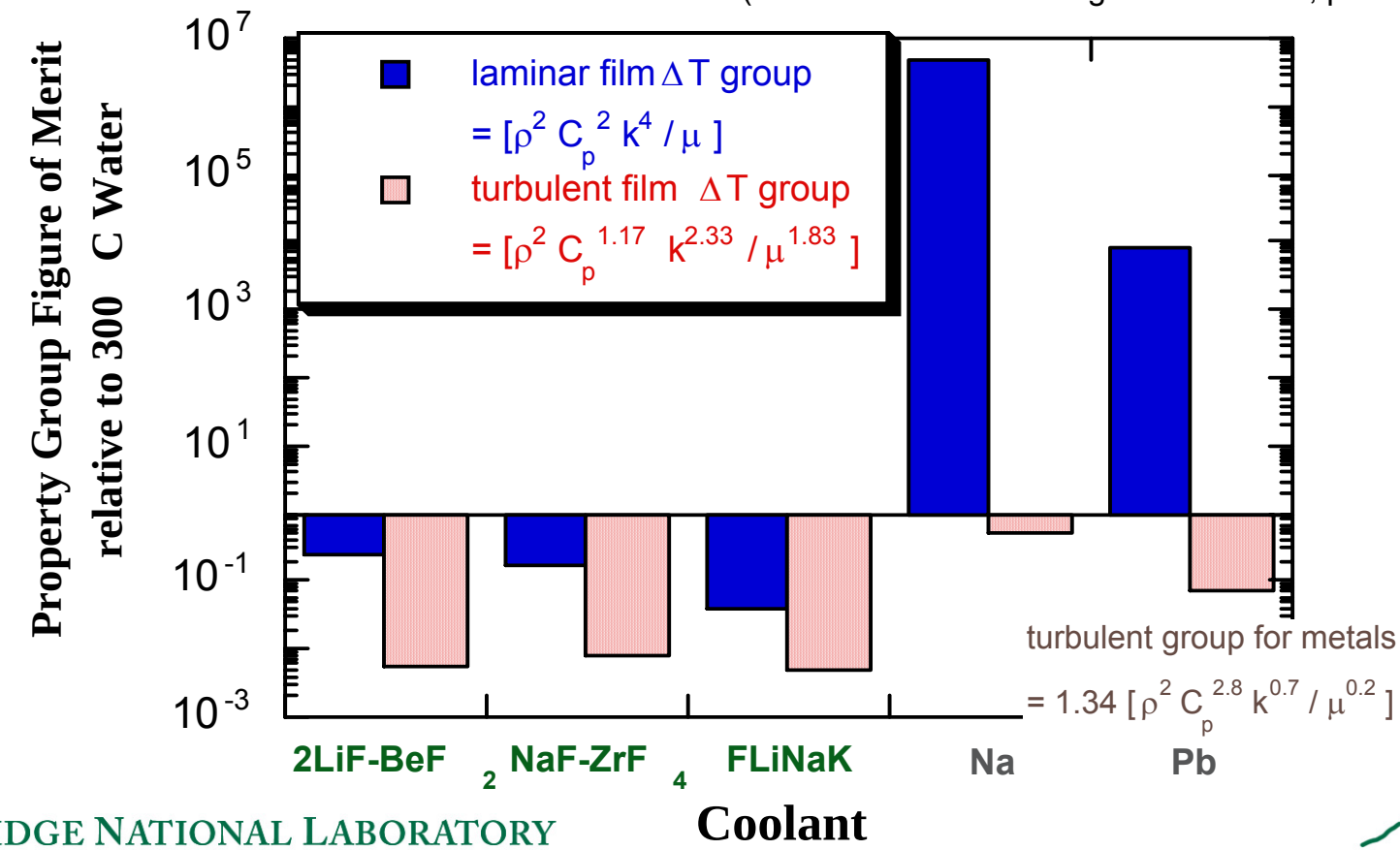
(REF: Bonilla in Etherington Handbook, p.9-90)



Coolant Figure of Merit For Heat Transfer From Fuel Element (Graphite) To Coolant

(Heat Flux per ΔT Fuel to Coolant: 700ºC Coolants Relative to 300ºC Water)

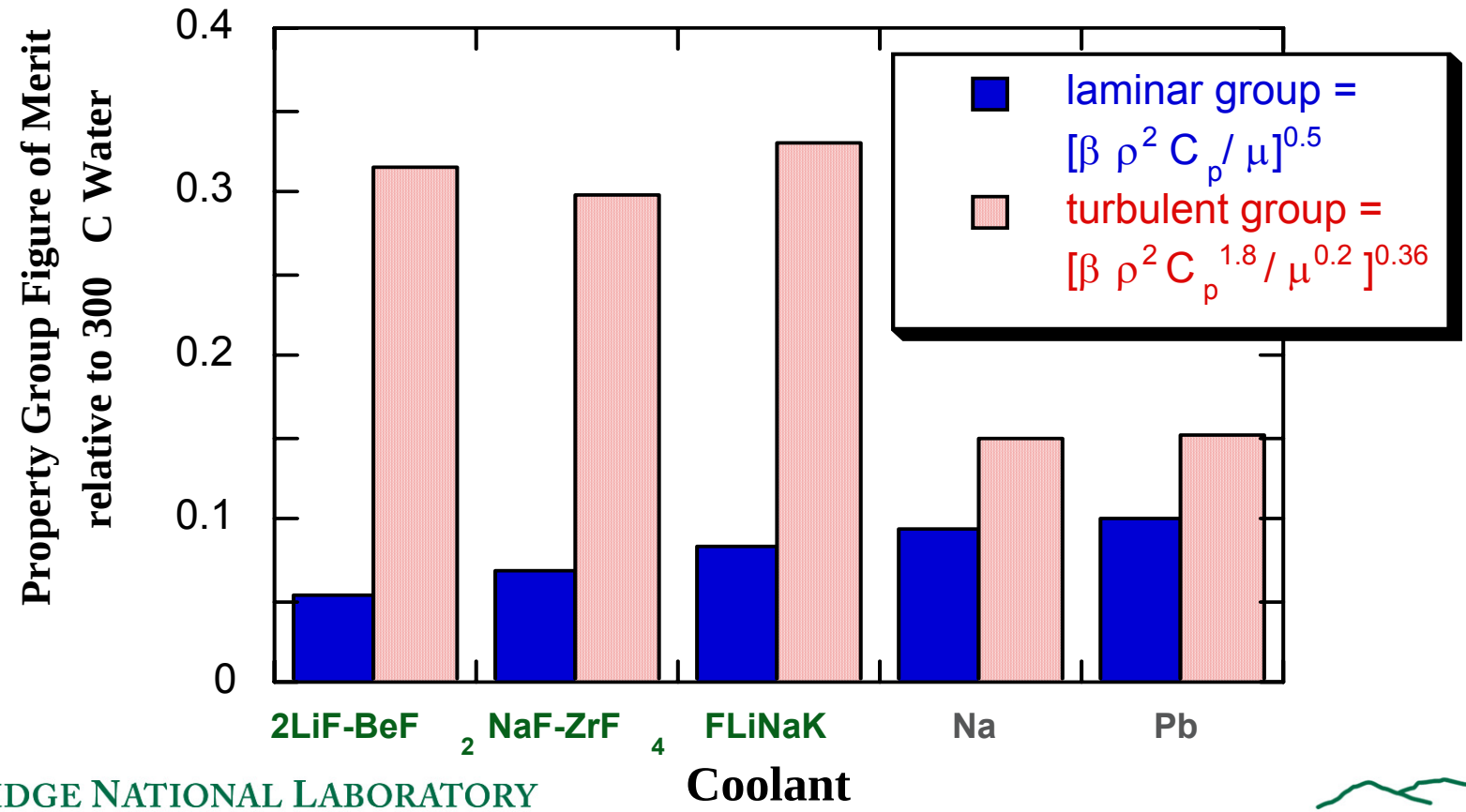
(REF: Bonilla in Etherington Handbook, p.9-90)



Natural Circulation Coolant Figures of Merit

700ºC Coolants Relative to 300ºC Water)

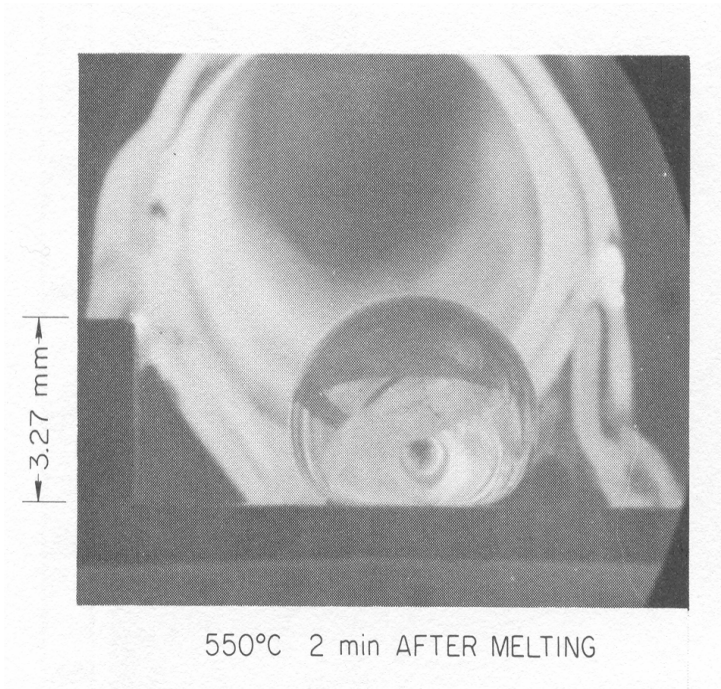
(REF: Bonilla in Etherington Handbook, p.9-90)



Materials Backup Data

Experience Shows Fluoride Salts Compatible With Carbon-Based Materials

- *Graphite-molten salt temperature limits.* Graphite interactions with molten salt were investigated as part of the molten salt reactor program. Tests were conducted to 1400ºC with no interactions between salt and graphite (ORNL-4344). Postirradiation examination of graphite from the MSRE showed no interactions between salt and graphite.
- *Graphite-salt interactions.* The non-wetting behavior of the fluoride salts of interest implies that the molten salt will not penetrate small cracks in graphite and not contact the fuel matrix. Picture right shows the non-wetting behavior of 2LiF-BeF_2 on CGB graphite (contact angle ~ 150 degrees, see ORNL-3529, p. 125-129; see also ORNL-3591 p.38, ORNL-3626, p. 132; ORNL-3122, p. 93, and ORNL-4396, p. 210). ZrF_4-containing fluoride melts were also measured and found to be very non-wetting (~150 degrees) [J. of Nuclear Materials, Vol. 35, P. 87-93 (1970)].



Experience Shows Fluoride Salts Compatible With Carbon-Based Materials

Evidence of lack of salt-graphite interaction from the post-irradiation examination of the MSRE (ORNL/TM-4174). A 1400°C experiment was also conducted which showed salt-graphite compatibility (ORNL-4344 p112).

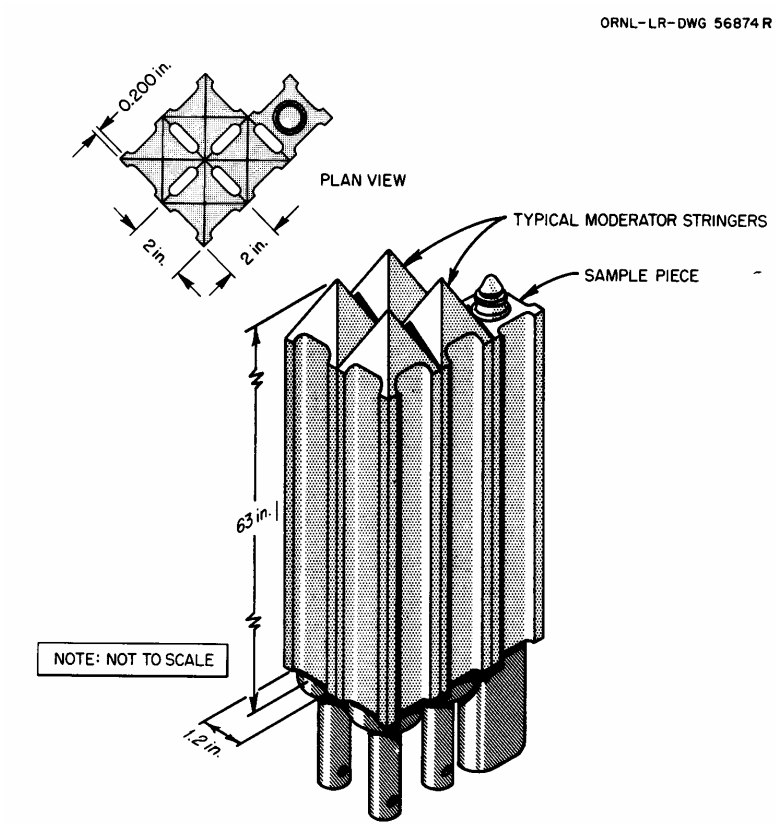


Fig. 4. Typical graphite stringer arrangement.

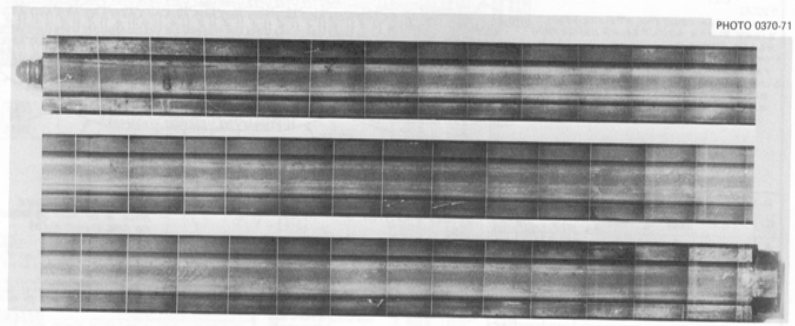


Fig. 6. One of the removable graphite moderator elements after operation in the MSRE, showing the fuel channel facing the center of the reactor. Machining marks are plainly visible in the fuel channel, showing excellent condition of the core block.

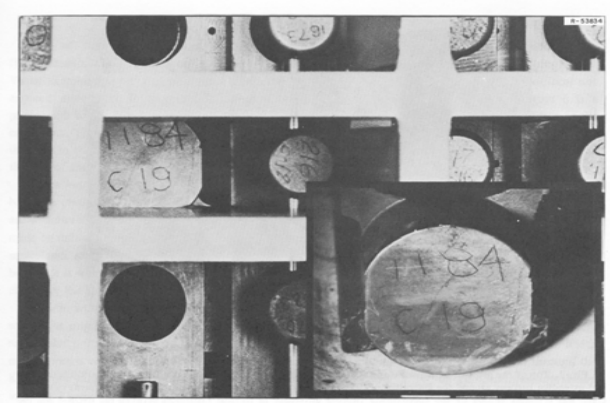


Fig. 8. Comparison of the bottom positioning stud on the graphite moderator element when initially installed in the MSRE and after operation. The large picture was made before the reactor was operational, and the small picture in the lower right corner was made in the hot cells after the moderator element had been at temperature for over three years.

Graphite & C-C Composites Are Generally Compatible with Molten Fluoride Salts

- Carbon components in reactor vessel will operate at 500 - 1100°C
  - Graphite core, reflector, and vessel insulation
  - C-C composite core supports, pump inlet, and control rods
- Considerations for service in AHTR
  - Salt compatibility, intercalation, wetting, strength (long-term and short-term), and irradiation-induced degradation and creep
- Extensive prior work has demonstrated compatibility and high resistance to intercalation and wetting with candidate salts
- Radiation-induced dimensional changes in graphite reactor vessel insulation must be accommodated
  - Provide torturous paths to vessel and/or periodic replacement
  - Cracking or failure of graphite insulation very unlikely at expected doses
- C-C composite heat exchangers should be explored as parallel path
  - Heat exchangers are highest metallic component performance risk

Other Graphite Issues Are Similar to Helium-Cooled, Prismatic VHTR with Known Solution Paths

Coated High-Temperature Alloys or Monolithic Alloys Will Likely Meet AHTR Needs

	Candidate Materials	Salt Corrosion Resistance	Air Corrosion Resist.	Long-Term Strength @ 1000°C	Highest Use T (°C)	Potential AHTR Component Usage*
Coated	Inconel 617	Needs Eval	Good	Very Good	1000	PM, P, V, HX
	VDM 602CA	Needs Eval	Good	Very Good	1000	P, V, HX
	Alloy 800 H	Needs Eval	Poor	Good	1000	P, HX
	Haynes 230	Needs Eval	Marginal	Good	900	P, HX
	Hastelloy X or XR	Needs Eval	Poor	Good	900	P, HX
	HP modified	Needs Eval	Good	Excellent	1100	V
Monolithic	Haynes 214	Very Good	Good	Good	1000	V, HX, CHX
	MA 956	Very Good	Good	Good	?	HX, CHX
	MA 754	Very Good	Good	Good	?	HX, CHX
	Cast Ni Superalloys	Very Good	Good	Good	?	PM

	Candidate Materials	Metallurgical Stability	Irrad. Resistanc	Fabricability	Alloy Maturity	Codified
Coated	Inconel 617	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec VIII
	VDM 602CA	Good	N/A	Good	Medium	Sec VIII
	Alloy 800 H	Good	N/A	Good	High	Sec I, III, VIII
	Haynes 230	Good	N/A	Fair-Good	High	Sec I, VIII
	Hastelloy X or XR	Good	N/A	Good	High	Sect I, VIII
	HP modified	Good	N/A	Cast Only	High	API
Monolithic	Haynes 214	Fair-Poor	N/A	Poor-Fair	Low	No
	MA 956	Good	N/A	Poor-Fair	Low	No
	MA 754	Good	N/A	Poor-Fair	Low	No
	Cast Ni Superalloys	Good	Adequate	Cast Only	High	No

*Pump (PM), Piping (P), Valves (V), Heat Exch's (HX), Compact HX (CHX)

Coated F-M or Stainless Steels or Monolithic Alloys Will Likely Meet AHTR Reactor Vessel Needs

	Candidate Materials	Salt Corrosion Resistance	Air Corrosion Resistance	Long-Term Strength @ 500°C	Highest Usage Temp (°C)
Coated	9Cr-1MoV	Poor	Good	Very Good	650
	2 1/4 Cr-1Mo	Poor	Good	Good	650
	304	Poor	Good	Very Good	815
	316	Poor	Good	Very Good	815
	347	Poor	Good	Very Good	815
	Alloy 800H or HT	Poor-Fair	Good	Very Good	980
Monolithic	Hastelloy N	Excellent	Good	Very Good	730
	Haynes 242	Very Good	Good	Very Good	540
	Alloy 800H or HT	Poor-Fair	Good	Very Good	980

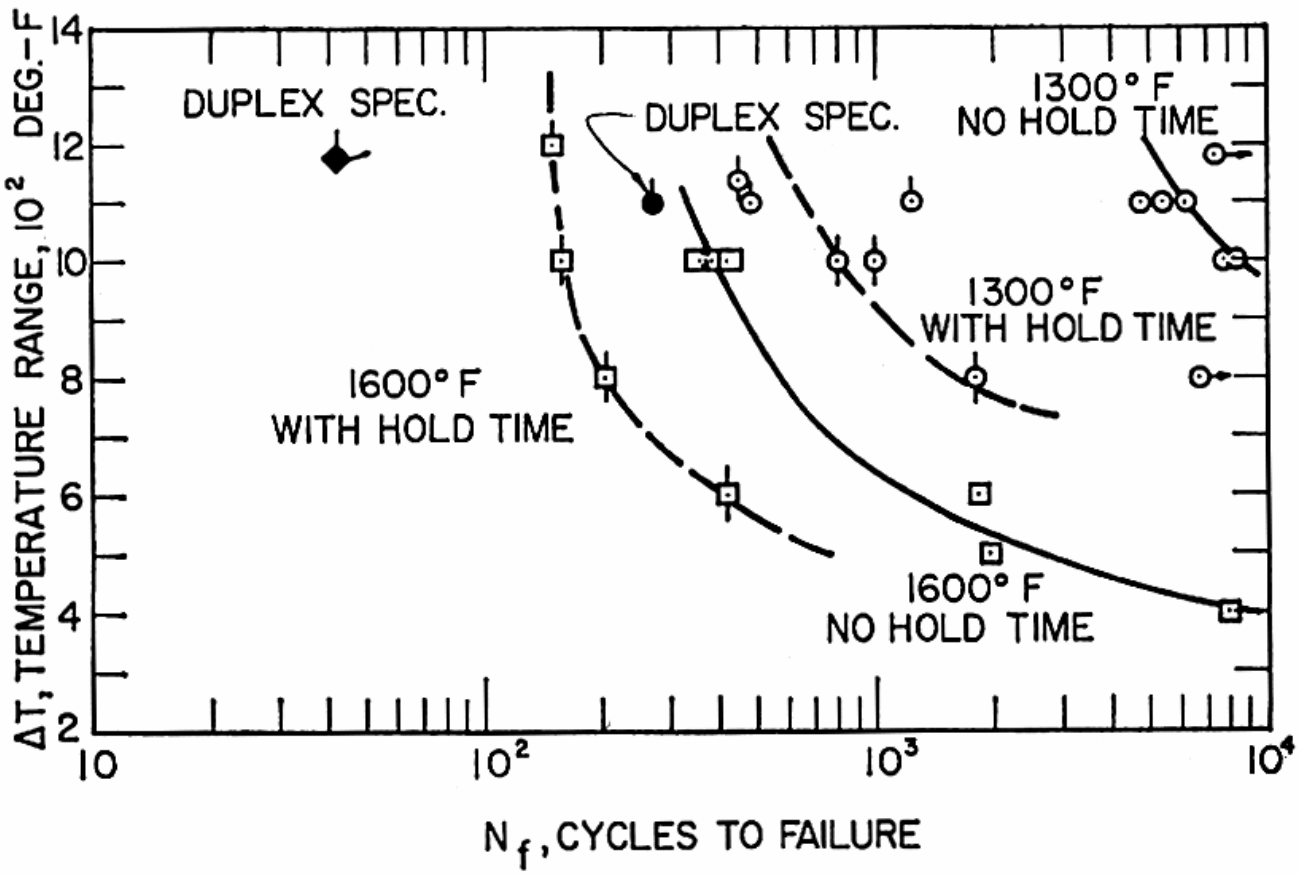
	Candidate Materials	Metallurgical Stability	Irradiation Resistance	Fabricability	Maturity	Codified
Coated	9Cr-1MoV	Fair	Good	Good	High	Sec III, VIII
	304	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec III, VIII
	316	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec III, VIII
	347	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec III, VIII
	Alloy 800H or HT	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec I, III, VIII
Monolithic	Hastelloy N	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec III*, VIII
	Haynes 242	Good	Adequate	Good	Low	Sec VIII
	Alloy 800H or HT	Good	Good	Good	High	Sec III, VIII

*Existing Code Case

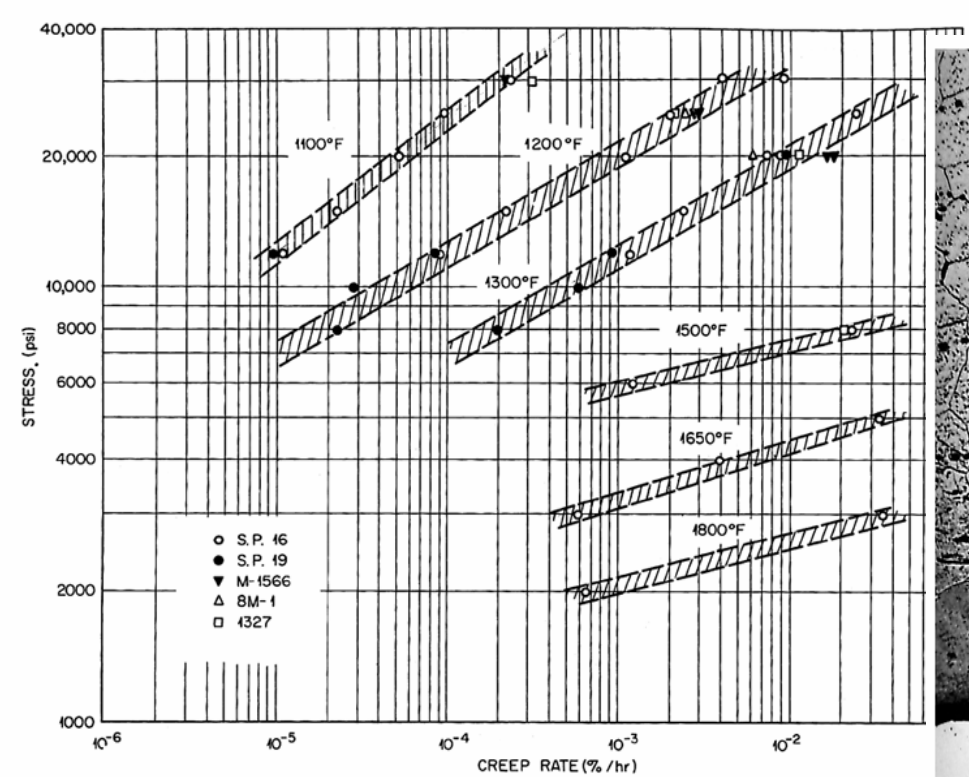
Selected Metals Are Compatible With Clean Molten Fluoride Salts, However, the Amount of Higher-Temperature Corrosion Test Data in Flow Loops Is Limited

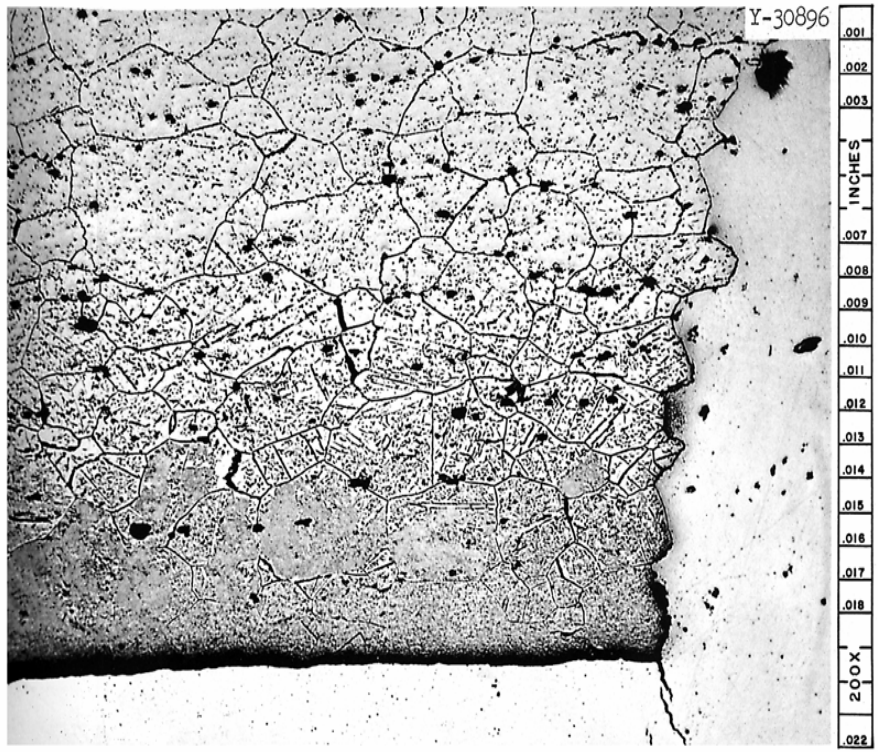
- Corrosion control by thermodynamics
  - Metals are noble with respect to salt
  - Same approach as used with sodium coolants
  - Coolant chemistry control to maintain reducing conditions can extend material performance
- Hastelloy-N code qualified (to 750°C)
  - Higher-temperature materials required for this application
  - Candidate materials similar to those proposed for the helium-cooled VHTR
  - However, the amount of higher-temperature corrosion test data in corrosion test flow loops is limited

Extensive Performance Data Exist for Hastelloy N

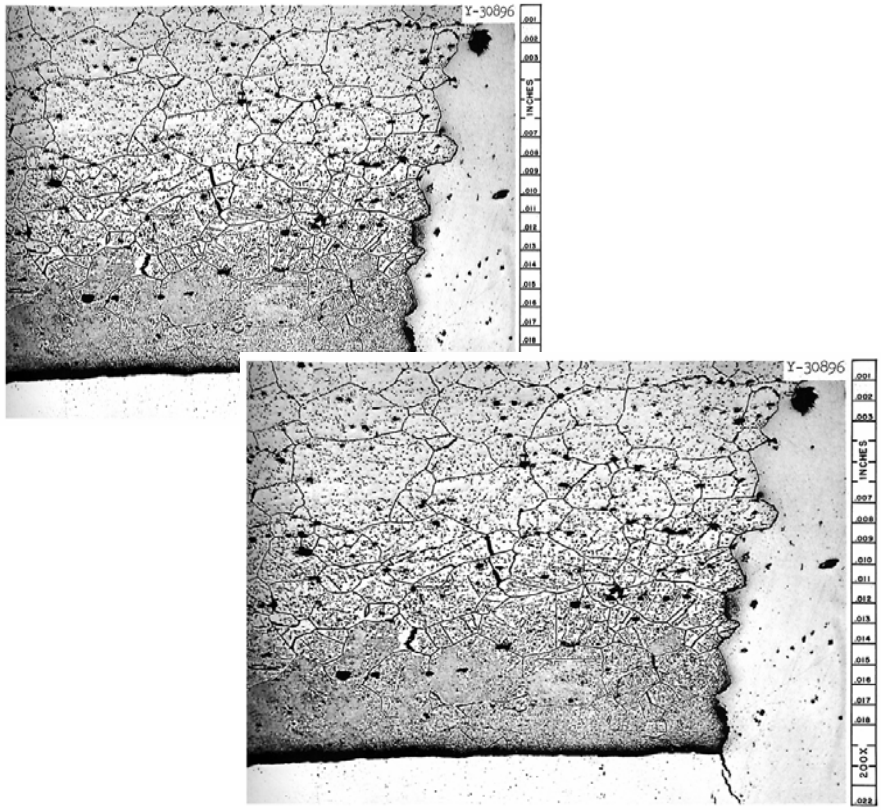


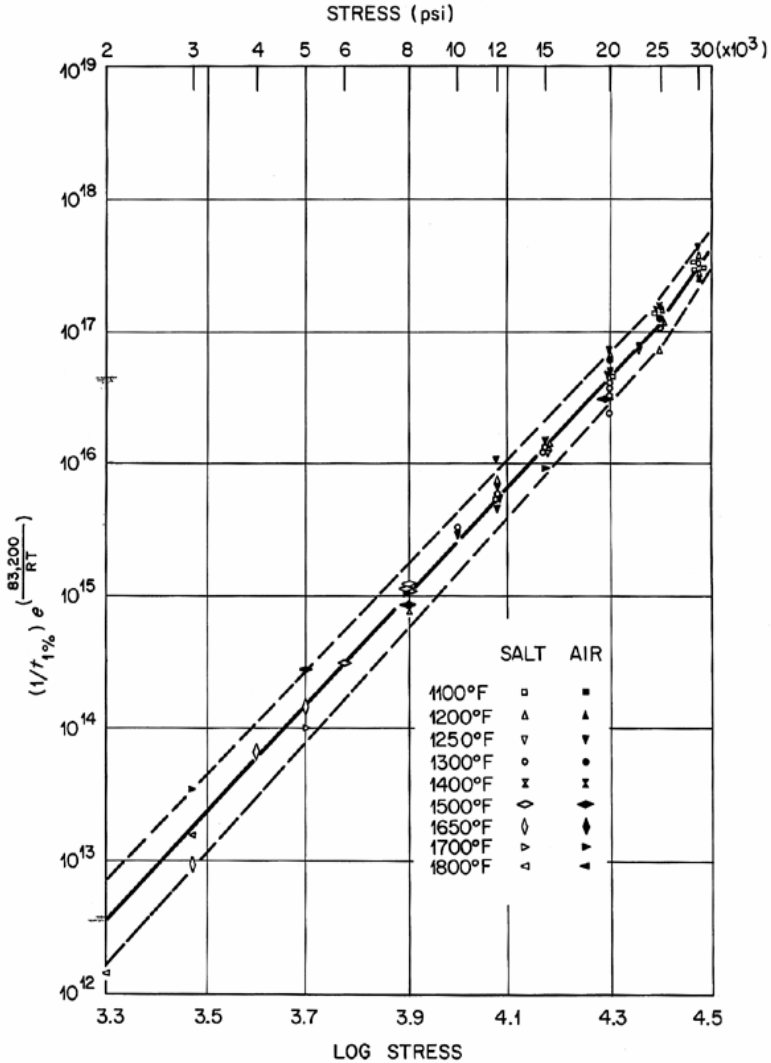
Creep Rate Data for Hastelloy N (up 1800° F) Exist



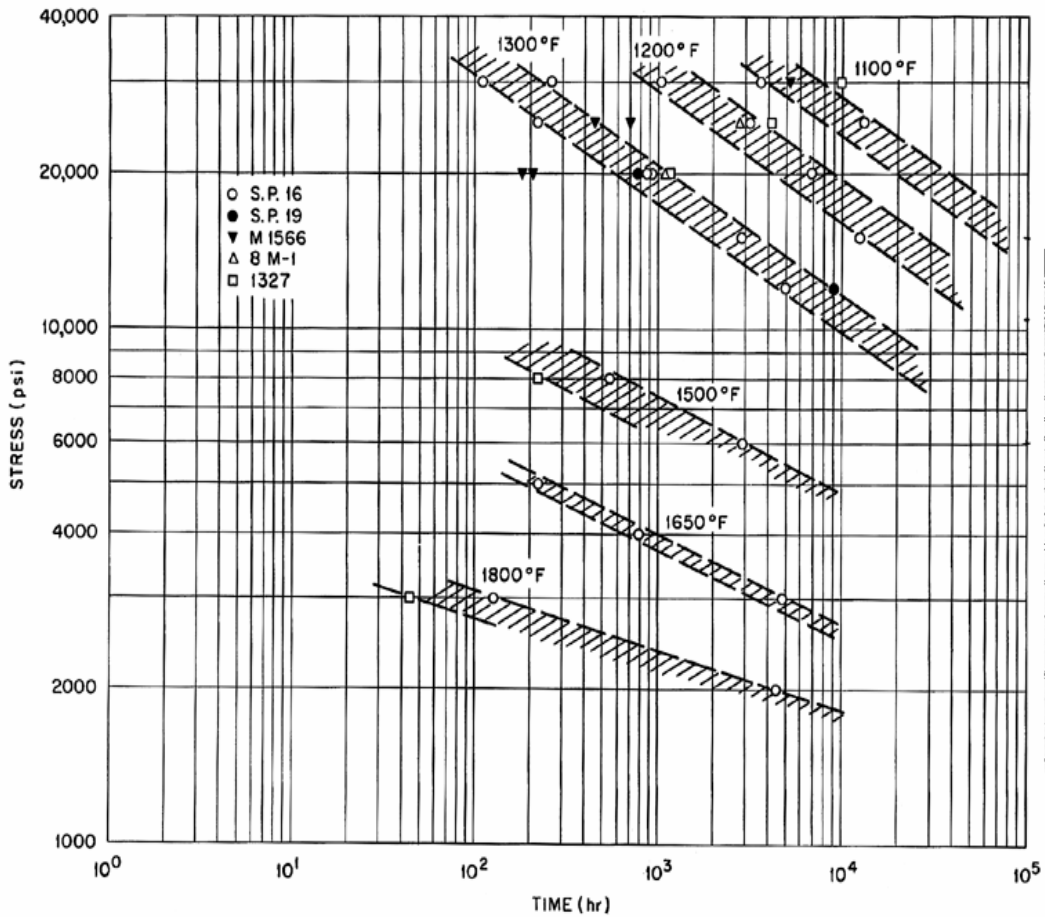


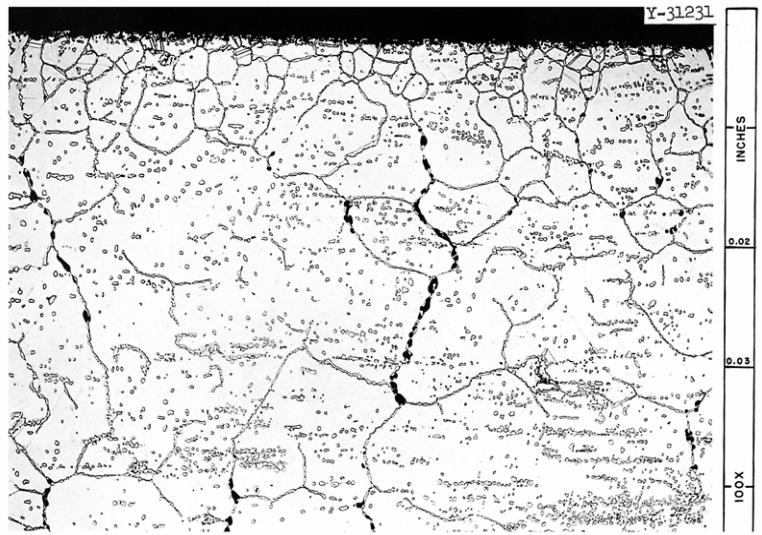
Comparison of Creep Strain vs Stress in Molten Salt and Air for Hastelloy N Exist





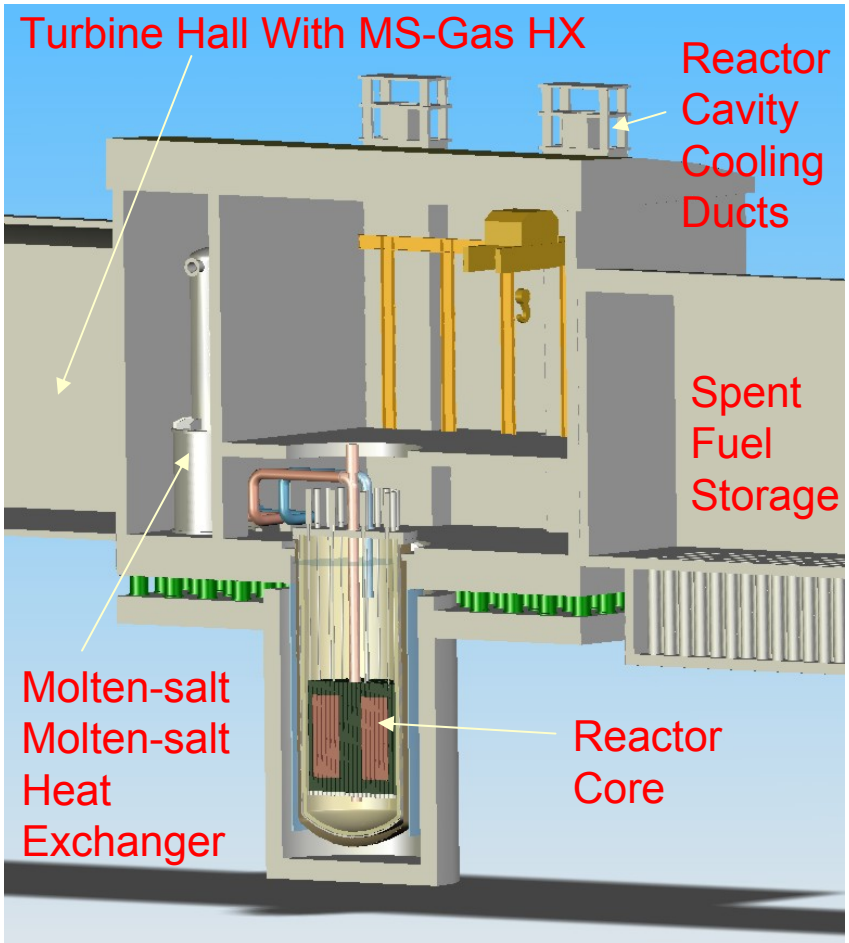
Time to Rupture Data for Hastelloy N (up 1800° F) Exist





Facility Design Data

Proposed AHTR Facility Layouts Are Similar to Sodium-Cooled Fast Reactors (1 of 3)



- *Similarities*. Sodium-cooled fast reactors and the AHTR are both low-pressure high-temperature reactors. Consequently, the general plant layout and much of the licensing basis will be very similar to those of sodium-cooled reactors. As a starting point, the AHTR facility design follows that of the General Electric S-PRISM. S-PRISM is a modular reactor with each module producing 1000 MW(t) output and 380 MW(e). It is the last sodium-cooled reactor that was designed in the United States.
- *S-PRISM design*. The design goals were for a passively safe economic breeder reactor. The economic optimization of the S-PRISM indicated that larger modules were more economical. The modular size limit was controlled by the ability to passively remove decay heat from the reactor vessel. Decay heat removal capability depended upon vessel size. A series of detailed engineering studies resulted in a vessel about 9.2 meters in diameter. This was defined as the largest practical size given various engineering, cost, and fabrication limitations. The large, low-pressure vessel had sufficient space for the reactor core, intermediate heat exchangers, and spent fuel storage.
- *AHTR design basis*. As a starting point, the S-PRISM facility design was used as a basis for the AHTR. This included using the same size reactor vessel. Because the AHTR is also a low-pressure liquid-cooled reactor, it is a reasonable starting assumption to assume the same fundamental limitations in facility and vessel design.

Proposed AHTR Facility Layouts Are Similar to Sodium-Cooled Fast Reactors (2 of 3)

- *AHTR Differences*. There are several differences in plant layout.
  - The intermediate heat exchangers and SNF storage are removed from the reactor vessel to provide space for the larger AHTR core. The intermediate heat exchangers are moved to the compartment that in S-PRISM contains the sodium-water heat exchangers.
  - The molten salt-gas (nitrogen or helium) heat exchangers in the secondary heat transfer loop are on the turbine floor. This is required for an efficient Brayton cycle. The pressure drops in gas systems are very large compared with molten salt pressure drops. As a consequence, the molten salt gas heat exchangers must be next to the Brayton cycle turbines
  - The larger AHTR results in a single Brayton cycle per reactor rather than the S-PRISM system, where two reactors provide thermal energy to a single Rankine (steam) plant.
- *Containment.* The AHTR containment building requirements are less than S-PRISM or a helium-cooled VHTR.
  - Pressurization. The chemical reactions of sodium with water and the high-pressure associated with helium-cooled reactors create gases that can pressurize containments and other structures. These pressure mechanisms do not exist for the AHTR.
  - Radionuclide release. Molten salts dissolve most fission products (including cesium and iodine) to very high temperatures. This creates an additional barrier to fission product release that does not exist with other reactors.
- *Balance of Plant.* The AHTR, like S-PRISM, uses an indirect power cycle. This has several implication relative to helium-cooled reactors.
  - High-quality industrial (not nuclear) standards, construction, and maintenance may be used for the power cycle.
  - Fuel quality. The absolute requirements for fuel reliability are lower than for direct cycle power plants. Radionuclides from leaky fuel dissolve in the coolant and are removed by the coolant cleanup system.
- *Refueling*. The refueling, operation, and maintenance of the AHTR will have many similarities to sodium- and lead-cooled fast reactors.
  - SNF Storage. The AHTR uses separate SNF storage, it does not use the reactor vessel for SNF storage.
  - Refueling. In some respects, the AHTR operations will be simpler because (1) the salt is transparent and thus allows camera views of the reactor core and (2) the salt is less chemically reactive than sodium. However, the temperatures will be higher and will require more careful design of systems to avoid undesired salt freezing.
- *Licensing*. Very little work has been done to develop a regulatory framework for the AHTR. The NRC review of the conceptual design of S-PRISM (February 1994) provides the initial basis for the regulatory consideration of a pool-type reactor. The use of the same fuel as the fuel used in gas-cooled reactors implies that many of the licensing interactions associated with gas-cooled reactors are directly applicable. However, the licensing issues with fuel performance are less because of (1) use of a low-pressure system, (2) a coolant that dissolves fission products, and (3) an indirect power cycle that further isolates the reactor core from the environment.

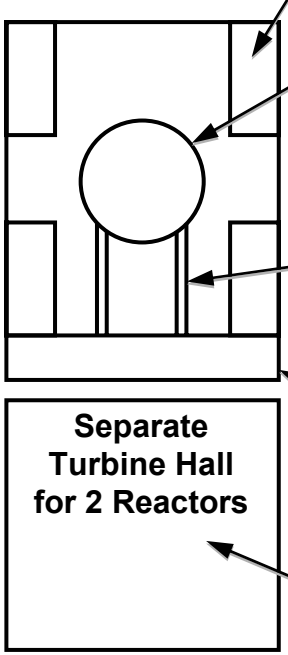
Proposed AHTR Facility Layouts Are Similar to Sodium-Cooled Fast Reactors (3 of 3)

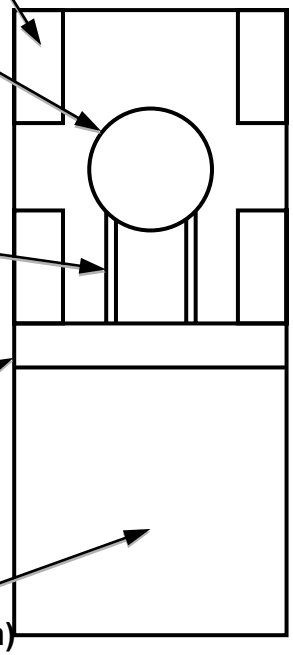
- ***Inspection.*** **Molten salts are transparent. This is a major advantage over liquid-metal reactors where inspection has been a major issue.**
- ***Decay heat removal*****. Several types of passive decay heat removal systems have been used in liquid-metal reactors. The AHTR, like S-PRISM, uses RVACs. There are other options such as DRACs, a secondary natural circulation loop to remove heat from the reactor vessel to the environment. This provides multiple longer-term cooling options including the options that may ultimately allow larger power outputs.**

A 2400-MW(t)* AHTR Nuclear Island Size May Ultimately Be Similar to A 1000-MW(t) S-PRISM

(Consequence of Higher Temperatures and Different Coolant Properties)

S-PRISM (Sodium)		AHTR (Molten Salt)
	Passive Decay Heat Removal	
• Same Vessel Size • Peak Vessel Temp ~550°C		• Same Vessel Size • Peak Vessel Temp ~750°C
	Same Vessel Size	
• Reactor Core • Sodium/Sodium Heat Exchanger		• Reactor Core
	Similar Equipment Size ***(Volumetric Heat Capacity: Molten Salt > Sodium)***	
	Heat Exchanger Compartment	
• Sodium/Water Heat Exchanger		• Molten Salt/ Molten Salt Heat Exchanger
	Turbine Hall	
• Rankine (Steam)		• Brayton (Nitrogen or Helium) – Gas/Molten Salt Heat Exchanger – Higher Efficiency (Higher Temperature)





*AHTR 1200 MW(e): S-Prism 380 MW(e)

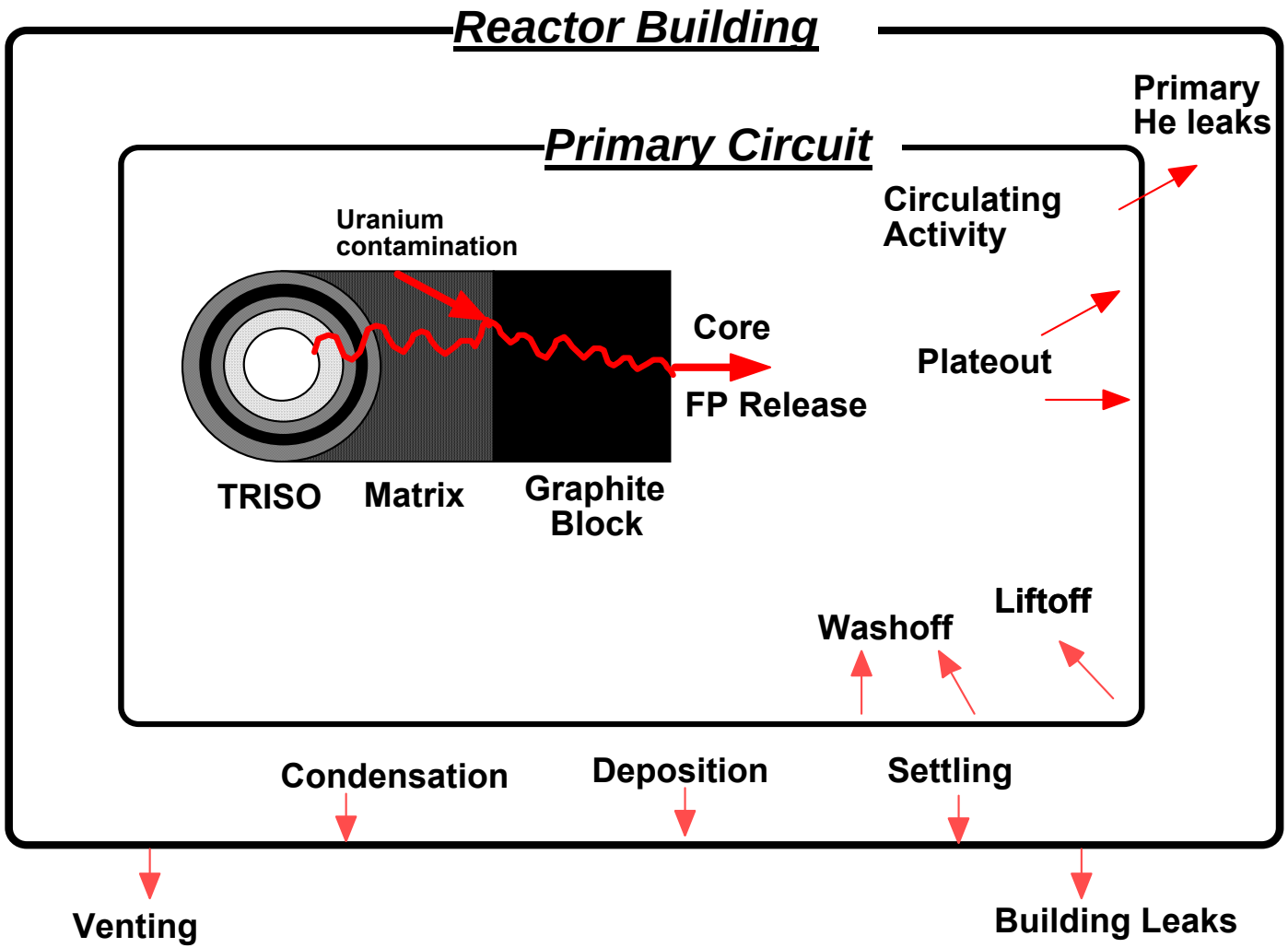
AHTR Nuclear Island (2400 MW(t)/>1200 MW(e)) Is Similar In Size To S-PRISM (1000 MW(t)/380 MW(e))

- *AHTR Sizing.* The initial assumption was that the AHTR vessel would be the same size as the General Electric S-PRISM vessel. Both reactors are low-temperature high-pressure machines. General Electric did a series of trade studies that indicated that the best economics resulted in maximizing the reactor size because this maximized the reactor size possible with passive safety. Assuming that the AHTR power density will be similar to proposed gas-cooled coated-particle fuel reactors, the maximum power level is ~2400 MW(t). Using similar power densities as a gas-cooled reactor has several implications.
  - Same technology. The same fuels can be used for the AHTR as for gas-cooled reactors.
  - Similar vessel heat capacity. The reactor vessel heat capacity is about the same per MW(t) as a gas-cooled reactor. This implies similar slow vessel heatup rates in an accident.
  - Lower peak fuel temperatures. Liquids are better coolants than gases. With similar power densities, the fuel temperatures will be less than those in gas-cooled reactors.
- *Technical viability*. The nuclear island size for the 1000 MW(t) S-PRISM and 2400 MW(t) AHTR are about equal because of several factors
  - Vessel volume. The larger core (see earlier) is possible because S-PRISM includes SNF storage and the intermediate heat exchangers in the reactor vessel while these are moved out of the vessel in the AHTR design.
  - Equipment size. Pipes, pumps, and valves are similar in size because the volumetric heat capacity of molten salts is several times greater than sodium. Volumetric heat capacity sizes much of the equipment.
  - Decay heat removal. The AHTR operates at higher temperatures. The decay heat removal system performance is a strong function of temperature.
  - Electricity production. The higher electricity production is a consequence of higher total power levels and higher temperatures (more efficient generation of electricity
- *Other size considerations*. There are several other factors not related to S-PRISM that makes a 2400 MW(t) reactor of interest
  - Electricity output. The reactor electrical output is similar to other large nuclear reactors used for power production
  - Hydrogen. The largest hydrogen plant under construction using natural gas as an energy source will produce 300 million ft^3/day. For a high-temperature reactor to produce an equivalent quantity of hydrogen, the energy output must be about 2400 MW(t).
  - Beyond-design-basis accidents. Preliminary analysis (further in presentation) indicates that this size of reactor may be able to withstand beyond-design-basis accidents (vessel failure) without massive fuel failure

Beyond-Design-Basis Accident Avoids Radionuclide Release By Multiple Mechanisms

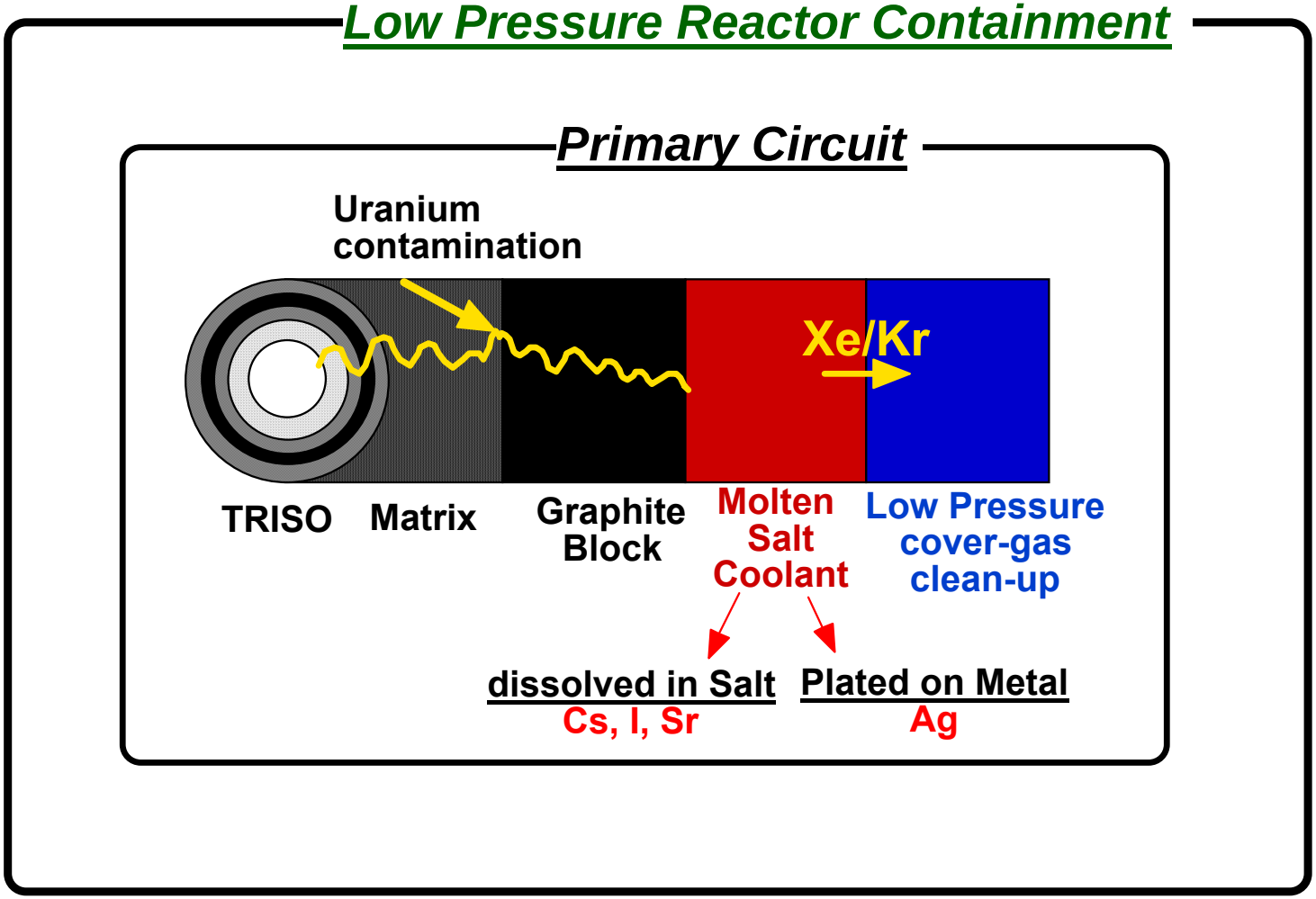
- ***Dissolution of radionuclides in molten salt*. All actinides and most fission products (including cesium and iodine) are highly soluble in fluoride molten salts to very high temperatures. This was the basis for the molten salt reactor where the uranium and plutonium was dissolved in the coolant. The only exceptions are the noble gases (primarily krypton and xenon) and the noble metal fission products that can plate out on surfaces. As a consequence of this behavior, as long as the solid fuel is in the salt, actinides and fission products from failed fuel will dissolve in the salt and not escape the reactor**
- ***Salt isolation of SNF from air.* One of the safety issues associated with graphite fuels is air ingress and oxidation of the fuel. As long as the fuel is covered by the coolant, air can not reach the fuel**
- ***No pressurization of containment.* Molten salts do not pressurize containment under accident conditions. This avoids a major energy source for dispersal of actinides and fission products. Gas cooled reactors typically include vented containments to allow escape of the helium if the reactor system depressurizes.**
- ***Beyond-design-basis-accidents*. In a beyond design basis accident with vessel failure, the molten salt floods the bottom of the silo with molten salt while keeping the reactor core covered with coolant. The molten salt may efficiently allow heat transfer to the silo while maintaining peak temperatures below those of massive fuel failure. See: C. W. Forsberg and Per F. Peterson, "Making Core Melt Accidents Impossible In a Large 2400 MW(t) Reactor, Global 2003", *Embedded Topical within 2003 American Nuclear Society Winter Meeting*, Nov. 16-20, 2003, New Orleans, Louisiana. However, significant work is required before this safety strategy can be considered proven (The first three safety mechanisms have significant data to support the conclusions).**

Fission Product Containment in Conventional HTRs is Complex - and difficult to estimate



from IAEA TECDOC-978, p259

AHTR offers Additional Fission Product Containment Features - may reduce some licensing barriers



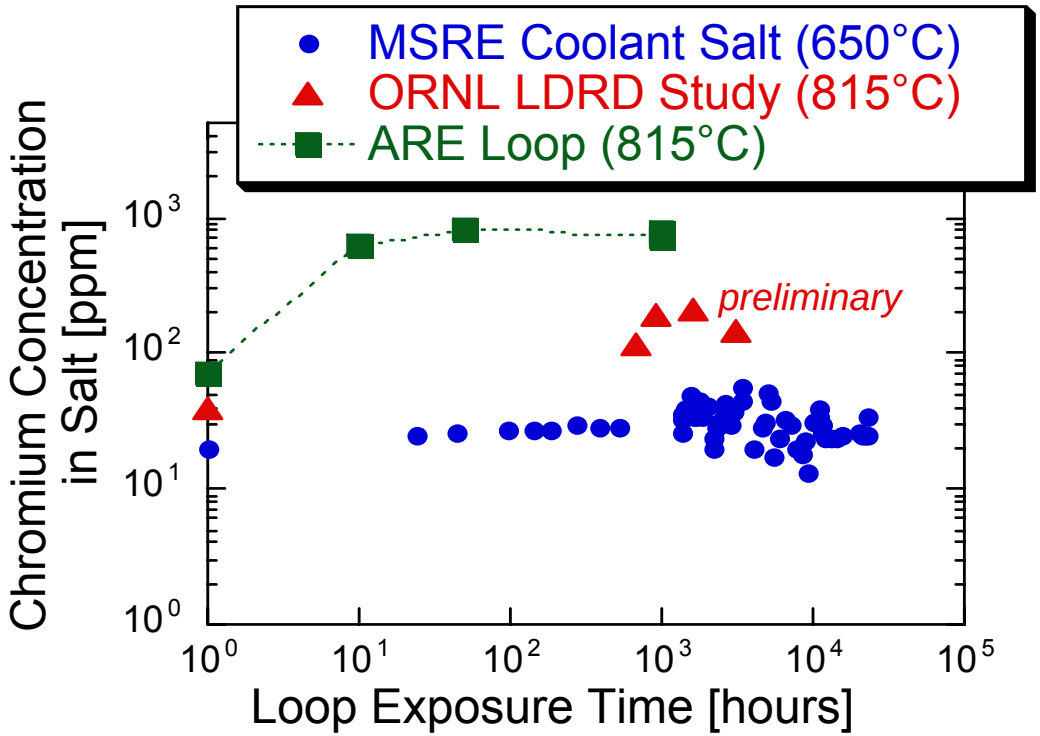
1. Salt Barrier
2. Low Pressure Traps
3. Containment Building

Adapted from IAEA TECDOC-978

Molten Fluoride Coolant can be Purified as Needed

No cleanup was needed for MSRE coolant salt (4 years of operation)

- No corrosion response was detected



- Special care was taken to keep inert cover-gas pure
- Control of the oxidation-reduction state of the salt will minimize corrosion and the need for cleanup

Contaminants Can be Removed from the Coolant

Non-radioactive contaminants:

Air, moisture ---> metal corrosion products (CrF_2, FeF_2, NiF_2)

Remnant oxides and hydroxides are removed by hydrofluorination
Structural metal fluorides are removed by reductive cleanup

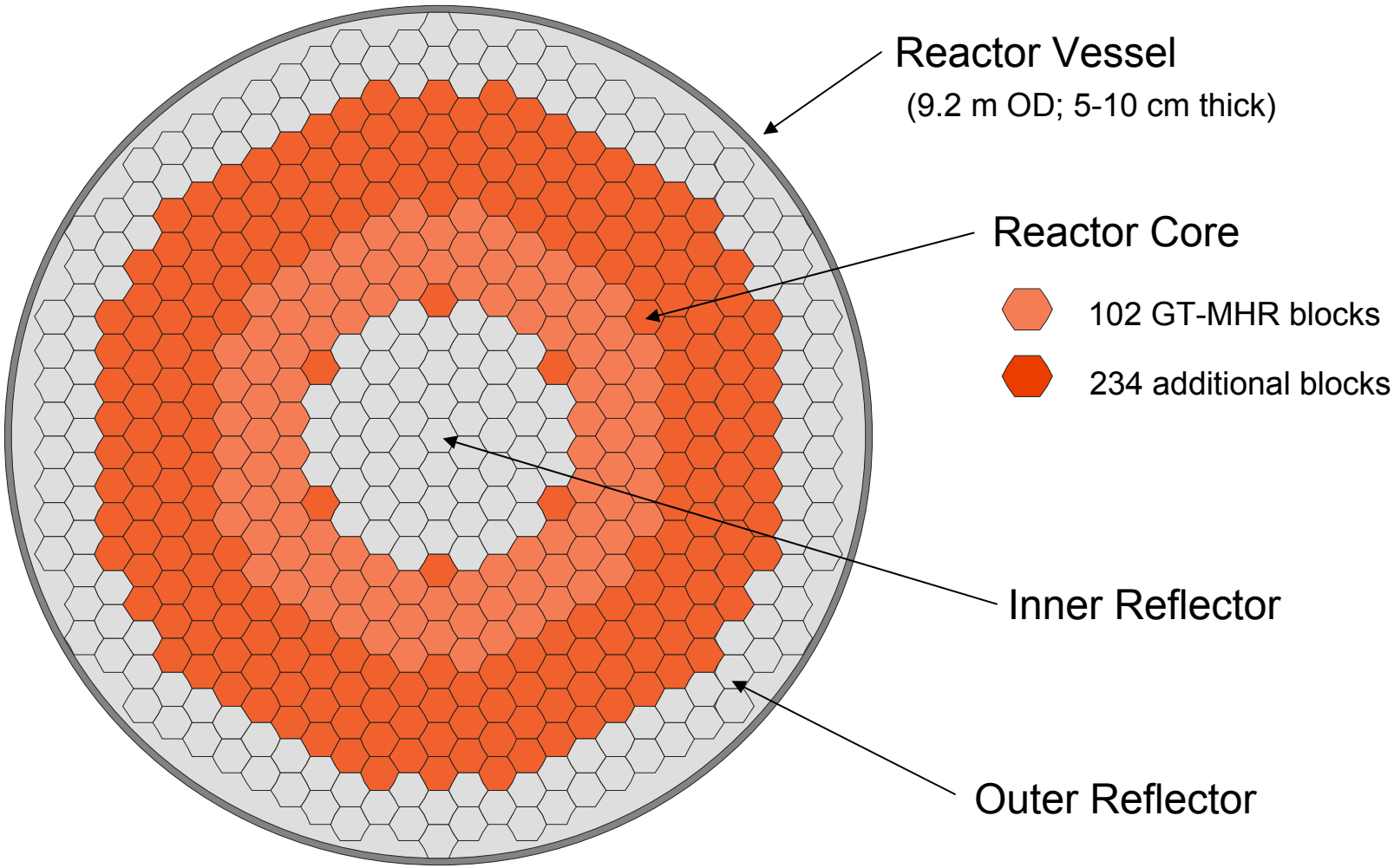
Primary Radioactive contaminants from TRISO: Ag, I, Cs

Silver - plates on cooler metal surfaces (like in HTR's)
any entrainment in salt is removed during reductive cleanup.
Iodine - is readily displaced by fluorine during hydrofluorination
Cesium - selectively removed by high temperature vacuum distillation

Unlikely radioactive contaminants - can be removed by either fluorination, reductive extraction, or distillation.

Reactor Core Design

Detailed Core View



AHTR Neutronics

To first approximation, the AHTR neutronics are very similar to the helium-cooled reactors. The same fuel is used, the power densities are similar, and the coolants have low nuclear cross sections. The fuel cycle and strong negative Doppler coefficients associated with gas-cooled reactors also characterize the AHTR. The Doppler coefficient implies that as the temperature goes up, the power level in the core decreases.

There is one significant difference. *Depending upon design*, a positive void coefficient is possible with a molten salt coolant. Several other reactor types have this characteristic: liquid-metal fast reactors and heavy water reactors. A positive void coefficient implies that if the core looses all coolant, the power level increases.

The AHTR characteristics in the context of a positive void coefficient are somewhat unusual. Analysis indicates that if the AHTR is designed with a positive void coefficient, the consequences of an accidental voiding of part of the core are very small. This is because of the very large negative Doppler coefficient. With coolant voiding, the power level goes up, the temperature goes up, and the Doppler effect reduces the power levels. The overall power coefficient is negative. The transient is very slow, unlike the transients predicted for other reactors with positive void coefficients. One would not expect core damage from such a transient.

The AHTR can be designed with a negative void coefficient with appropriate adjustment of enrichment, burnable absorbers, and geometry. The penalty for this is an increase in the quantity of fuel required. However, the thermal efficiency of the AHTR is about 50% greater than a LWR. As a consequence, the fuel efficiency (kW(e)/kg of natural uranium) is still expected to be superior to that of an LWR.

The potential for a positive void coefficient is a consequence of the different properties of the graphite versus the coolant. The AHTR has a thermal to intermediate neutron spectrum. The graphite and molten salt coolant act as neutron moderators and slow the neutrons down to allow their absorption by the uranium fuel. If one removes these neutron moderators, the reactor can not go critical (produce power). However, the two moderators are also neutron absorbers. Graphite has an extraordinarily low neutron absorption cross section. The molten salt coolants have low absorption cross sections compared to most materials (including water), but not as low as helium. Graphite, molten salts, and helium can be characterized by a moderator to absorber nuclear cross-section ratio that defines the relative tendency to moderate (slow down) neutrons versus absorb neutrons. The graphite has a higher moderator to absorber ratio than the molten salt. If the molten salt is removed, the moderator to absorber ratio of the non-fuel part of the reactor core improves, fewer neutrons are absorbed in the moderator, more neutrons are available to be absorbed in the fuel, and the power level can go up. However, removal of the coolant has other effects such as the loss of some of the moderator that is required. What actually happens depends upon the ratio of materials in the reactor core and the geometry. Under some circumstances, the core can have a positive void coefficient. The brute-force method to eliminate the positive void coefficient is add sufficient neutron absorbers to the graphite so its moderator to absorber ratio is the same as the molten salt. In this case the loss of the salt is like the loss of graphite: the reactor is under moderated, the void coefficient is negative, and the power level goes down. Major core design studies will be required to determine the optimum core design that maximizes economics while meeting safety criteria.

Void Coefficient vs. Salt Choice – SNL Model (No Neutron Absorbers)

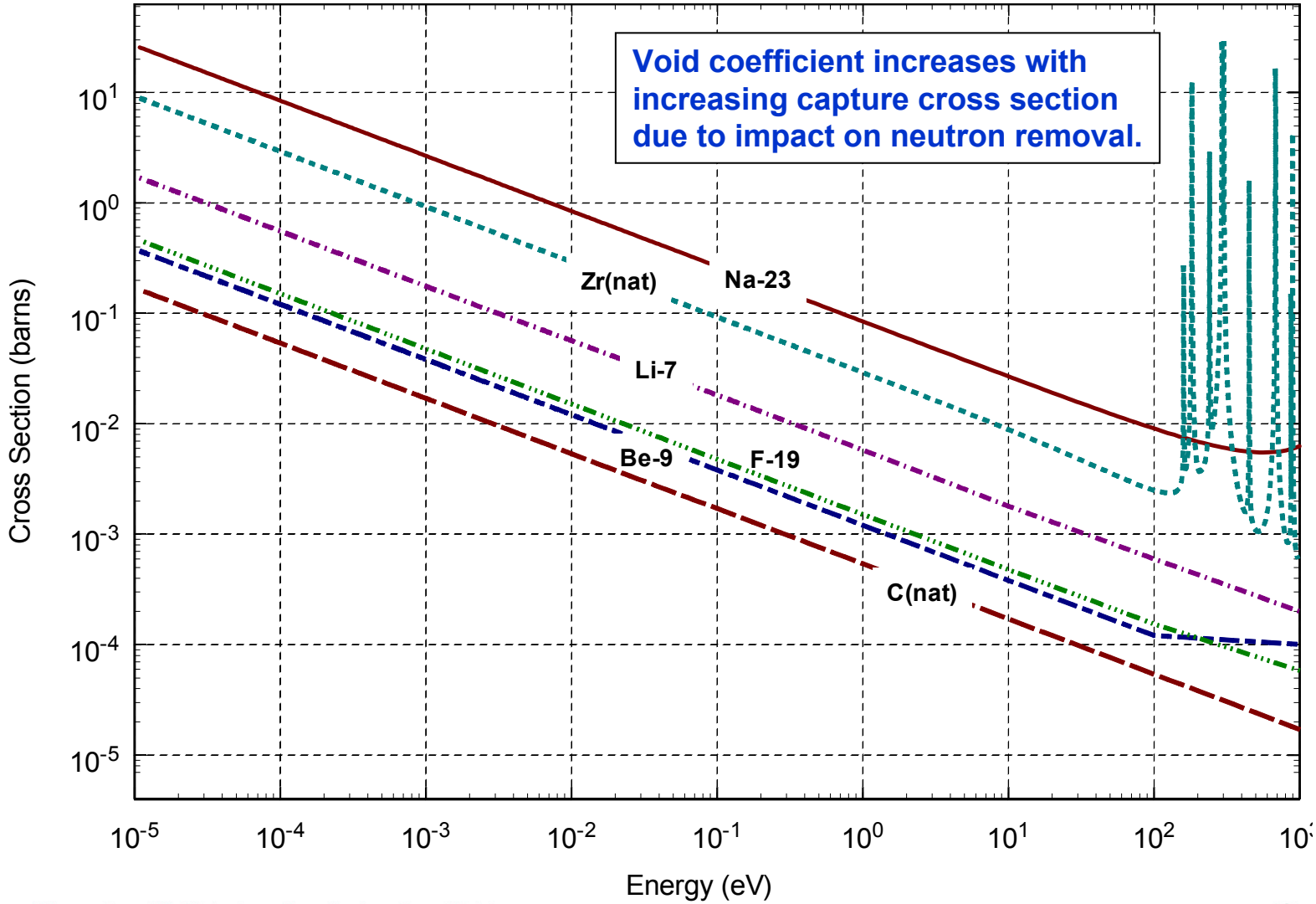
Salt	Total Void Reactivity Effect ($)
BeF_2	-1.46
LiF/BeF_2 (66/34)	-0.47
MgF_2/BeF_2 (50/50)	-0.49
---	---
LiF (Li-7)	+0.16
ZrF_4/BeF_2 (50/50)	+0.43
ZrF_4/LiF (52/48)	+1.25
---	---
NaF/BeF_2 (57/43)	+1.82
ZrF_4	+1.41
NaF/ZrF_4 (25/75)	+1.88
NaF/ZrF_4 (50/50)	+2.64
NaF/ZrF_4 (75/25)	+3.82
NaF	+7.05

- Example for 6.6% coolant volume fraction and complete core voiding
- Lower mass elements with low absorption cross sections can yield negative feedback
- Positive effects are reactivity limited

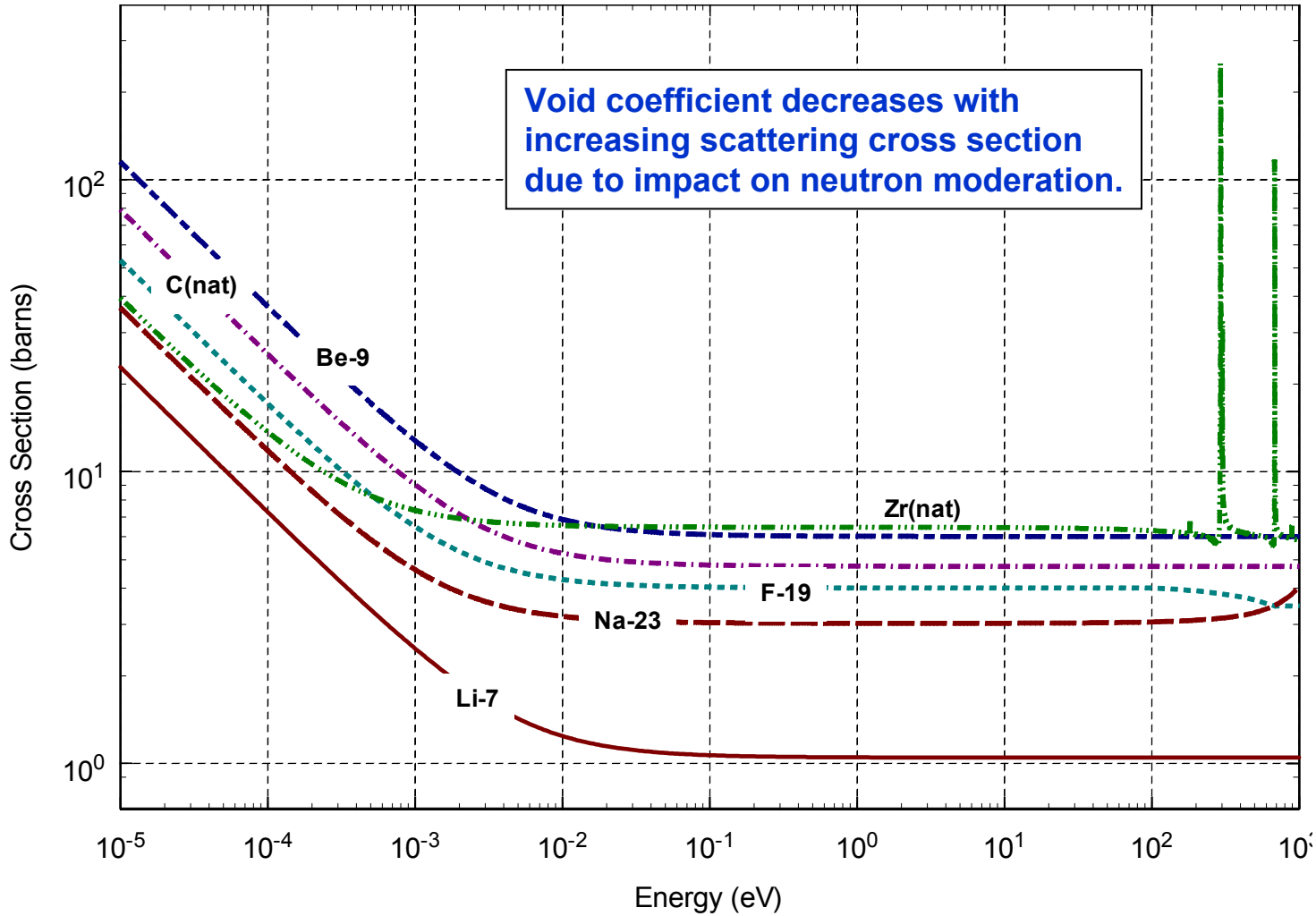
<u>Ranking (best to worst)</u>

Be, Li-7, Mg, Zr, Na

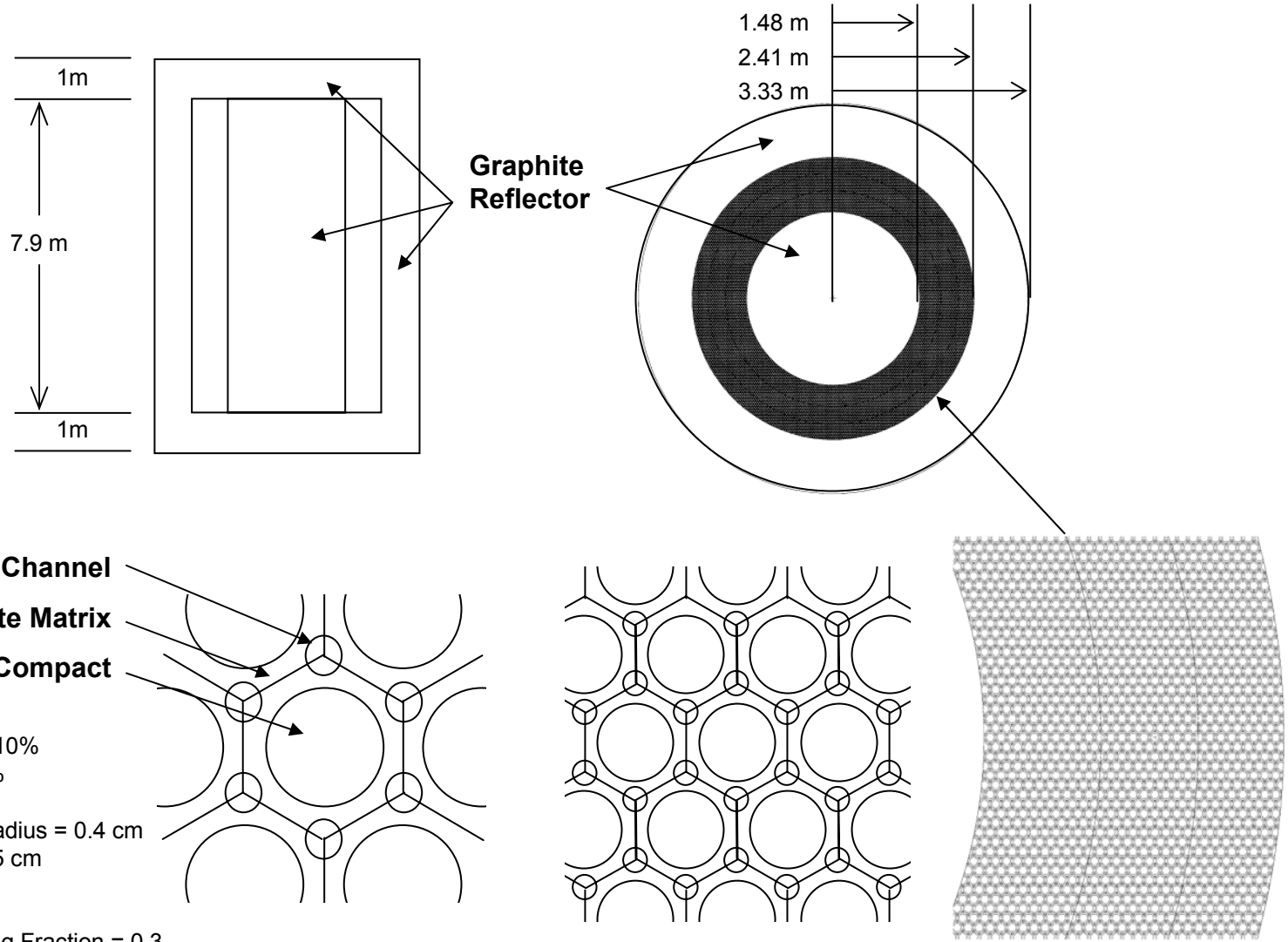
Void Coefficient Is Most Sensitive To Capture Cross Section of Salt Constituents



Void Coefficient Is Also Sensitive to Scattering Cross Section of Salt Constituents



Geometry for SNL MCNP Calculations



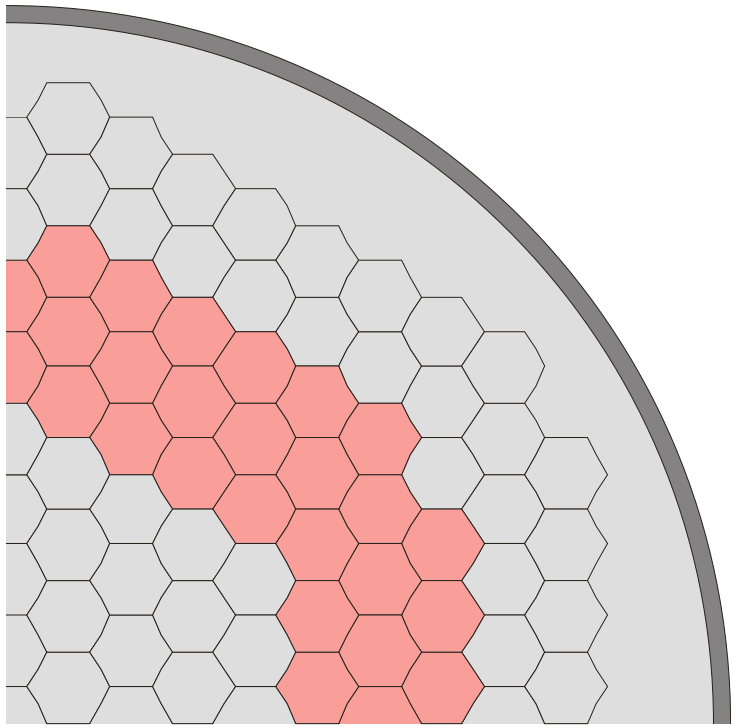
Coolant Fraction = 10%
Fuel Fraction = 50%

Coolant Channel Radius = 0.4 cm
Fuel Radius = 1.265 cm
Pitch = 3.407 cm

Fuel Particle Packing Fraction = 0.3

Impact of Burnable Poisons and ^{7}Li Purity on Void Coefficient – ORNL Model

BP Loading (grams of Er per block)	Lithium-6 Enrichment (atom-%)	Void Coeff. for full core voiding ($)
70	0.01	1.30
140	0.01	1.12
210	0.01	0.98
210	0.0	0.42

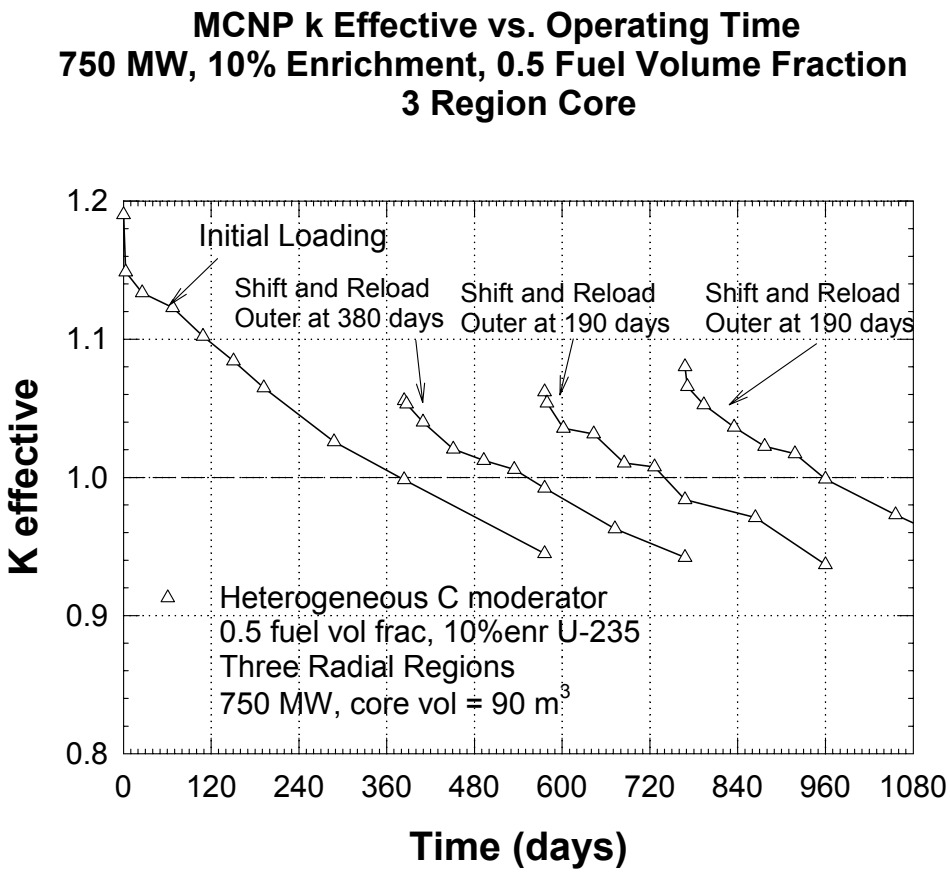


- 66%LiF-34%BeF_2 Salt
- 1 mol% VF_3 Buffer
- 102-column core (600MW)
- 900 °C coolant; 1200 °C fuel
- 14 wt% ^{235}U

Conclusions on Void Coefficient

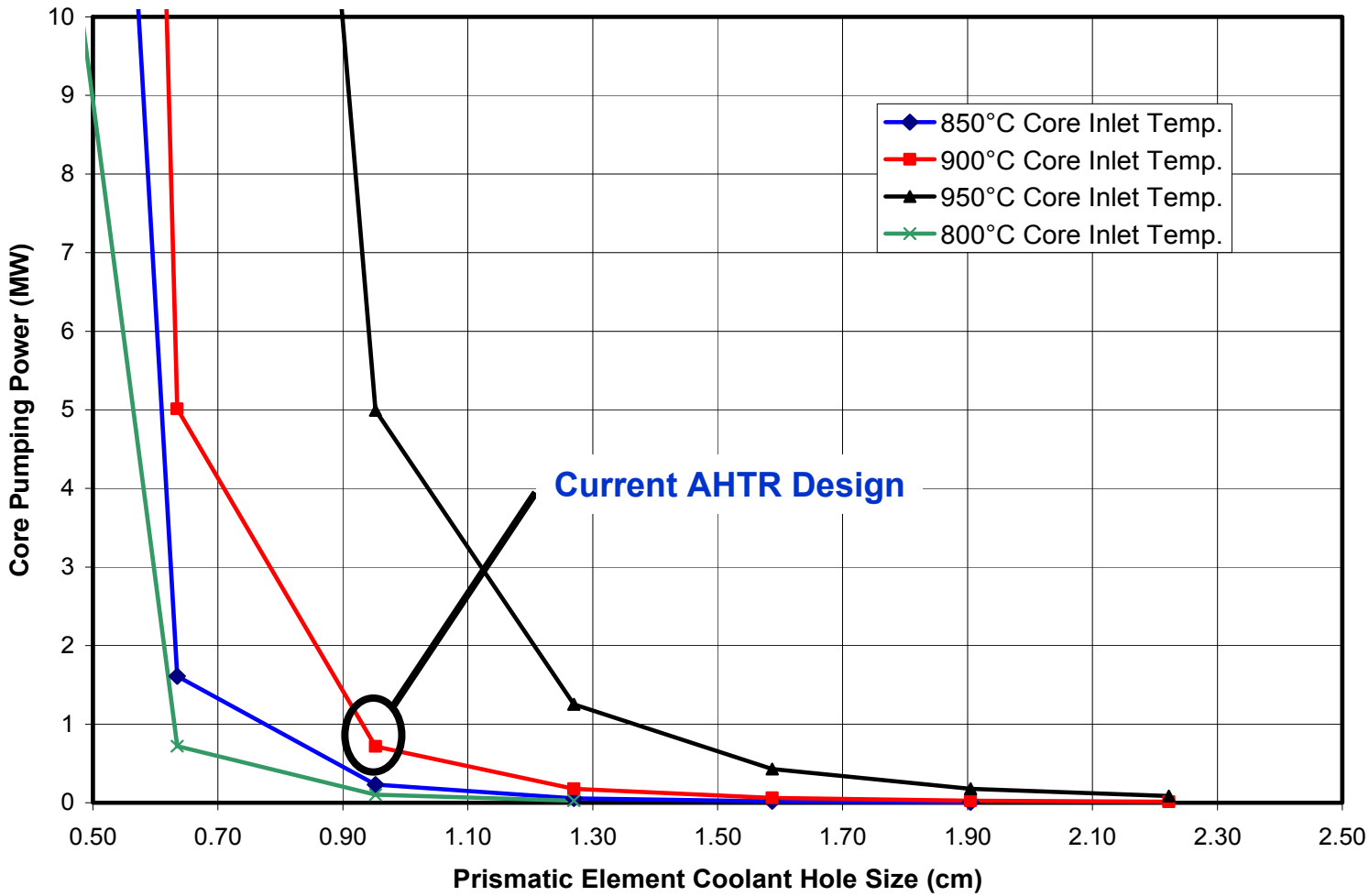
- Magnitude of coolant void coefficient (CVC) for LiF-BeF_2 decreases with increasing uranium loading and increasing burnable poison loading
- Magnitude of CVC depends on the neutron spectrum – it decreases with increasing U/C ratio
- Magnitude of CVC for LiF-BeF_2 is very dependent on the ^{7}Li purity in the salt
- Magnitude of CVC increases rapidly with increasing coolant hole diameter – higher relative coolant volume in the core
- Magnitude of CVC can be decreased by making the neutron spectrum of the coolant channels harder – higher fuel loading, higher burnable poison loading, poisoning the graphite blocks or replacing some of the graphite in the core with carbides, incorporate the coolant channels at the center of the fuel channels.
- Need substantial neutronics analysis to evaluate options for reducing or zeroing the CVC

Burnup Example for 8.3 W/cc – 90m^3 Core

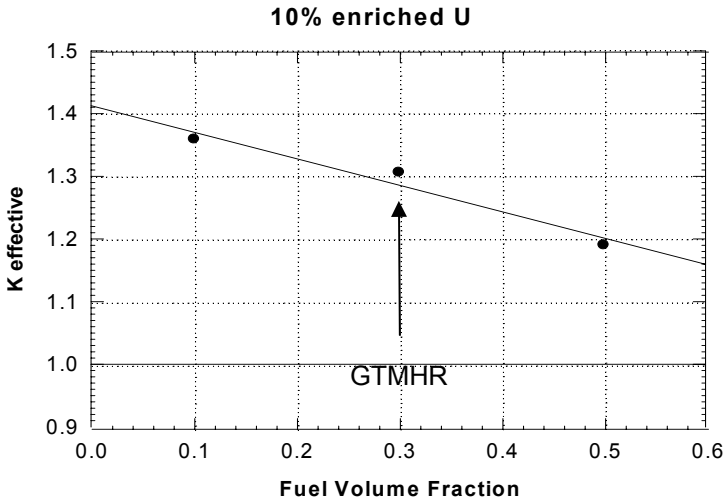


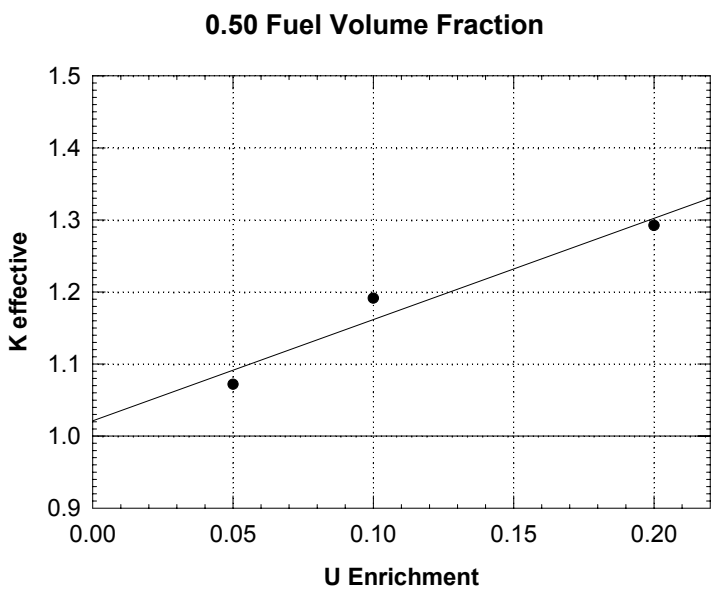
- Core life considerations similar to GTMHR
- 8.3 W/cm^3, core life is approximately 580 days (10% enrich, 0.5 fuel volume fraction
- Burnup similar to GT-MHR

Pumping Power Depends Heavily On Core ΔT and Coolant Channel Diameter



Neutronics for AHTR Are Similar to GTMHR





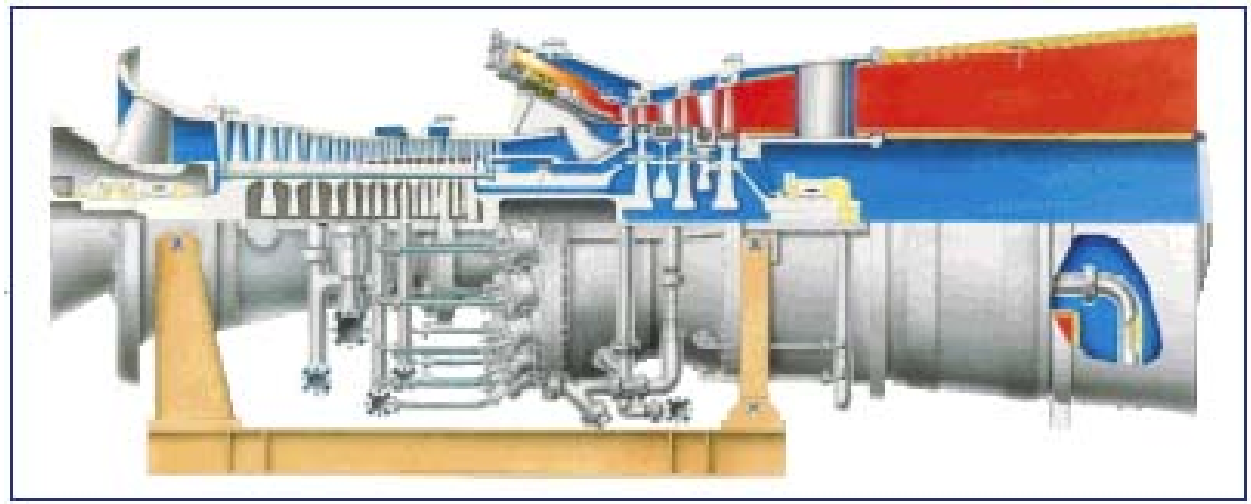
- Excess reactivity similar for given core loading
- Lower coolant volume fraction
- Neutron lifetime ~1ms
- k_{eff} increases with higher moderator to fuel ratio (undermoderated in design region)
- Similar fuel burnup and fuel cycle options
- Large negative temperature coefficient due to Doppler effects ~ -$0.01/K

Void Reactivity Worth Molten Salt/Graphite/Fuel Matrix Reactor
Core Radius = 241cm outer, 148cm inner, Height = 793cm
Volume Fraction of Flibe Salt = 0.065
Inner Region Graphite, Outer Reflector 92cm Graphite
Axial Reflector = 100 cm Graphite
Temperature = 900 ^{o}C
0.3 Particle Packing Fraction

Energy Conversion Data

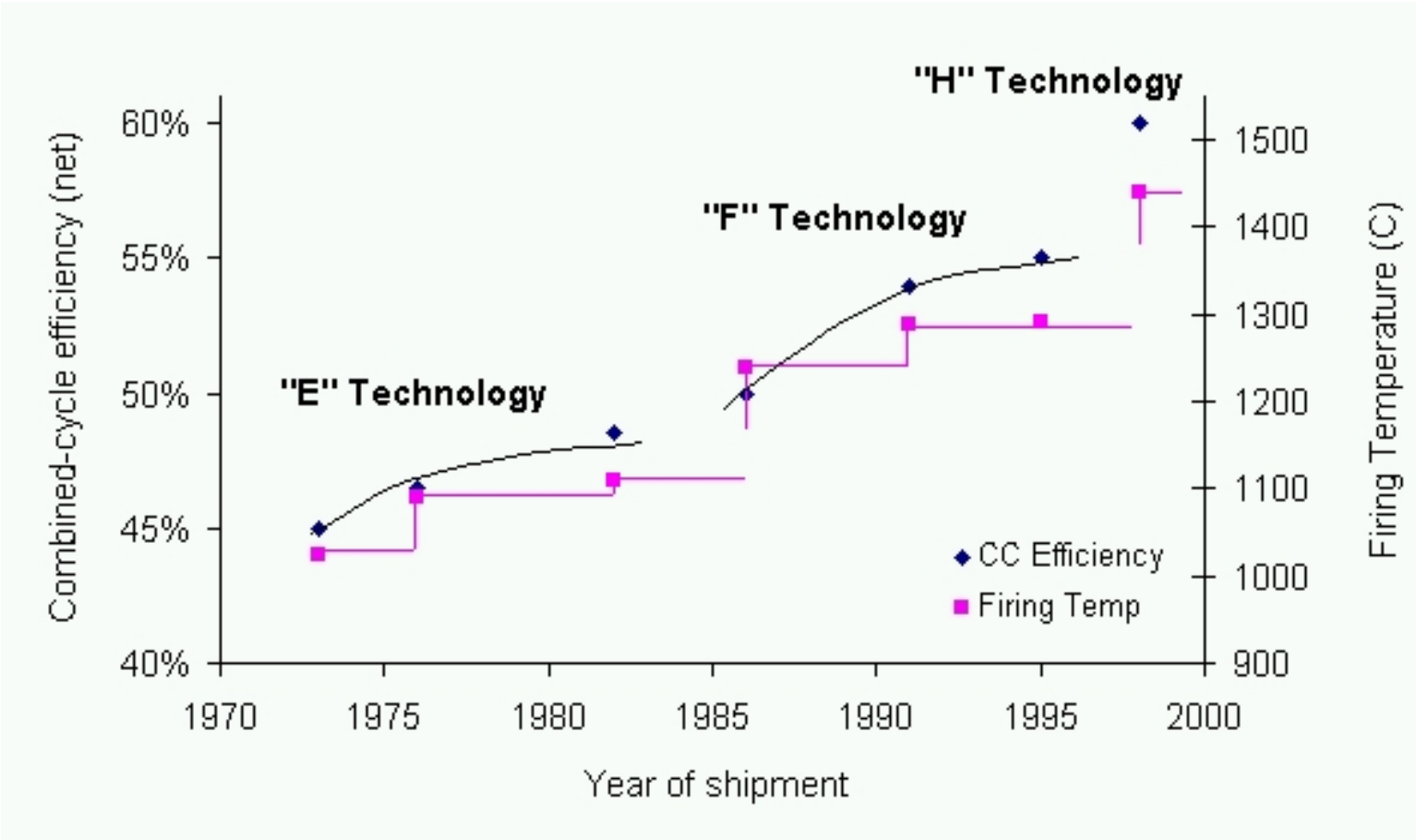
High Temperature Turbines

GE Power Systems MS7001FB
Introduced in November 1999; 9 purchased for New York plant
Designed for high efficiency, low life-cycle cost power plants
Uses single crystal materials developed for GE's jet engines
2500° F-class firing temperature (1644 K, 1371 °C)



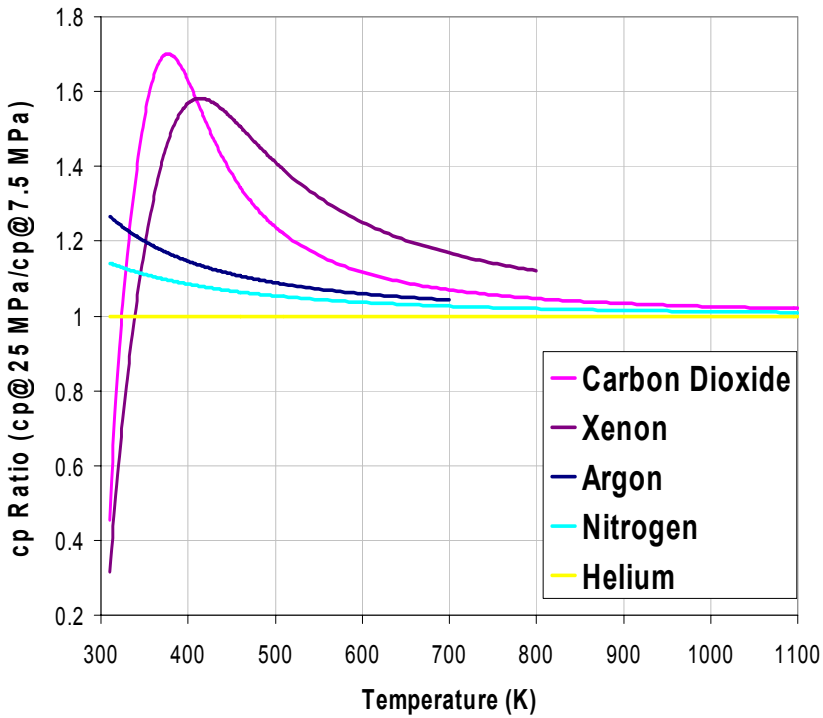
http://www.gepower.com/products/gas_turbines/7fb_intro.html

GE Turbines Have Steadily Increased Combined Cycle Efficiency



R. Anex, et al.,
http://www.ou.edu/spp/turbine/paper.html

AHTR Could Utilize Current Air Turbine Technology in a Closed N_2 Brayton Cycle as a Near Term Option

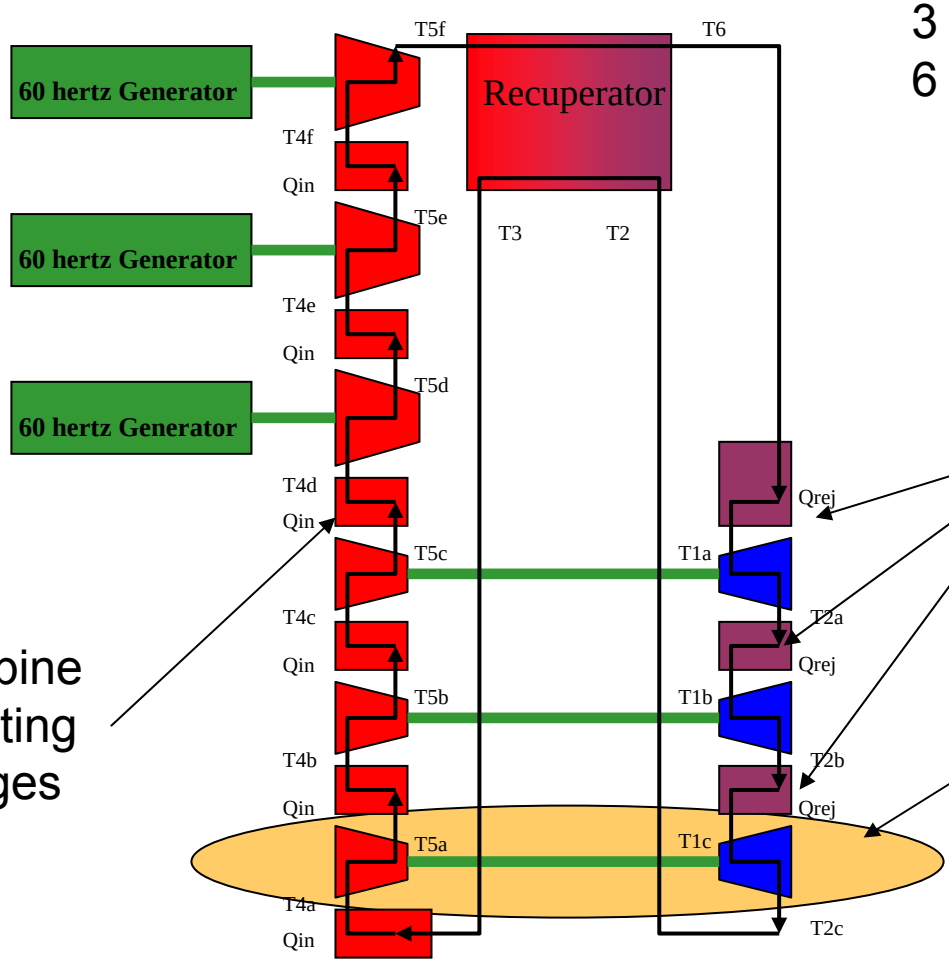


Constant Pressure Heat Capacity Ratio as a Funtion of Temperature for Various Brayton Cycle Working Fluids

- N_2 is nearly an Ideal Gas
- N_2 cycle has similar efficiency to He cycle
- N_2 turbine development could utilize air turbine technology
- Heat exchangers must be designed for lower N_2 heat transfer

Molten Salt Coolant (high heat capacity, low ΔT) Facilitates the Use of IC&H Technology and Independent Running Aircraft Turbine Technology

3 compressor stages,
6 turbine stages



compressor cooling stages

Turbine heating stages

Turbine staging could be incorporated from aircraft technology, since many of the stages will not have to operate at 60 hertz

Design Parameter Used In SNL Analysis

$turbine_{blade_height}(min) = 5\ cm$

$\Delta T_{across\ reactor} = 100K$

$\rho_{structural\ material} = 8\ g/cm^3$

$\sigma_{limit}(300K) = 68\ MPa$

$\sigma_{limit}(1000K) = 20\ MPa$

$\sigma_{limit}(1273K) = 10\ MPa$

$eff_{turbine} = 93\%$

$eff_{compress} = 85\%$

$eff_{QinHX} = 98\%$

$eff_{QrejHX} = 98\%$

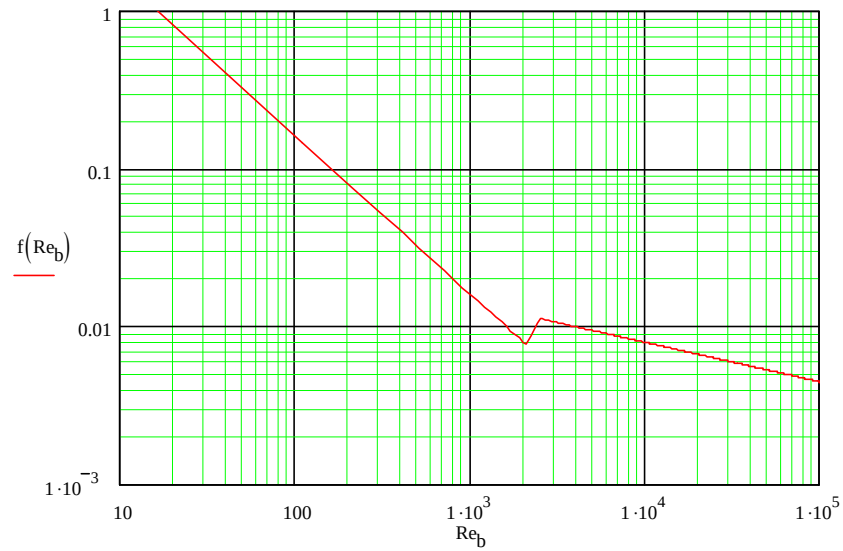
$eff_{QrecupHX} = 95\%$

$\Delta P/P_{recupHP} = 1\%$

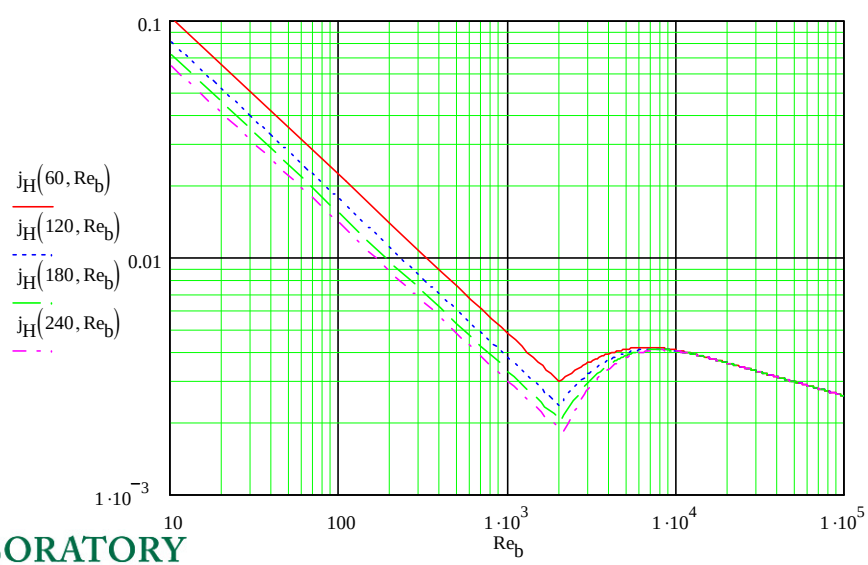
$\Delta P/P_{recupLP} = 2\%$

$\Delta P/P_{Qin} = 1\%$

$\Delta P/P_{Qrej} = 1\%$

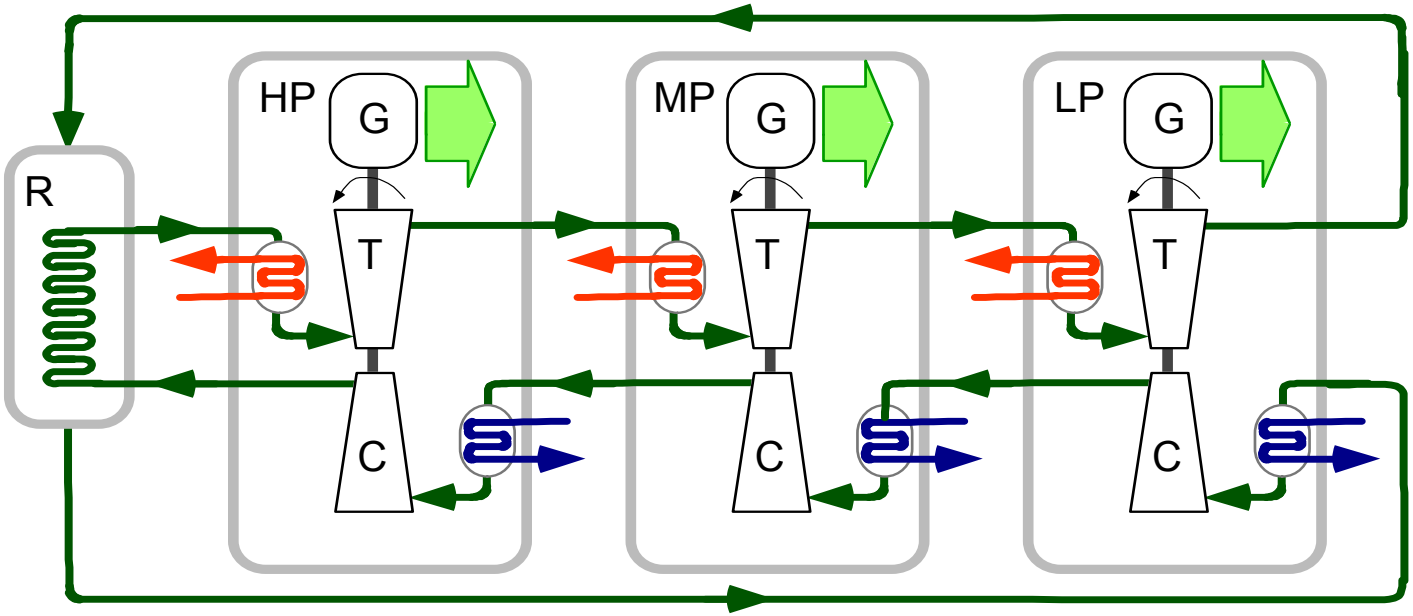


$$\frac{dP}{dx} := \frac{2 \cdot f \cdot mdot^2}{D_{hd} \cdot \rho \cdot A_{flow}^2}$$

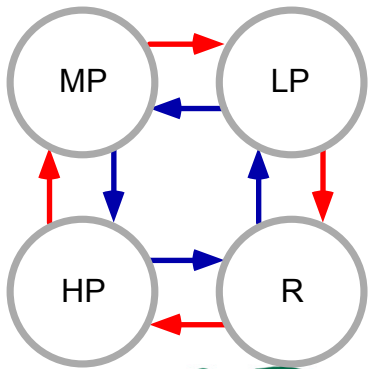


$$\frac{dT_g}{dx} := \frac{4 \cdot j_H \cdot \Delta T_{gw} \cdot \left(\frac{\mu_b}{\mu_w}\right)^{0.14}}{Pr_b^{.67} \cdot D_{hd}}$$

UCB Layout for a 2400 MW(t) Helium Brayton Cycle Based on Three GT-MHR Power Conversion Units (PCUs)



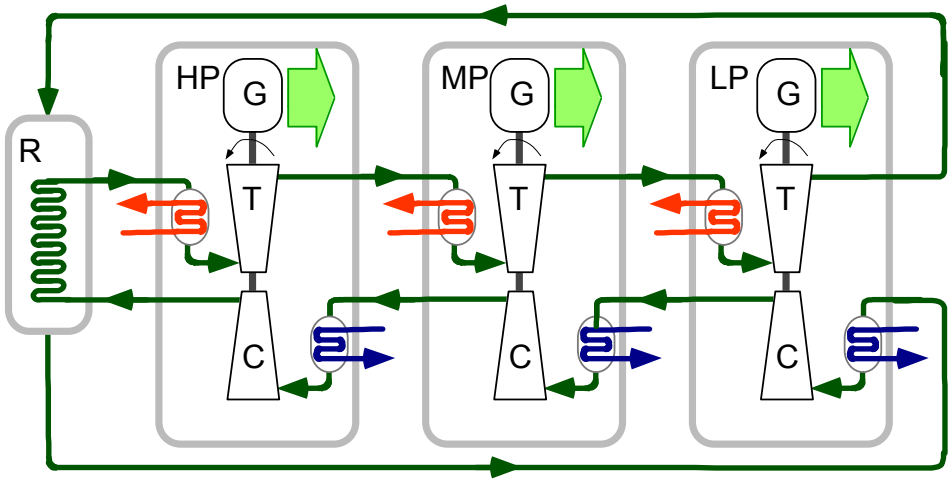
Schematic showing the multireheat Brayton cycle, with *n* = 3 turbine (T) / compressor (C) / generator (G) modules, each with a cooler and heater, and a recuperator (R) located in a fourth vessel.



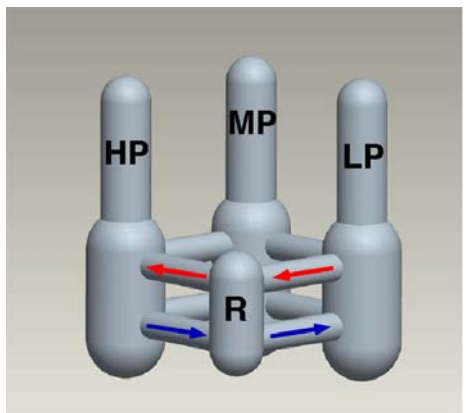
Schematic of physical arrangement of vessels and hot/cold leg flows

UCB Has Completed a Pre-conceptual Design Study for an AHTR Power Conversion System

- Pre-conceptual design allows comparison of AHTR Brayton cycle versus gas-cooled reactor power conversion
  - Based on GT-MHR power conversion unit (PCU) design
  - Includes calculations for MS-to-He heat exchangers
- Results for high-temperature design
  - 2400 MW(t)
  - 900°C turbine inlet temp.
  - 54% thermal efficiency
  - 1300 MW(e)
- Power density comparison
  - GT-MHR: 230 kW(e)/m^3
  - AHTR: 360 kW(e)/m^3
  - Additional AHTR savings due to non-nuclear grade turbine building



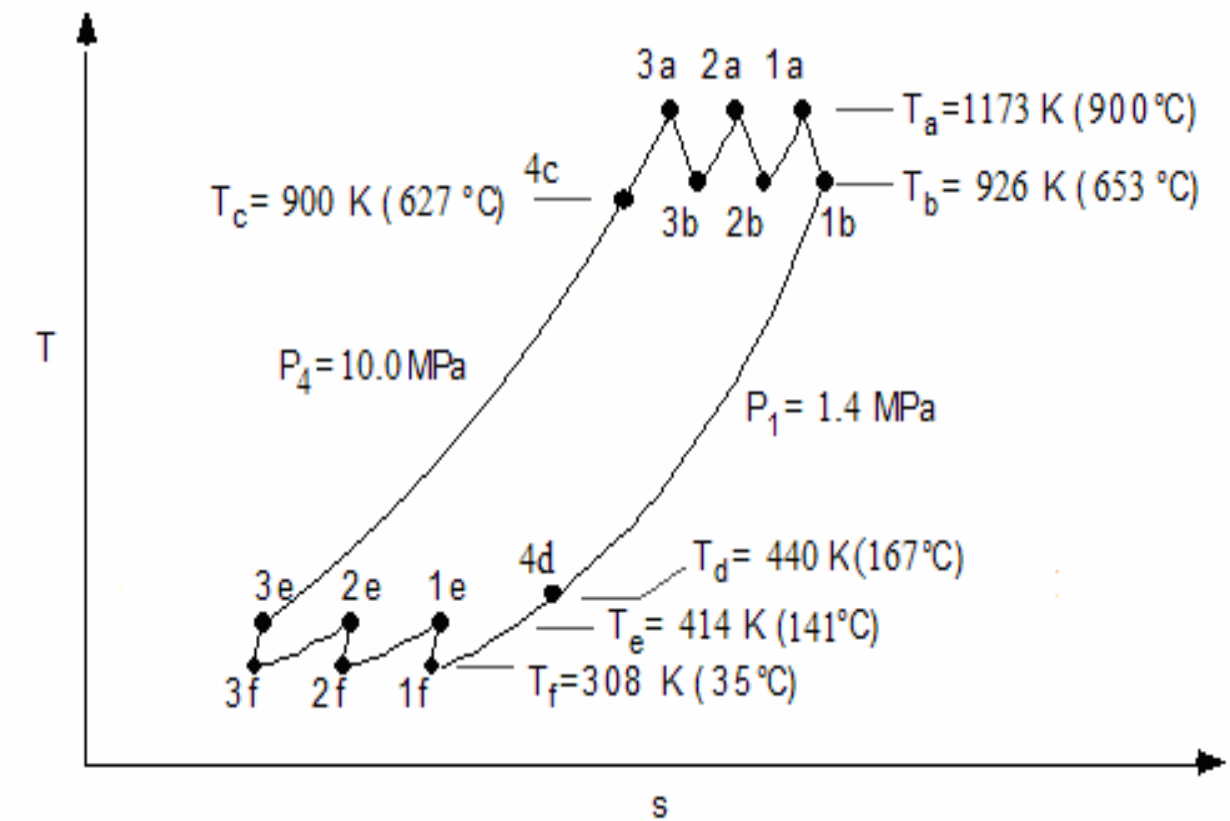
Components fit in four pressure vessels



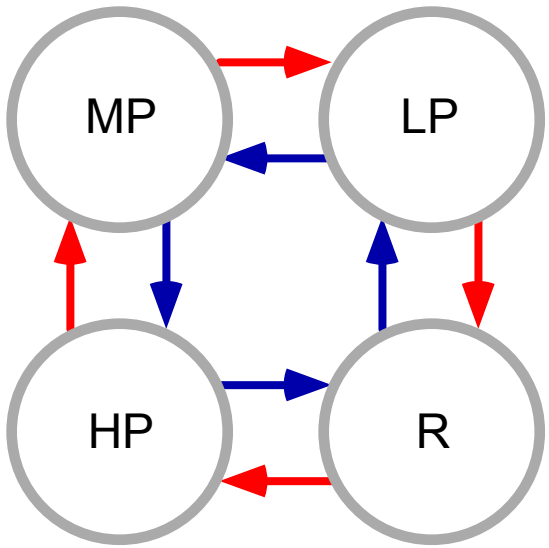
Physical arrangement based on the GT-MHR PCU (vessels are ~ 30 m high)

H. Zhao and P.F. Peterson, "A Reference 2400 MW(t) Power Conversion System Point Design for Molten-Salt Cooled Fission and Fusion Energy Systems," Report UCBTH-03-002 (Rev. B), Jan. 10, 2004.

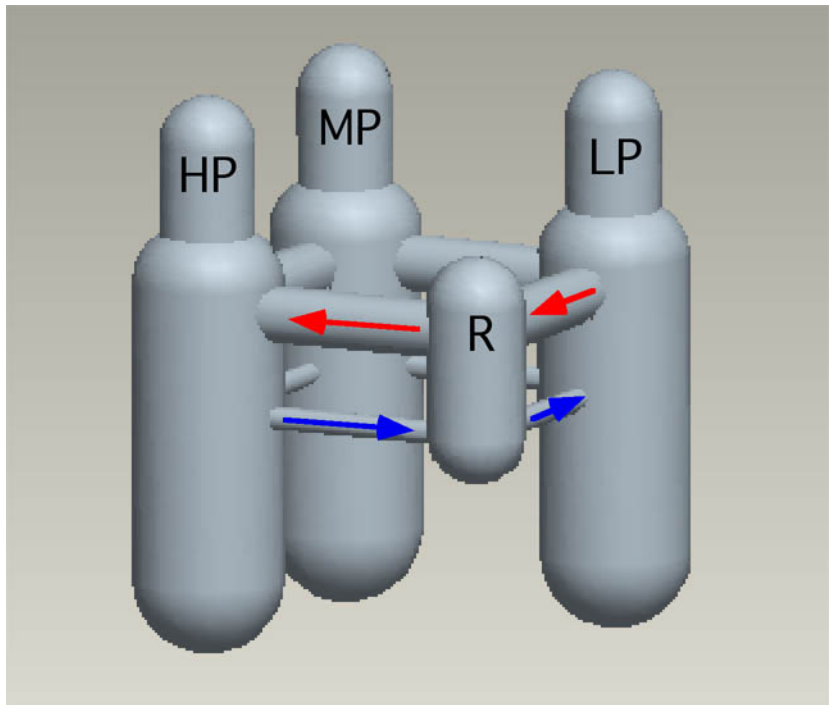
Temperature/Entropy Diagram for Helium Multi-reheat Brayton Cycle



Power Conversion Unit Arrangement Schematics



A very compact PCU arrangement is possible with a hot leg located above the cold leg. Hot leg hot duct operates at ~650°C, and ~10% of cold flow is bypassed upward to hot-leg annulus to cool the pressure boundary. ~90% of cold flow is transferred in lower cold leg, minimizing flow distance and pressure drop



Physical arrangement for the multi-reheat Brayton cycle based on the GT-MHR PCU (vessels are ~ 30 m high)

The PCU Requires Only Modest Modifications To The Current GT-MHR PCU

Current GT-MHR PCU (Russian design)

Changes Required for AHTR

Generator becomes taller due to higher power output

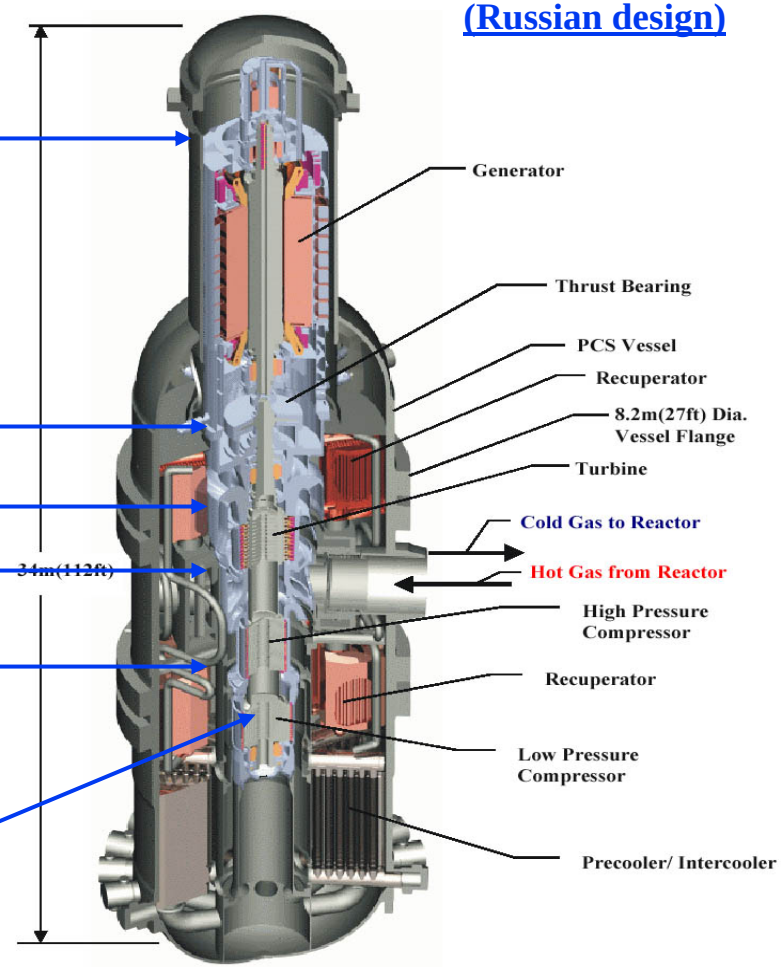
Hot cross-over legs at turbine exit elevation

Heaters located in annular space around turbine

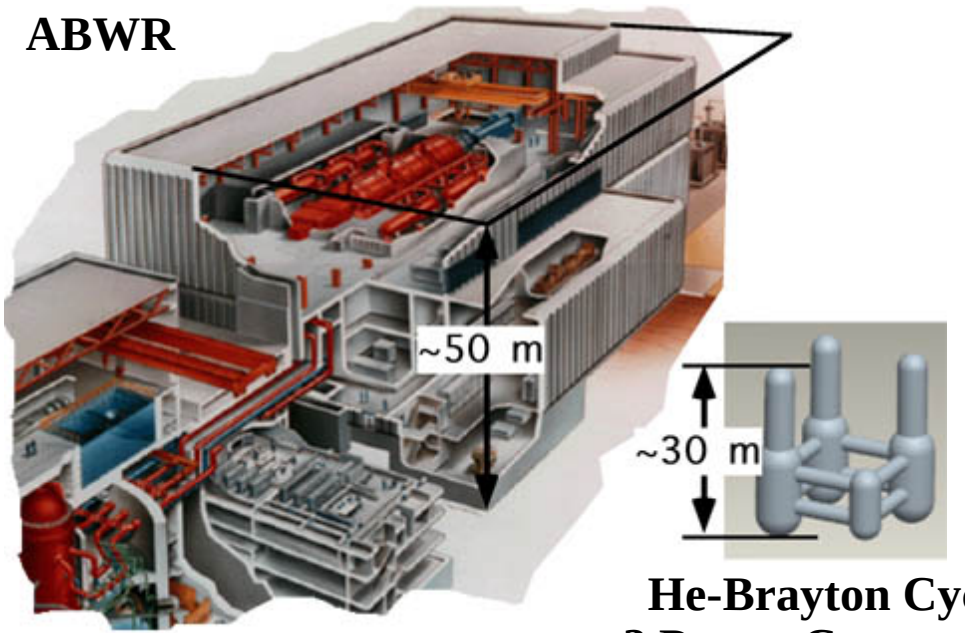
Cold cross-over legs at compressor exit elevation

Single compressor/cooler (no intercooling), cooler moves up into annular space currently occupied by lower recuperator

With higher peak pressure (10 MPa vs. 7 MPa, the AHTR turbomachinery size is only slightly larger in diameter, and similar length, to GT-MHR



Scaled Comparison of the 1380 MWe ABWR Turbine Building and ~1300 MW(e) AHTR



He-Brayton Cycle With
3 Power Conversion Units

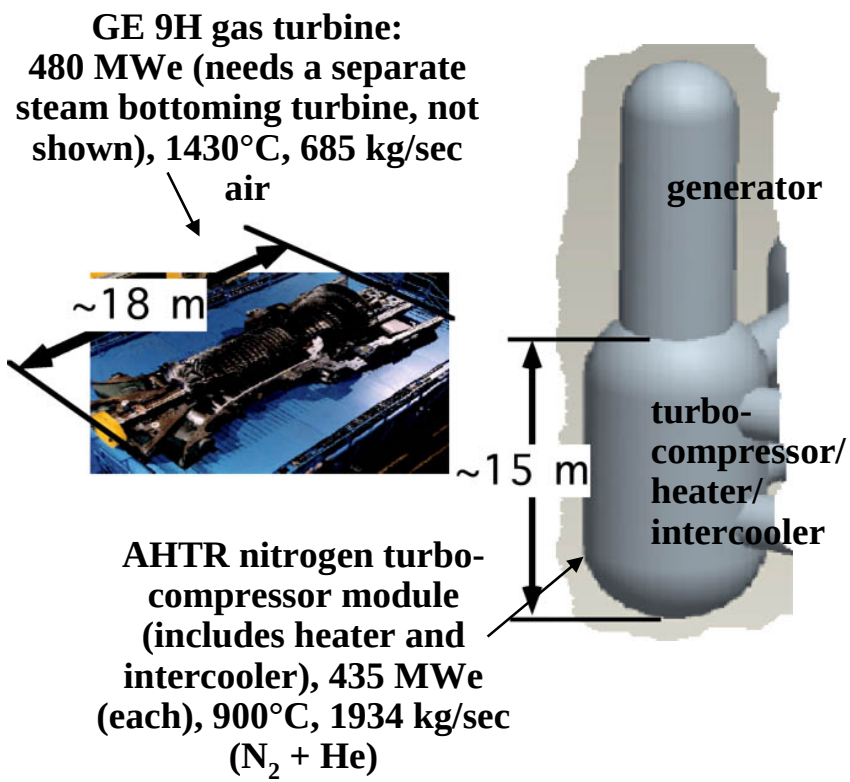
Advanced helium Brayton cycles can likely achieve a substantial reduction of the turbine building volume

- **AHTR turbine building must also contain crane, turbine lay-down space, compressed gas storage, and cooling water circulation equipment**
- **AHTR requires ~1100 MW(t) of cooling water capacity, compared to 2800 MW(t) for ABWR; no low-pressure turbines (steam)**

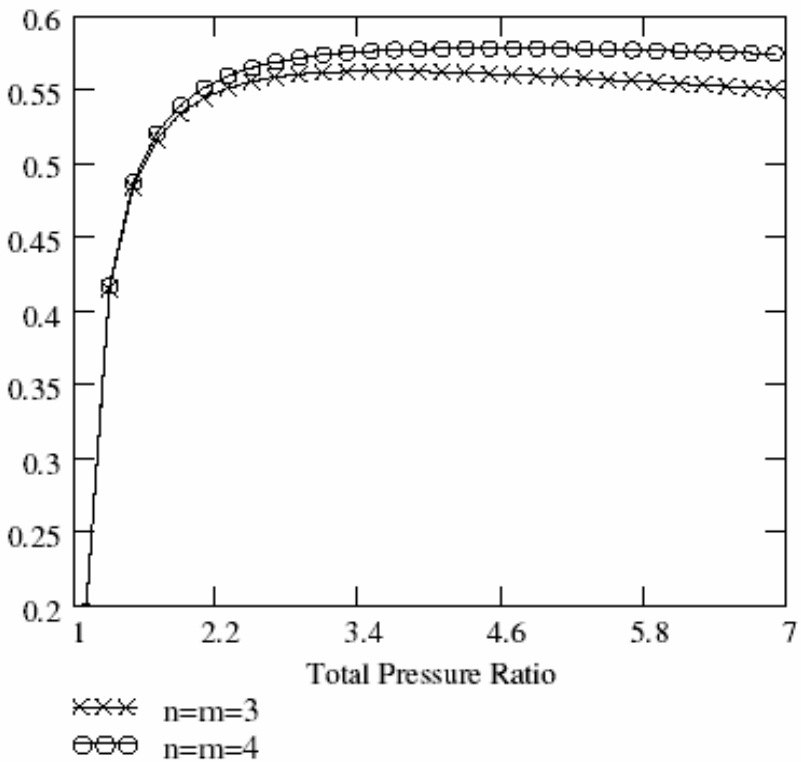
Design calculations for a nitrogen-based MCGC have also been recently completed

- Use N_2 with 10 wt. percent helium to increase heat transfer
- System volume increases by ~46% compared to pure He, for same efficiency
- Compressor inlet pressure is 0.7 MPa, compared to 0.1 MPa required for combustion turbines
  - Nitrogen turbo-machinery has ~ 3 times higher power density compared to modern combustion turbines (~5 times for helium)
  - Suggests favorable capital cost for power conversion system versus natural-gas combined cycle plants
- Horizontal turbomachinery configurations also possible
  - Trade bearing design issues for heater issues

Size comparison of module and a modern large combustion turbine



Thermal Efficiency Above 50% Is Achieved For a Wide Range of Pressure Ratios



Overall thermal efficiency versus total pressure ratio (for constant pressure loss P = 0.07)

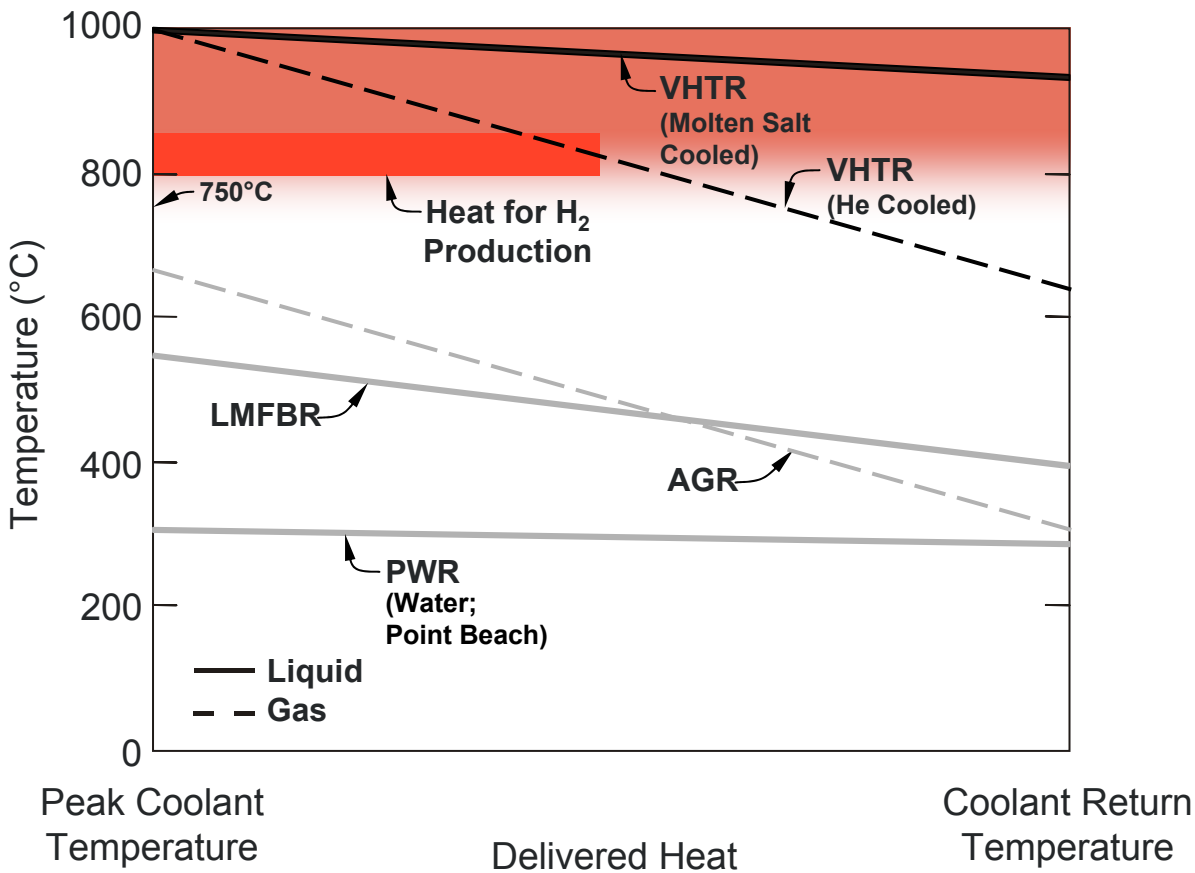
56% for optimal pressure ratio for 3 stages
Compare this value to:

- **Carnot cycle efficiency: 74%**
- **Current PWR & BWR: 34%**
- **GT-MHR: 48%**
- **Steam plant coal fired: 40%**
- **Gas turbine natural gas fired: 45-55%**

Thermal efficiency does not change significantly between pressure ratios of 3 and 7; higher pressure ratios give lower turbine exit and hot crossover leg temperatures, and more compact recuperators

Hydrogen Production Methods Require Much of the Heat To Be Delivered Over a Small Temperature Range

Liquid Cooling Can More Easily Achieve This Goal



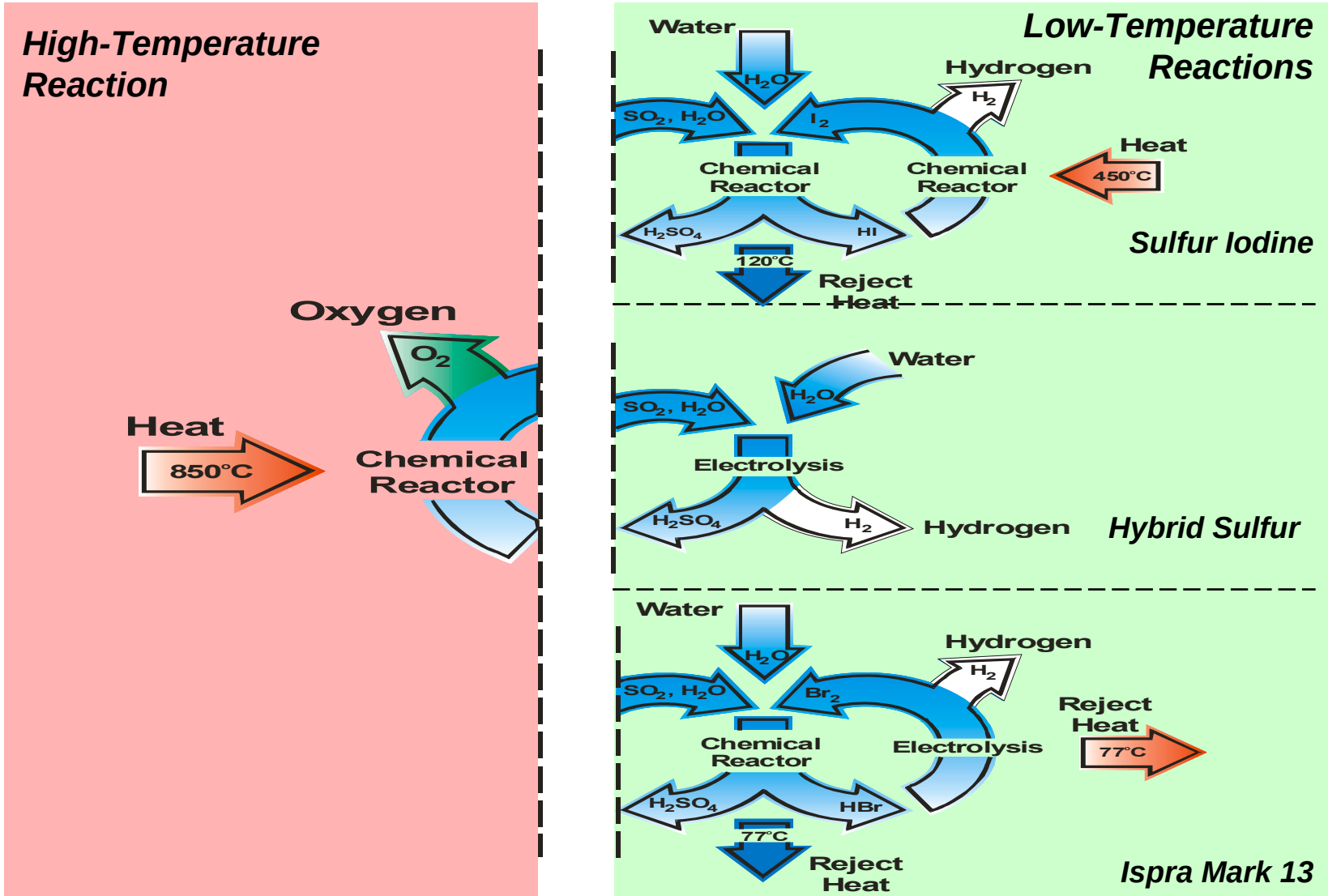
Hydrogen Production Methods

Leading candidates are thermochemical sulfur cycles

High-temperature step is the thermal decomposition of sulfuric acid

Requires most of the energy delivered at high temperatures

Sulfur Family of Thermochemical Hydrogen Production Cycles
(The Sulfur Cycles Include 3 Of The 4 Fully Demonstrated Cycles)



Economics Data

Initial AHTR Cost Analysis Is Based On Scaling and Combining Costs From S-PRISM and GT-MHR

	S-PRISM two blocks 1000 MWt per reactor indirect cyc 4 reactors	Block scaling exponents derived from ALMR 1-3 blocks	S-PRISM one block 2 reactors 1000 MWt per reactor	Estimated cost factors 2 to 1 reactors in same block	S-Prism one block one reactor 2000 MWt	Power scaling exponents 2000-2400 MWt	S-Prism one block one reactor 2400 MWt (912 MW_e)	GT-MHR 910720/1 target costs 4x600 MWt (1145 MW_e)	**AHTR (Mix & Match) (S-Prism & GT-MHR at 2400 MWt)** (1145 MW_e)	
							Indirect cycle	Direct cycle	**Indirect cycle**	
	4000 MWt		2000 MWt		2000 MWt		2400 MWt	2400 MWt	**2400 MWt**	
	1996 k$		1996 k$				1996 k$	1994 k$	**1996 k$**	
Land	0		0				0	2,000	**0**	S Prism
Structures & Improvements	232,000	0.82	131,166	0.80	104,933	0.5	114,948	149,000	**114,948**	S Prism
Reactor Plant equipment	900,000	0.86	497,025	0.81	404,081	0.6	450,793	353,000	**450,793**	S Prism
Turbine Pant equipment	236,500	0.99	118,674	1.00	118,674	0.8	137,309	211,000	**154,743**	GT-MHT: 3 units
Electric Plant equipment	128,000	0.85	70,981	1.00	70,981	0.5	77,756	65,000	**67,706**	GT-MHT
Misc plant equipment	39,000	0.51	27,464	0.80	21,971	0.3	23,206	31,000	**32,291**	GT-MHT
Main heat reject system	38,500	0.88	20,976	1.00	20,976	0.8	24,270	35,000	**28,479**	GT-MHT
Special Materials	20,000	1.0	10,000	1.00	10,000	0.8	11,570		**11,570**	S Prism
total direct cost	1,594,000		876,286		751,616		839,853	846,000	**860,530**	
Construction Services	138,000	0.71	84,365		72,362	0.4	77,837	107,000	**79,753**	S-Prism %
Home Office Engineering & S	69,000	0.34	54,383		46,646	0.2	48,378	68,000	**49,569**	S-Prism %
Field Office Engineering & Sc	79,000	0.71	48,402		41,516	0.4	44,657	52,000	**45,756**	S-Prism %
Owner's Cost	290,000	0.83	163,017		139,824	0.4	150,402	150,000	**154,105**	S-Prism %
total indirect	576,000		350,167		300,348		321,274	377,000	**329,184**	
Base Construction Cost	2,170,000		1,226,452		1,051,964		1,161,127	1,223,000	**1,189,714**	
Contingency	0		0		0		0	295,000	**0**	S-Prism %
Overnight Cost	2,170,000		1,226,452		1,051,964		1,161,127	1,518,000	**1,189,714**	
electrical power, MWe	1520		760		760		912	1145	**1145**	GT-MHR
$/kWe, Overnight	1,428		1,614		1,384		1,273	1,326	**1,039**	
2002_$/kWe, Overnight	1,580		1,786		1,532		1,409	1,528	**1,150**	
Relative_$/kWe, Overnight	1.00		1.13		0.97		0.89	0.97	**0.73**	