



Nuclear Energy: Principles, Practices, and Prospects

By David Bodansky

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This second edition represents an extensive revision of the first edition, - though the motivation for the book and the intended audiences, as described in the previous preface, remain the same. The overall length has been increased substantially, with revised or expanded discussions of a number of topics, - including Yucca Mountain repository plans, new reactor designs, health effects of radiation, costs of electricity, and dangers from terrorism and weapons proliferation. The overall status of nuclear power has changed rather little over the past eight years. Nuclear reactor construction remains at a very low ebb in much of the world, with the exception of Asia, while nuclear power's share of the electricity supply continues to be about 75% in France and 20% in the United States. However, there are signs of a heightened interest in considering possible nuclear growth. In the late 1990s, the U. S. Department of Energy began new programs to stimulate research and planning for future reactors, and many candidate designs are now contending—at least on paper—to be the next generation leaders. Outside the United States, the commercial development of the Pebble Bed Modular Reactor is being pursued in South Africa, a French- German consortium has won an order from Finland for the long-planned EPR (European Pressurized Water Reactor), and new reactors have been built or planned in Asia. In an unanticipated positive development for nuclear energy, the capacity factor of U. S. reactors has increased dramatically in recent years, and most operating reactors now appear headed for 20-year license renewals.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The material presented here is largely accessible to anyone interested in nuclear energy. This book is the best of its kind in providing a well-written survey of the science, technology, safety, and economics of the full range of nuclear issues, including power, waste, weapons, terrorism, biological effects, and the future of the nuclear industry. This book is highly recommended both for its content and its accuracy, and should be read by everyone interested in our nuclear future."

-CHOICE

From the Back Cover

The world faces serious difficulties in obtaining the energy that will be needed in coming decades for a growing population, especially given the problem of climate change caused by fossil fuel use. This book presents a view of nuclear energy as an important carbon-free energy option. It discusses the nuclear fuel cycle, the types of reactors used today and proposed for the future, nuclear waste disposal, reactor accidents and reactor safety, nuclear weapon proliferation, and the cost of electric power. To provide background for these discussions, the book begins with chapters on the history of the development and use of nuclear energy, the health effects of ionizing radiation, and the basic physics principles of reactor operation.

The text has been rewritten and substantially expanded for this edition, to reflect changes that have taken place in the eight years since the publication of the first edition and to provide greater coverage of key topics. These include the Yucca Mountain repository plans, designs for next-generation reactors, weapons proliferation and terrorism threats, the potential of alternatives to nuclear energy, and controversies about low-level radiation.

Acclaim for the first edition:

"...The book provides a superb background for scientists and those in technical fields. It provides probably all the information that many people, including government policy makers, will ever need...[a] well-written and balanced book. This book is recommended for anyone who wants a broad technical background on nuclear energy."

-American Journal of Physics

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