



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

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Nuclear Energy

Numerical Estimation of the Spent Fuel Ratio

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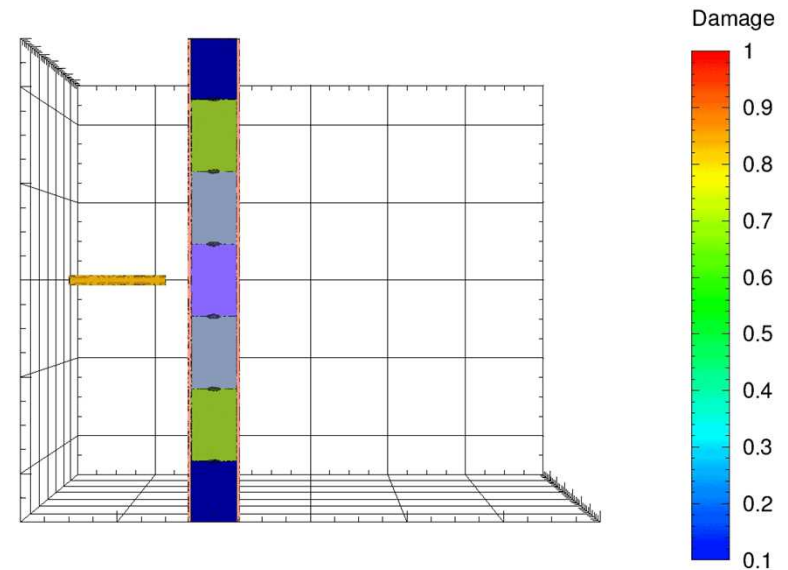
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SAND2015-####





Motivation

- **Releases of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) by sabotage could have significant impacts to the public health and nuclear industry**
 - Need to quantify the amount released (source term)
 - Subject of research for almost 40 years in US
 - Early studies were overly conservative due to lack of data
 - Model refinements as a result of testing

■ **5.6 > 3 > 1**



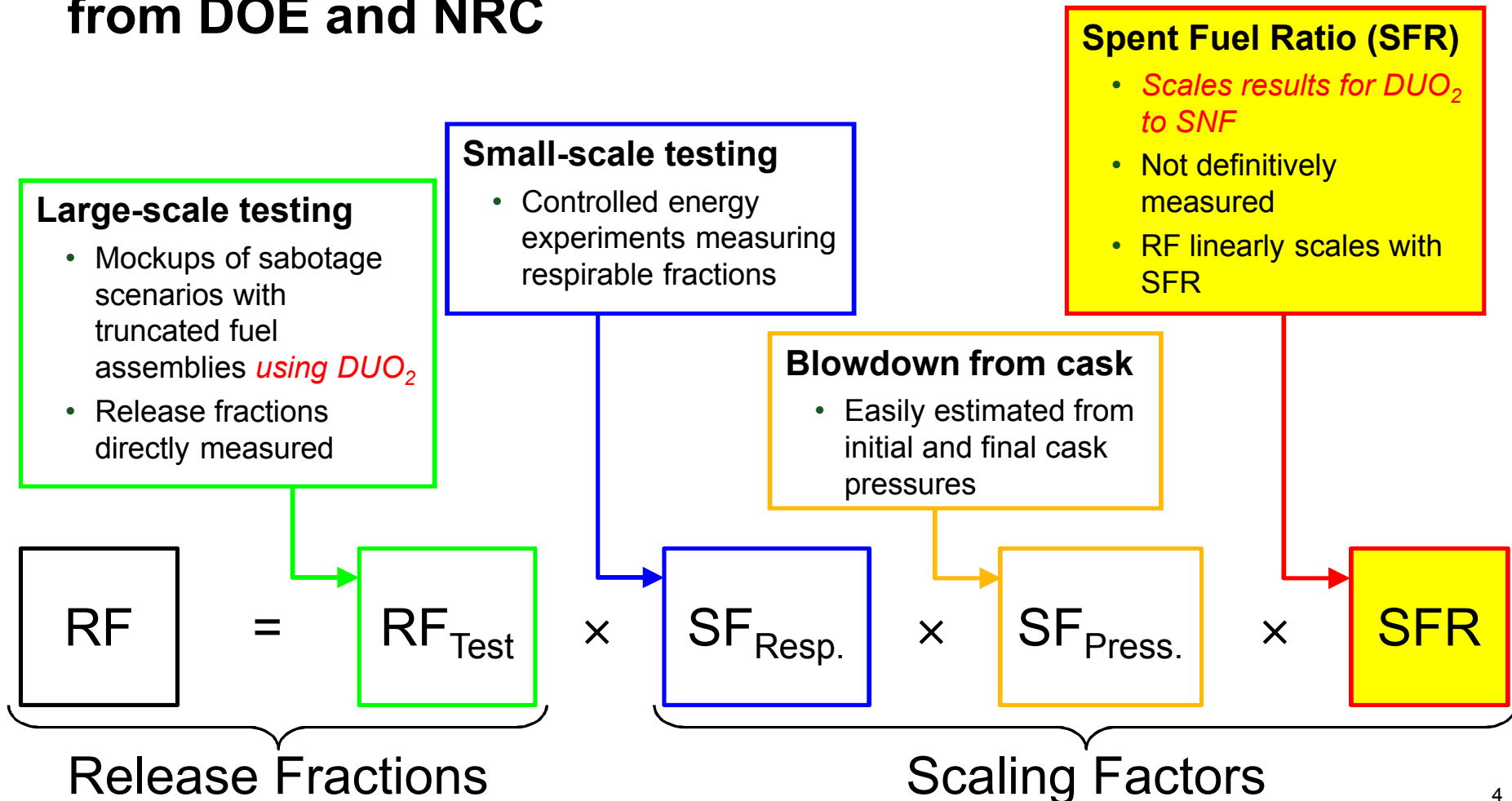
Spent Fuel Ratio (SFR)

- **Surrogate fuel pellets may aerosolize differently than actual spent fuel**
 - Spent fuel pellets undergo changes to bulk material properties such as density and porosity due to irradiation
- **Data needed to scale release fractions determined from previous large-scale tests conducted with surrogate (DUO₂)**
- **SFR quantifies the respirable aerosols produced by an high energy device (HED) acting on spent fuel compared to a surrogate material**
 - $$\text{SFR} = \frac{\text{RF}_{\text{Spent Fuel}}}{\text{RF}_{\text{Surrogate}}}, \text{ Aerodynamic Equivalent Diameter (AED)} < 10 \mu\text{m}$$
 - Comparisons must be made under identical conditions
 - Statistically significant number of experiments are required
 - Or modeling using acceptable, simplifying assumptions
- **Underlying physics highly complex**



Current Source Term Evaluation

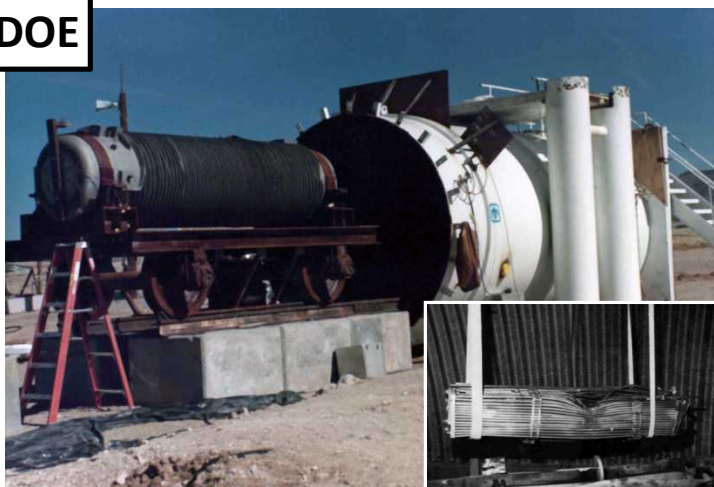
Model developed over several decades with support from DOE and NRC





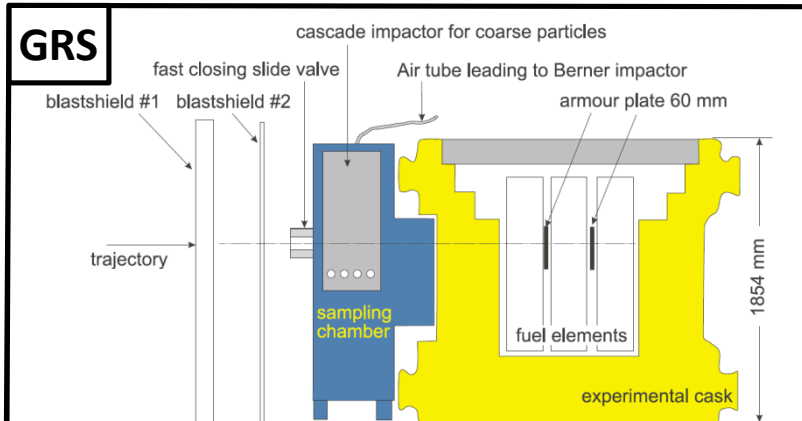
Large-Scale Cask Sabotage Testing

DOE



Sandoval, R.P, et al., "An Assessment of the Safety of Spent Fuel Transportation in Urban Environs," SAND82-2365, 1983.

GRS



Lange, F., et al., "Experiments to Quantify Potential Releases and Consequences from Sabotage Attack on Spent Fuel Casks," 13th Int. Sym. on Packaging and Transportation of Radioactive Materials, Chicago, IL, 2001.

■ DOE sponsored full-scale test of obsolete truck cask (SAND82-2365)

- High energy density device (HED) directed at cask
- 15×15 PWR truncated assembly *with DUO₂*
 - Cask and fuel unpressurized
 - ~3 g released in "respirable" range

■ GRS sponsored full-scale test mimicking CASTOR (Lange, et al.)

- 17×17 PWR assemblies *with DUO₂* pressurized to 40 bar
 - First two tests (1 bar) released ~1 g
 - Third test (0.8 bar) 0.35 g



Significant Differences between DUO_2 and SNF

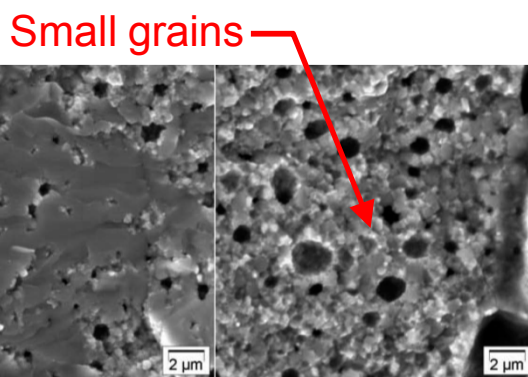
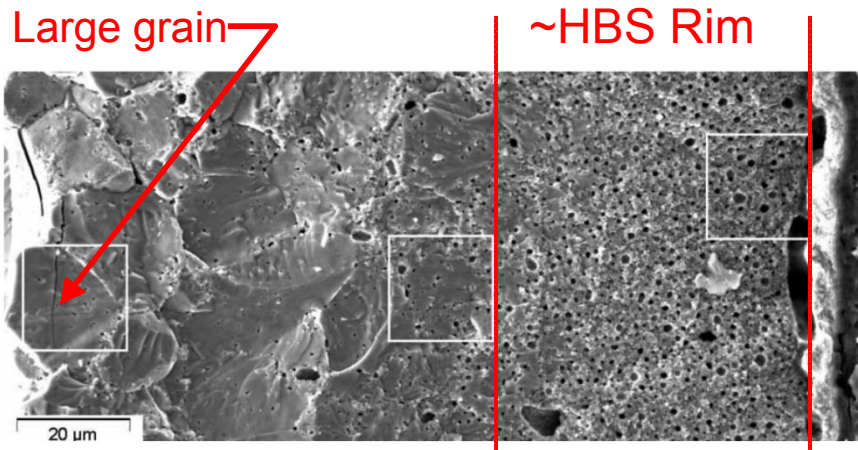
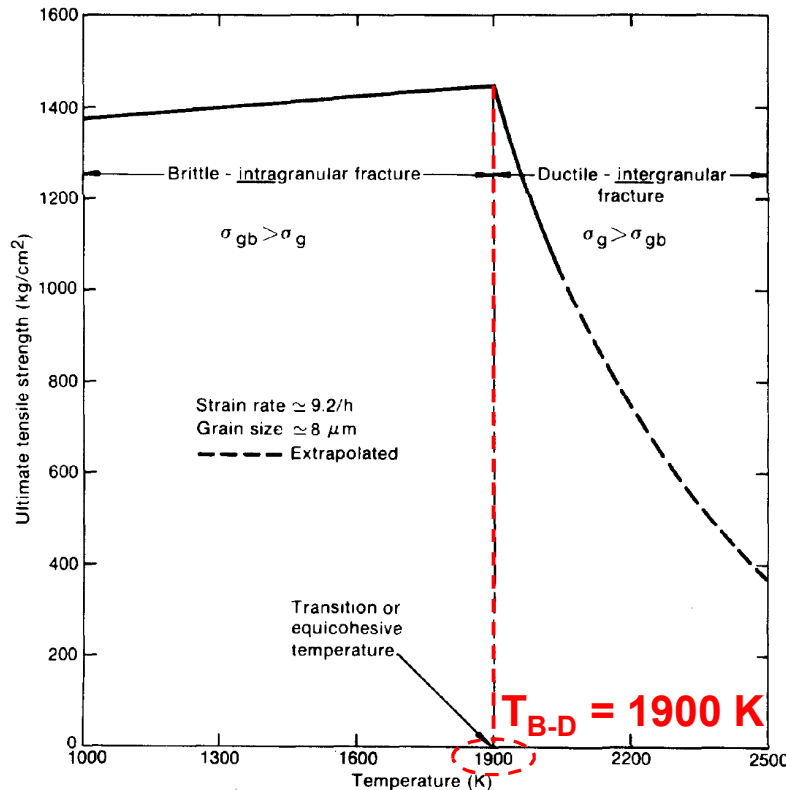


Fig. 11. SEM Fractograph of the 73 GWd/tU Sample Periphery

- **Bulk changes from irradiation**
 - Density decreases
 - Porosity increases
 - Pellet swells
- **Grain size decreases**
 - ~20 μm grains in fresh fuel
 - ~0.5 μm grains in high burnup structure
- **High Burnup Structure (HBS)**
 - ~60 μm thick rim
 - Small volume fraction
 - Rim burnup ~2x bulk burnup
 - Possible to simulate properties as $f(r)$ with current modeling tools
 - Not explored in these results



Importance of the Transition Temperature

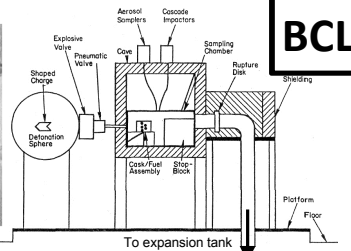
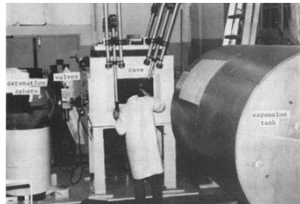


- Brittle-ductile transition $T_{B-D} = 1900\text{ K}$
- Brittle fracture if $T_{Fracture} \leq T_{B-D}$
 - Fractures through the ceramic grains (intragranular)
 - Argument for fractures independent of grain size
 - Respirable generation for SNF and DUO_2 should be similar for same energy density (i.e. SFR ≈ 1)
- Ductile fracture if $T_{Fracture} > T_{B-D}$
 - Fractures along grain boundaries (intergranular)
 - Size distribution of particles would be similar to grain size distribution
 - SNF would produce more respirable aerosols than DUO_2 (i.e. SFR > 1)

A.W. Cronenberg, T.R. Yackle "Intergranular fracture of unrestructured fuel," *Journal of Nuclear Materials* 84 (1979) 295-318.

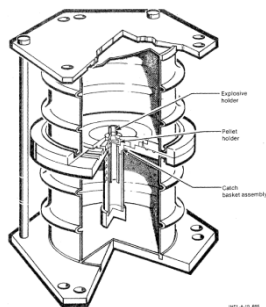


Previous SFR Measurement Attempts



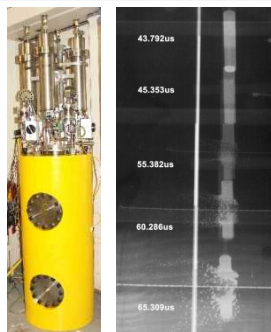
BCL

Schmidt, E.W., et al., "Final Report on Shipping Cask Sabotage Source Term Investigation," NUREG/CR-2472, 1981.



INL

Alvarez, J.L. and Kaiser, B.B.,
"Waste Forms Response
Project Correlation Testing,"
EGG-PR-5590, 1982.



SNL

Molecke, M.A., et al., "Spent
Fuel Sabotage Test Program,
Characterization of Aerosol
Dispersal: Interim Final
Report," SAND2007-8070.

- **No definitive value to date**
 - Large degree of experimental scatter
- **Battelle Columbus Laboratories**
 - $SFR = 0.42$ to 0.71
 - Analysis of BCL results by Sandoval (SAND82-2365)
 - $SFR = 2.5$ to 12
 - Subsequent review by Luna (SAND99-0963)
 - **Current RF calculations assume $SFR = 3$**
- **Idaho National Laboratory**
 - **$SFR = 5.6$**
 - Based on questionable extrapolation of wet sieve data
 - **Value used in previous analyses**
 - $SFR = 0.53$
 - Bulk aerosol measurements
- **Sandia National Laboratories**
 - Testing on different surrogate materials resulted in similar respirable release fractions
 - Provided confidence in using lower SFR estimate
 - No SNF testing

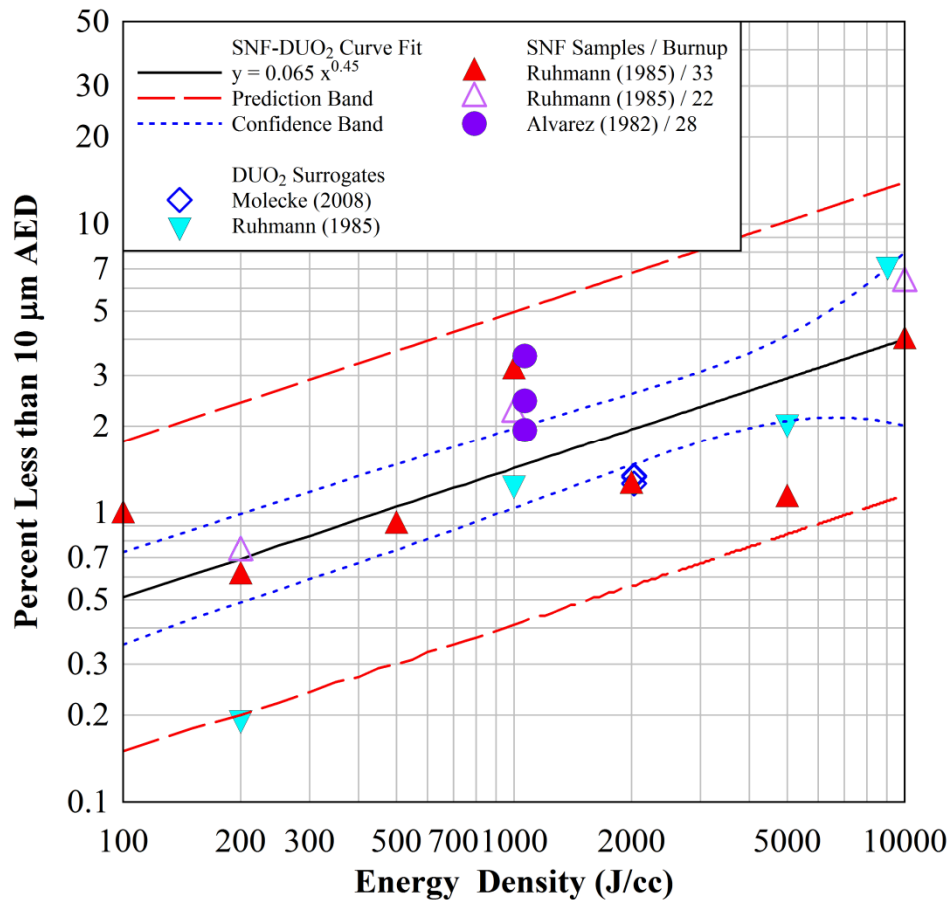


Current Modeling Approach

- **Model DUO₂ and SNF as continuum in shock physics code**
 - Interactions at the grain level not explicitly modeled
- **Same equation of state for DUO₂ and SNF**
 - Mie-Grüneisen
- **Differences in SNF explored by:**
 - Decreasing density (density ↓ as burnup ↑) along with the P-Alpha porous material model
- **Quantify the average, internal energy density rise in the target material**
- **Aerosol generation estimated from empirical fit of DUO₂ and SNF data**
 - Quantifies mass fraction less than 10 μm AED as a function of internal energy density
 - Low energy density and non-UO₂ samples discarded for these analyses



Energy Density Determines Release



Alvarez, J.L. and Kaiser, B.B., EGG-PR-5590, 1982.

Molecke, M.A., et al., SAND2007-8070, 2008.

Ruhmann, H., et al., "Research Program on the Behavior of Burnt-Up Fuel under Strong Mechanical Impacts," Kraftwerk Union, Report R 917/85/002, (1985).

■ Empirical aerosol model

- Percent of sample smaller than 10 μm AED after subjected to sudden energy input
- Additional surrogate data ignored for these analyses (CeO₂, SYNROC, concrete, and various glasses)

■ Respirable fraction ↑ as energy density ↑

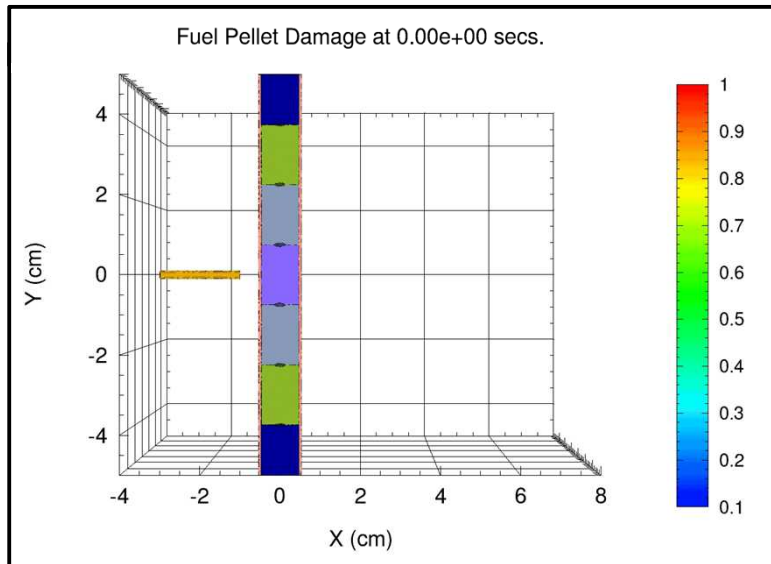
- Roughly square root dependence

■ All SNF data for relatively low burnup

- Authors unaware of any high burnup data



Shock Physics Modeling

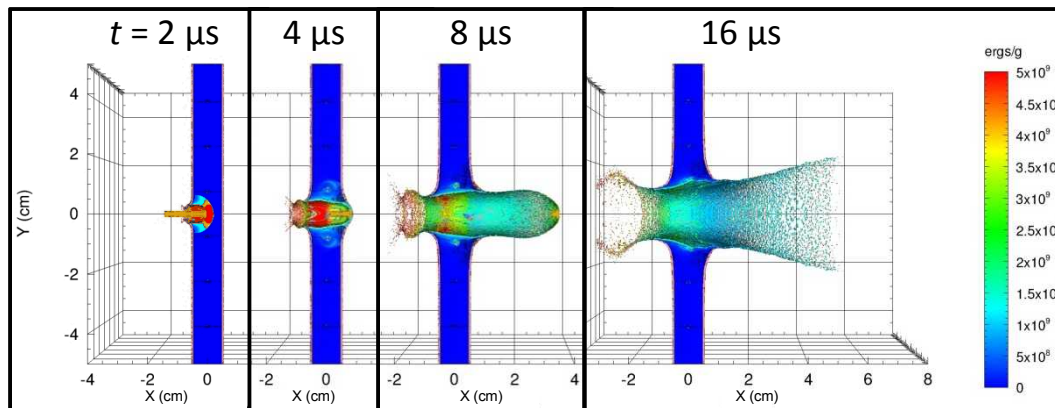


- **High velocity copper jet impacts perpendicularly into fuel segment**

- 7 pellet segment of a 15x15 PWR fuel rod

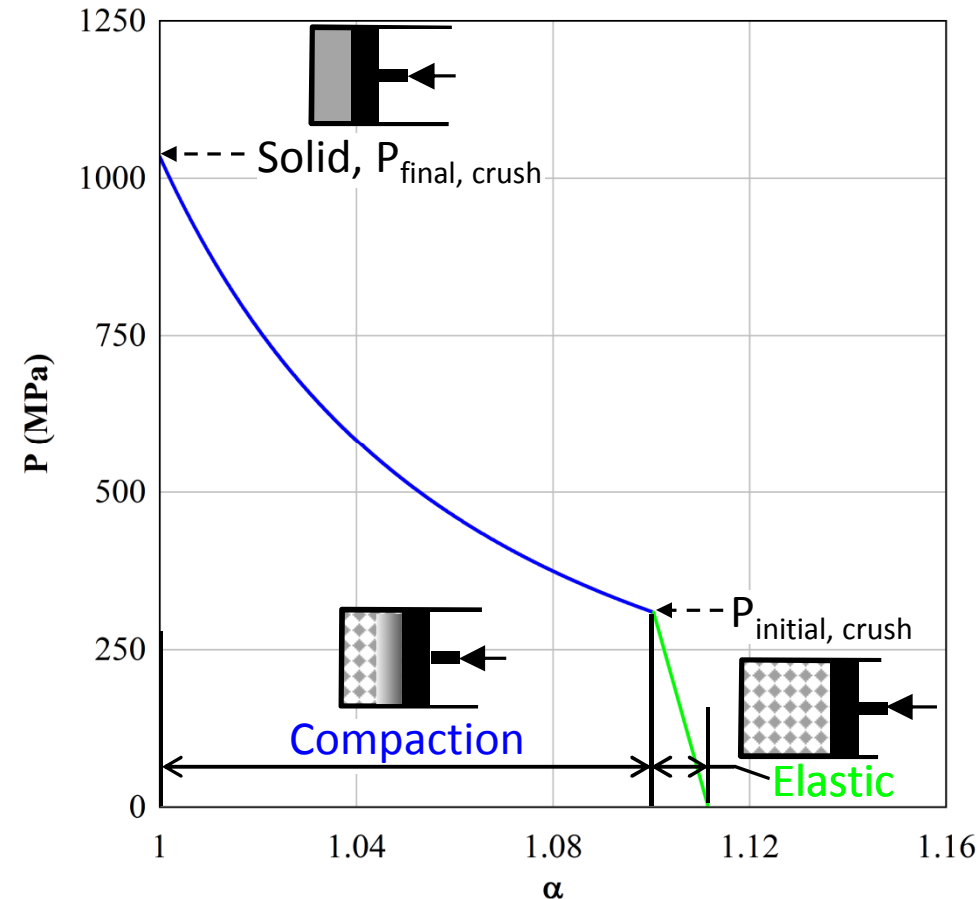
- **Modeling with CTH**

- Shock physics code developed at SNL
 - Explicit Eulerian code developed for solving high strain transient dynamics problems
 - Explosions and high velocity impact problems
 - Mie-Grüneisen EOS
 - P-Alpha crush model for porous media





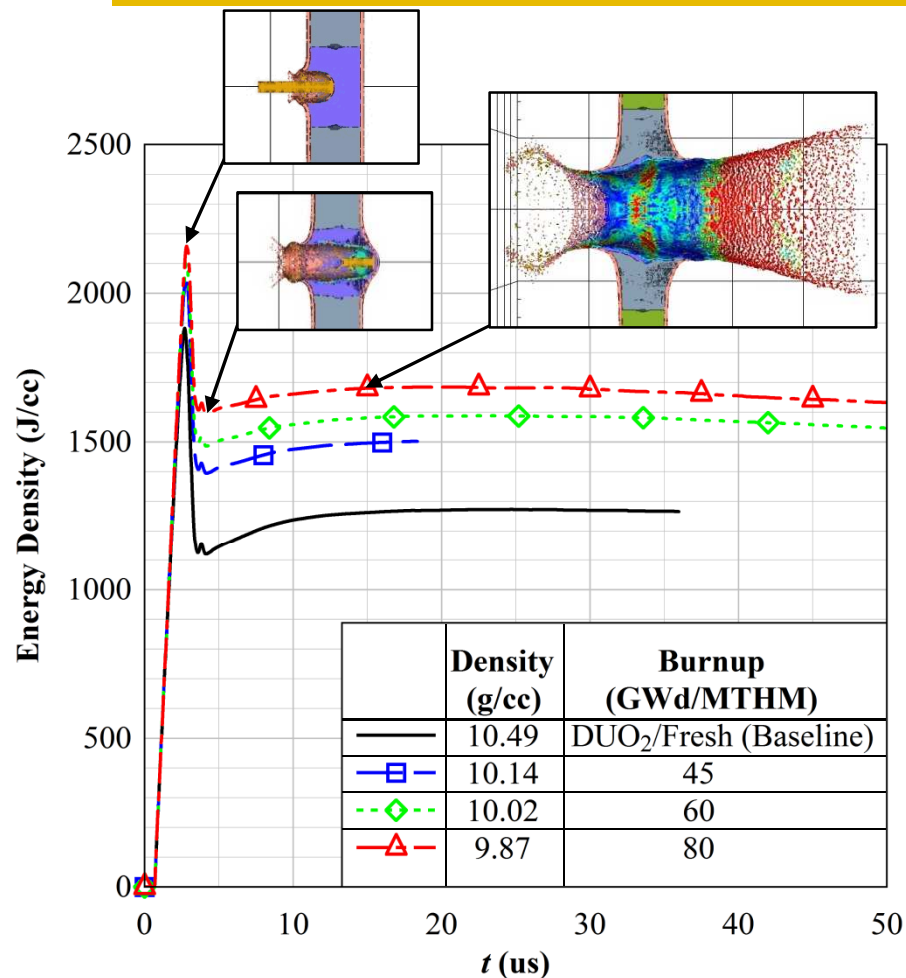
Porous Material Modeling (P- α)



- **P-Alpha used to model porous material behavior**
 - $\alpha = \rho_{\text{solid}} / \rho$
- **Initially elastic when stress is applied**
- **Pores are crushed as stress is increased**
 - Irreversible process
 - Plastic compression
- **Eventually all pores are eliminated**
 - Material behaves as solid and follows solid Hugoniot curve (Mie Gruneisen)



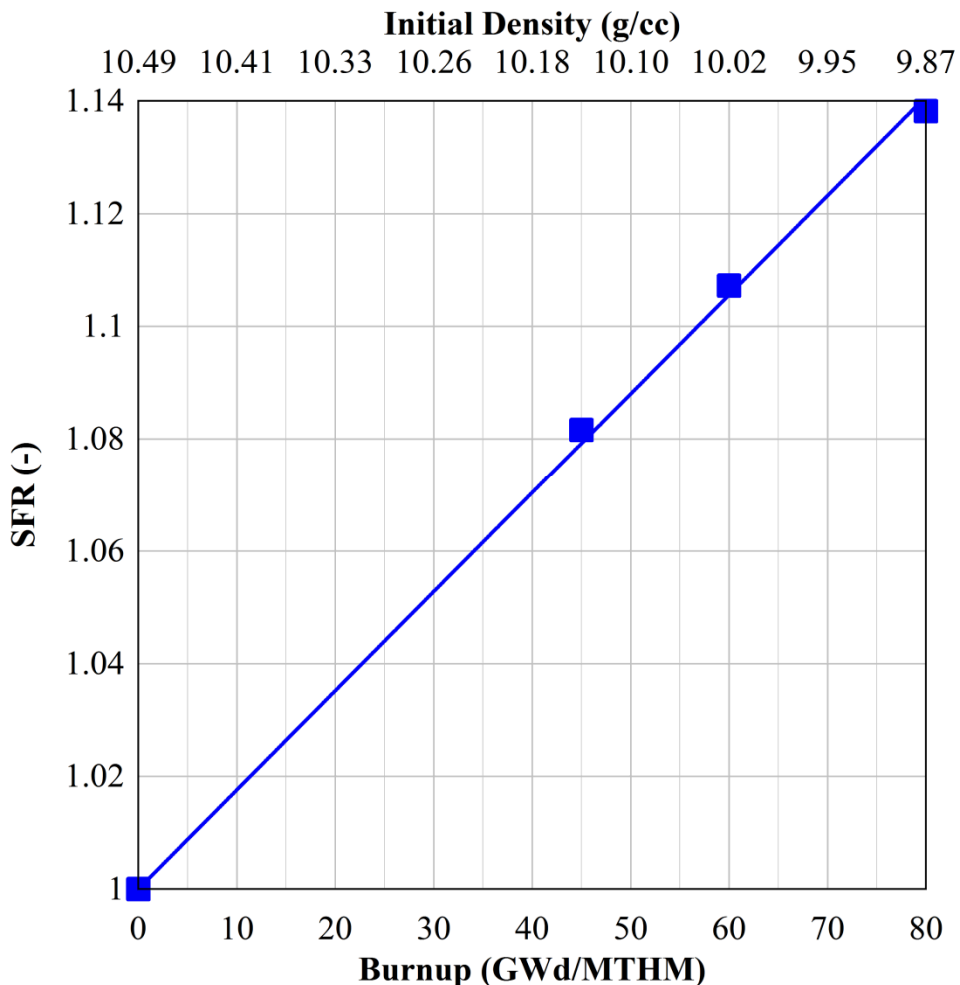
Internal Energy Density Results



- Internal energy density for central fuel pellet only
- More energy absorbed as porosity increases
 - Additional work to compact material to solid density
 - 6% ↓ density \Rightarrow 33% ↑ energy density
- Simulations insensitive to choices in P-Alpha model
 - Varied initial and final crush pressures by 7.5× and 3× from baseline values, respectively
 - Less than 1% change to energy density
- Aerosol model is valid based on $T_{\text{Fracture}} < 1900 \text{ K}$
 - Results assume $T_o = 300 \text{ K}$
 - Max. energy density = 1680 J/cc
 - For storage $T_{\text{Fuel}} < 700 \text{ K}$
 - Max. energy density = 1970 J/cc
 - Energy density = 3700 J/cc to reach $T_{\text{Fuel}} = 1900 \text{ K}$



Spent Fuel Ratio Results



- **Maximum SFR = 1.14 for all cases**
 - Determined for maximum burnup 80 GWd/MTHM (minimum density)
 - Max. respirable percentage = 1.8%, Baseline (DUO₂) = 1.6%
- **SFR effectively linear with burnup (and density)**
- **Calculated SFR ~3× smaller than currently assumed**



Summary

- **Large-scale sabotage testing scaled by Spent Fuel Ratio (SFR)**
 - All tests used DUO_2 surrogate
 - Need SFR for source term analyses
- **Previous testing efforts to define SFR were indeterminate**
 - Large uncertainties in SFR
- **Modeling alternative to additional testing demonstrated**
 - CTH shock physics code excellent for providing insight into SFR
 - Preliminary numerical investigations indicate **$\text{SFR} \approx 1$**
 - Well within values defined by SFR test data
 - Not confirmed by new test data
 - Simulations represent fuel up to 80 GWd/MTHM
 - Model is capable of higher porosity and radius dependent calculations
 - Reducing SFR decreases calculated release
 - *Significant impact possible*

$1 < 3 < 5.6$