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WFPS:TME-79-008  
PREPRINT  
JANUARY 25, 1979

ENHANCED FUEL PRODUCTION IN THORIUM FUSION HYBRID BLANKETS  
UTILIZING URANIUM MULTIPLIERS

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SUBMITTED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE  
ANS 1979 ANNUAL MEETING, ATLANTA GA  
JUNE 3-8, 1979

**fusion power  
systems department**

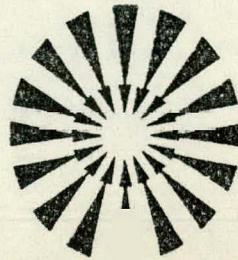


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Available from  
National Technical Information Service  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
5285 Port Royal Road  
Springfield, VA 22161  
Price: Printed Copy \$3.50; Microfiche \$3.00

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Submitted for Presentation at the  
ANS 1979 Annual Meeting, Atlanta GA  
June 3-8, 1979

SUMMARY

The multiplication of 14 MeV D-T fusion neutrons via  $(n,2n)$ ,  $(n,3n)$ , and fission reactions by  $^{238}\text{U}$  is well known and established. This study consistently evaluates the effectiveness of a depleted (tails)  $\text{UO}_2$  multiplier on increasing the production of  $^{233}\text{U}$  and tritium in a thorium/lithium fusion-fission hybrid blanket. Nuclear performance is evaluated as a function of exposure and zone thickness.

Nuclear performance of the blanket/shield was calculated using a one-dimensional infinite cylindrical model with the cylinder axis along the plasma centerline. The plasma source of radius 1.2 m is surrounded by a void (scrape-off) layer of 0.2 m and a vacuum vessel/first wall of 0.4 cm thickness. These regions are surrounded by a 1 m thick blanket/shield composed of a  $\text{UO}_2$  zone, a  $\text{ThO}_2$  zone for breeding  $^{233}\text{U}$ , a  $\text{Li}_2\text{O}$  zone for tritium breeding, and a shield of boron carbide and stainless steel. These dimensions are similar to those chosen for a Demonstration Tokamak Hybrid Reactor (DTHR)<sup>1</sup>. The blanket contains  $\text{UO}_2$  and  $\text{ThO}_2$  fuel rods with Zircaloy-4 as a clad and structural material. These fuel rods are cooled by wet steam with a density of  $0.064 \text{ gm}\cdot\text{cm}^{-3}$  to maintain a hard neutron spectrum. The  $\text{Li}_2\text{O}$  zone and shield are helium cooled. The plant factor averaged neutron wall loading was  $1.2 \text{ MW}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$ .

Twenty-seven group  $P_3$ - $S_8$  calculations were performed using ANISN<sup>2</sup> with group constants collapsed from the 171 group CTR library<sup>3</sup>. Resonance effects were accounted for by using the self-shielding capabilities of the library. Burn-up and depletion were analyzed using a combination of the CINDER<sup>4</sup> and HIC<sup>5</sup> codes which were appended<sup>6</sup> to the ANISN code. Five time steps of one year each were used in the calculations. For each time step, ANISN supplies collapsed five group fluxes and cross sections to the CINDER-HIC module. CINDER-HIC then calculates the burn-up and isotope depletion and returns the new number densities and a lumped fission product concentration to ANISN for the next time step.

The thickness of the  $\text{UO}_2$  multiplier was varied from 0-15 cm. For each multiplier, calculations were performed for  $\text{ThO}_2$  zone thicknesses of 0, 5, 10, and 15 cm. The  $\text{Li}_2\text{O}$  zone thickness was adjusted to maintain a small and nearly constant neutron leakage from the  $\text{Li}_2\text{O}$  zone to the shield. The tritium breeding ratio

(TBR) and the net  $^{233}\text{U}$  and  $^{239}\text{Pu}$  atoms produced per fusion neutron ( $F^{233}$  and  $F^{239}$ ) were plotted as a function of  $\text{ThO}_2$  zone thickness at beginning-of-life (BOL) and end-of-life (EOL) (five years or  $6 \text{ MW}\cdot\text{yr}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}$  of exposure). For a TBR of 1.1,  $F^{233}$ ,  $F^{239}$  and the corresponding thickness of  $\text{ThO}_2$  were determined. A plot of the data as a function of  $\text{UO}_2$  multiplier thickness is presented in Figure 1. Similar plots were generated for TBR = 0.8, 0.9, and 1.0.

The peak in  $F^{233}$  in Figure 1 clearly indicates the effect of the  $\text{UO}_2$  multiplier on maximizing  $^{233}\text{U}$  production. The shift in the peak between BOL and EOL is due to increased fissioning and absorptions by the isotopes produced during blanket irradiation. To maintain an average TBR of 1.1 during irradiation, the optimal zone thicknesses were found to be  $\Delta\text{UO}_2 = 3 \text{ cm}$ ,  $\Delta\text{ThO}_2 = 9.5 \text{ cm}$ , and  $\Delta\text{Li}_2\text{O} = 67 \text{ cm}$ .

The nuclear fuel production of this blanket with and without the use of the 3 cm multiplier is presented in Figure 2. Net  $^{233}\text{U}$  production is increased by an average of 14.3% during exposure. Net fissile production is increased by 48.7% and the TBR is maintained at an average of 1.1. In addition, the energy multiplication in the blanket is increased by a factor of about 1.5 with the multiplier.

The overall conclusions from this study indicate that the use of a uranium multiplier can produce a small increase in  $^{233}\text{U}$  production but significantly larger increases in total fissile and energy production.

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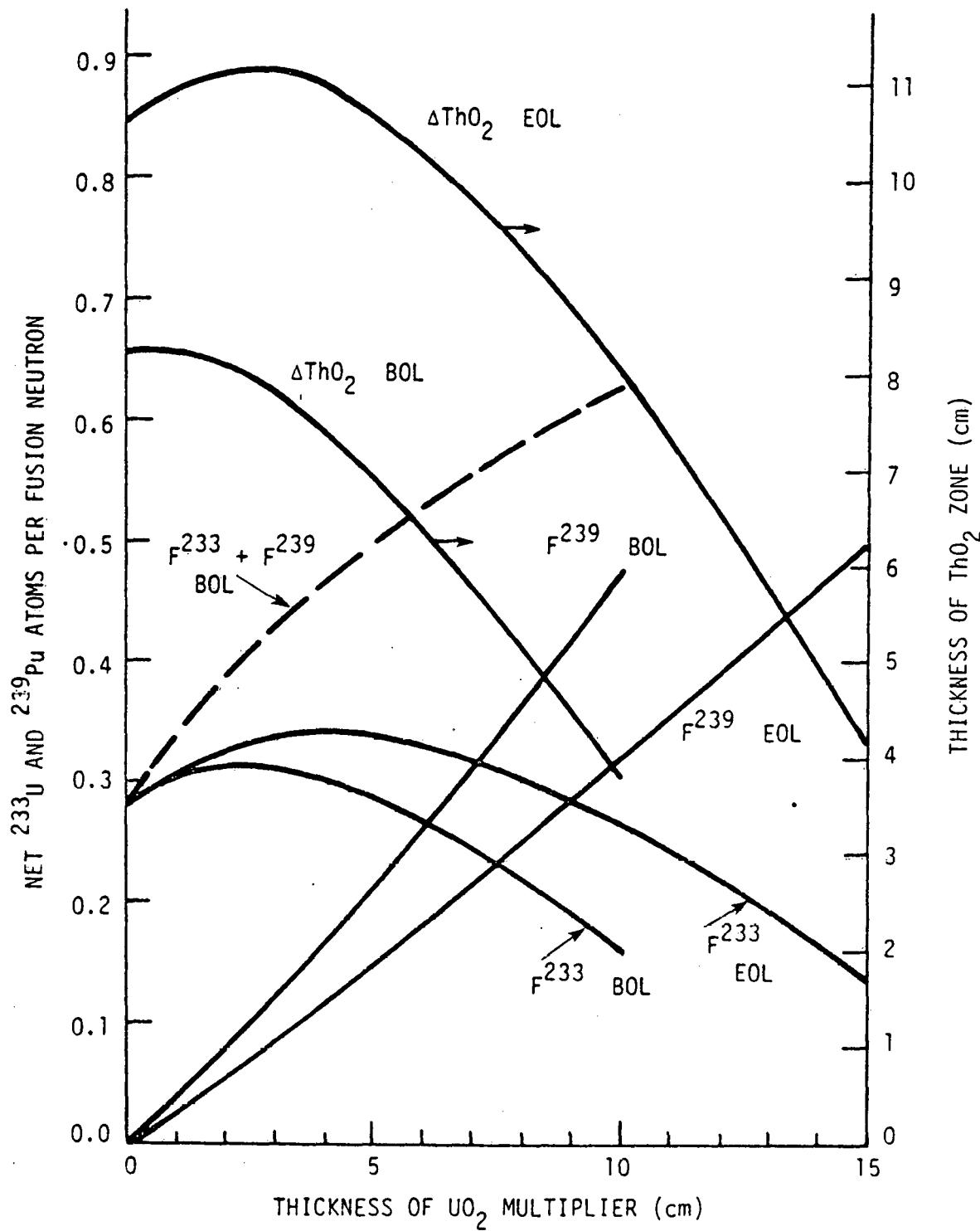


Figure 1. Hybrid Blanket Parameters for  $TBR = 1.1$ .

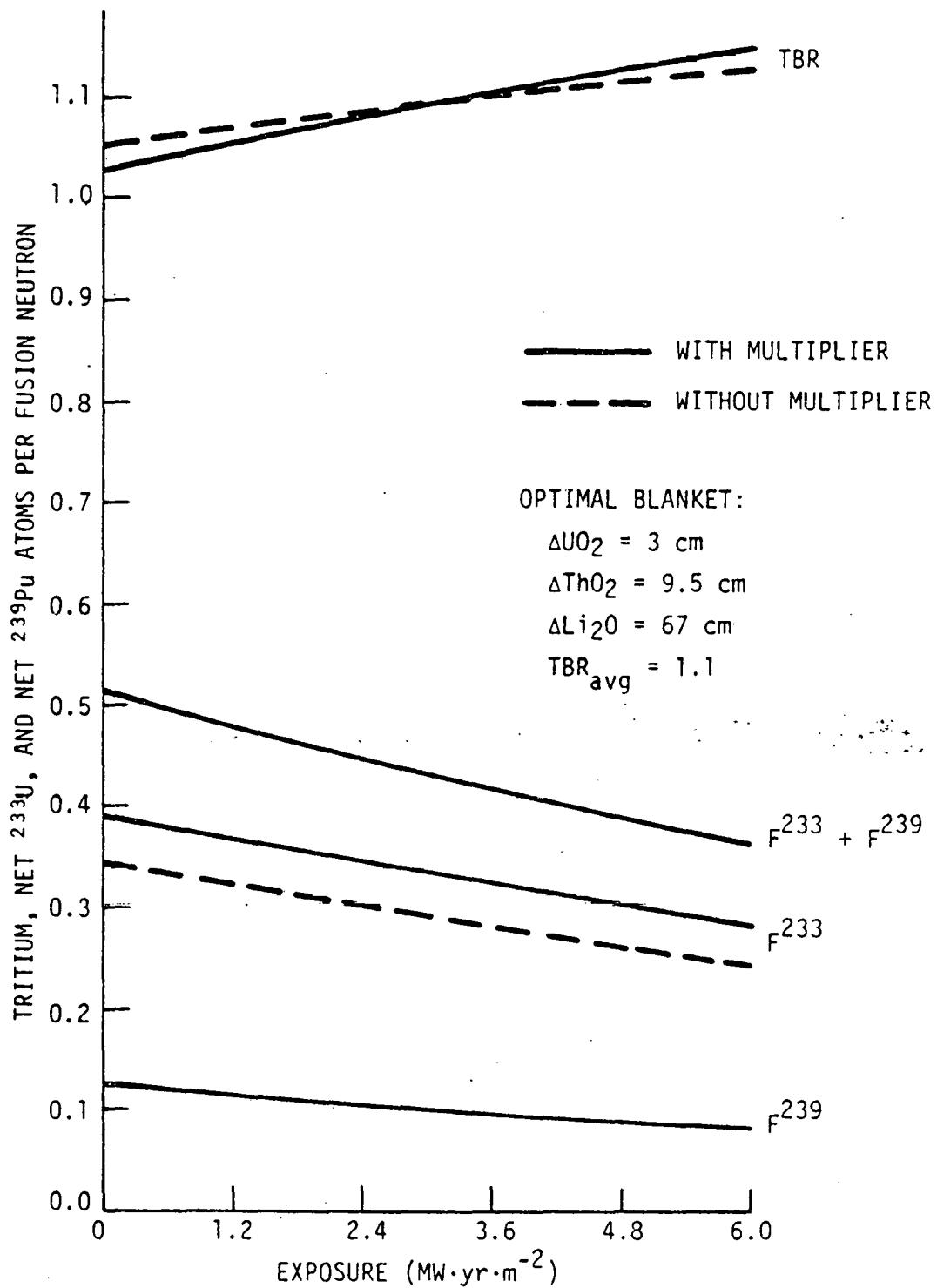


Figure 2. Nuclear Fuel Production of Optimal Uranium/Thorium/Lithium Hybrid Blanket for  $\text{TBR} = 1.1$ .