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CORE-POWER AND DECAY-TIME LIMITS FOR DISABLED AUTOMATIC-ACTUATION OF LOFT ECCS

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FOR DISABLED AUTOMATIC-ACTUATION OF LOFT ECCS

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LOFT TECHNICAL REPORT
LOFT PROGRAM

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SUMMARY

The Emergency Core Cooling System (ECCS) for the LOFT reactor may need to be disabled for modifications or repairs of hardware or instrumentation or for component testing during periods when the reactor system is hot and pressurized, or it may be desirable to enable the ECCS to be disabled without the necessity of cooling down and depressurizing the reactor. LTR 113-47 has shown that the LOFT ECCS can be safely bypassed or disabled when the total core power does not exceed 25 kW.

A modified policy involves disabling the automatic-actuation of the LOFT ECCS, but still retaining the manual-actuation capability. Disabling of the automatic-actuation can be safely utilized, without subjecting the fuel cladding to unacceptable temperatures, when the LOFT power decays to 70 kW; this power level permits a maximum delay of 20 minutes following a LOCA for the manual-actuation of ECCS.

For the operating power of the L2-2 Experiment, the required decay-periods (with operating periods of 40 and 2000 hours) are about 9 and 66 hours, respectively. With operating periods of 40 and 2000 hours at Core-I full power, the required decay-periods are about 19 and 320 hours, respectively. After these decay periods the automatic actuation of the LOFT ECCS can be disabled assuming a maximum delay of 20 minutes following a LOCA for the manual actuation of ECCS.

CONTENTS

Page

SUMMARY i

I. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM 1

II. SAFETY CRITERIA 2

III. METHOD OF ANALYSIS 3

IV. ANALYSIS RESULTS 4

V. CORE-REFLOOD AND PLENUM-REFILL CONSIDERATIONS 9

VI. CONCLUSION 11

VII. REFERENCES 12

FIGURES

1. Specific Heats of UO_2 and Z_r-4 6

2. Decay-Energy Release Rates 7

TABLE

I. LOFT Decay Time to 70 kW 8

II. TIME-VARIATION OF SENSIBLE-HEAT REMOVAL 10

I. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

If ECCS is not available when a LOCA occurs, natural-circulation air-cooling is depended-upon for core heat dissipation. LTR-113-47[1] has established the capability of natural-circulation air-cooling in LOFT; for example, with an air inlet temperature of 580°F, the limiting core power level is 25 kW. An extension of the analysis of LTR-113-47 was requested to determine the LOFT decay-heat power at which the automatic-activation function of ECCS can be disabled, but still retaining the manual-actuation capability. Specifically requested was the determination of the LOFT decay-heat power level at which the automatic ECCS-delivery capability can be disabled for 30 minutes without the potential of subjecting the fuel cladding to unacceptable temperatures.

II. SAFETY CRITERIA[2]

"The criteria used for determining when the ECCS would not be needed following a loss of coolant was a maximum (peak) fuel clad temperature of less than 1650°F. This maximum clad temperature (TMAX) is obtained from the damage criteria established for the LOFT Technical Specifications[11] for Infrequent Incidents (Unlikely Faults). Loss of coolant accidents are considered to have a qualitative probability for occurrence less than that for a Limiting Fault (or Extremely Unlikely Fault) for both the LOFT reactor and for the nuclear industry. The damage criteria specified in the LOFT Technical Specifications for Limiting Faults would allow TMAX to be up to 2200°F as long as no more than 244 fuel pins have a clad temperature exceeding 1900°F (see Reference 11 for other limiting conditions for the Limiting Fault damage criteria). Therefore, use of TMAX < 1650°F is a conservative and sufficient criteria for use in determining when ECCS would not be required following a loss of coolant. With a maximum clad temperature of 1650°F a small amount of damage may exist to some of the LOFT fuel pins (necessitating replacement), but any significant fuel pin perforation would not be expected."

III. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The initial calculational considerations involved the simultaneous natural-circulation air-cooling and the temperature-rise of the LOFT fuel and cladding, during the specified 30-minute period. Reference 4 was to be the basis for evaluating the transient natural-circulation air-cooling. During preparations for this complex transient analysis, it was found that the energy absorption by the fuel and cladding was sufficiently greater than the heat dissipation to the air as to make unnecessary the carrying-out of the combination calculation. The calculation then required is establishing the LOFT decay-heat power which would raise the average fuel-and-cladding temperature from 580 to 960°F in 30 minutes. The initial temperature of 580°F is the estimated average fuel-and-cladding temperature while the PCS water was removing the decay heat. The average core temperature of 960°F is based on a limiting clad temperature of 1650°F[2] and a peak-to-average ratio of 2.5[3].

This method, which considers only the sensible-heat absorption in the fuel and cladding, includes two areas of conservatism. As mentioned above, no credit was taken for the heat dissipation to the natural-curculation air. In the fuel-and-clad heat-up calculation, the thermal conductivities of the UO_2 and Zr-4 were assumed to be infinite; with the low actual thermal conductivity of UO_2, a significant fraction of the heat produced would still be present in the UO_2 at the end of the 30-minute period.

IV. ANALYSIS RESULTS

The mass of UO_2 in LOFT Core-I is 4405 pounds; the mass of Zr-4 in the 66-inch core length is 644 pounds. The heat capacities of UO_2[5] and Zr-4[6], as a function of temperature, are given in Figure 1. Therefore, a decay-heat power of 80 kw would raise the average temperature of the LOFT core from 580 to 960°F in 30 minutes.

The calculated value of decay-heat power needs to be discounted for the potential inaccuracy in decay power calculations or in measuring reactor power at very low power levels. For shutdown (decay) times between 10^3 and 10^7 seconds, the decay power as calculated by the curves or equations of References 7 and 10, may have an uncertainty of +10% to -20%. The inaccuracy in knowing the reactor power level is unlikely to be significantly greater than this. Because of the conservatisms already present in the method of calculation (Section III), a discounting of 12.5 percent appears adequate. Therefore, the limiting decay-heat power is 70 kw.

Decay-power fractions, $P(t)/P_0$, as functions of reactor operating times and decay times and based on ANS Standard 5.1[7], are given in Figure 2[8, 10]. The nominal and upper-limit LOFT powers for the L2-2 Experiment are 25 and 28 MW, respectively[9]. The Core-I nominal and upper-limit powers are 50 and 53 MW. Based on the acceptable decay-heat power of 70 kw, the $P(t)/P_0$ ratios for the L2-2 and Core-I situations are 0.0025 and 0.00132, respectively. The decay periods required before ECCS-disable, with reactor operating periods of 40, 200 and 2000 hours, are given in Table I.

Although the above analysis demonstrates that 30 minutes is adequate to prevent fuel clad temperature from exceeding 1650°F, it is recommended that

manual actuation of the ECCS be initiated within 20 minutes of a LOCA. This allows 10 minutes for core refill to at least the top of the fuel. This 10 minute period is considered sufficient to allow for core refill in the event that the RABVS are disabled and steam binding is present as is discussed in the following Section V.

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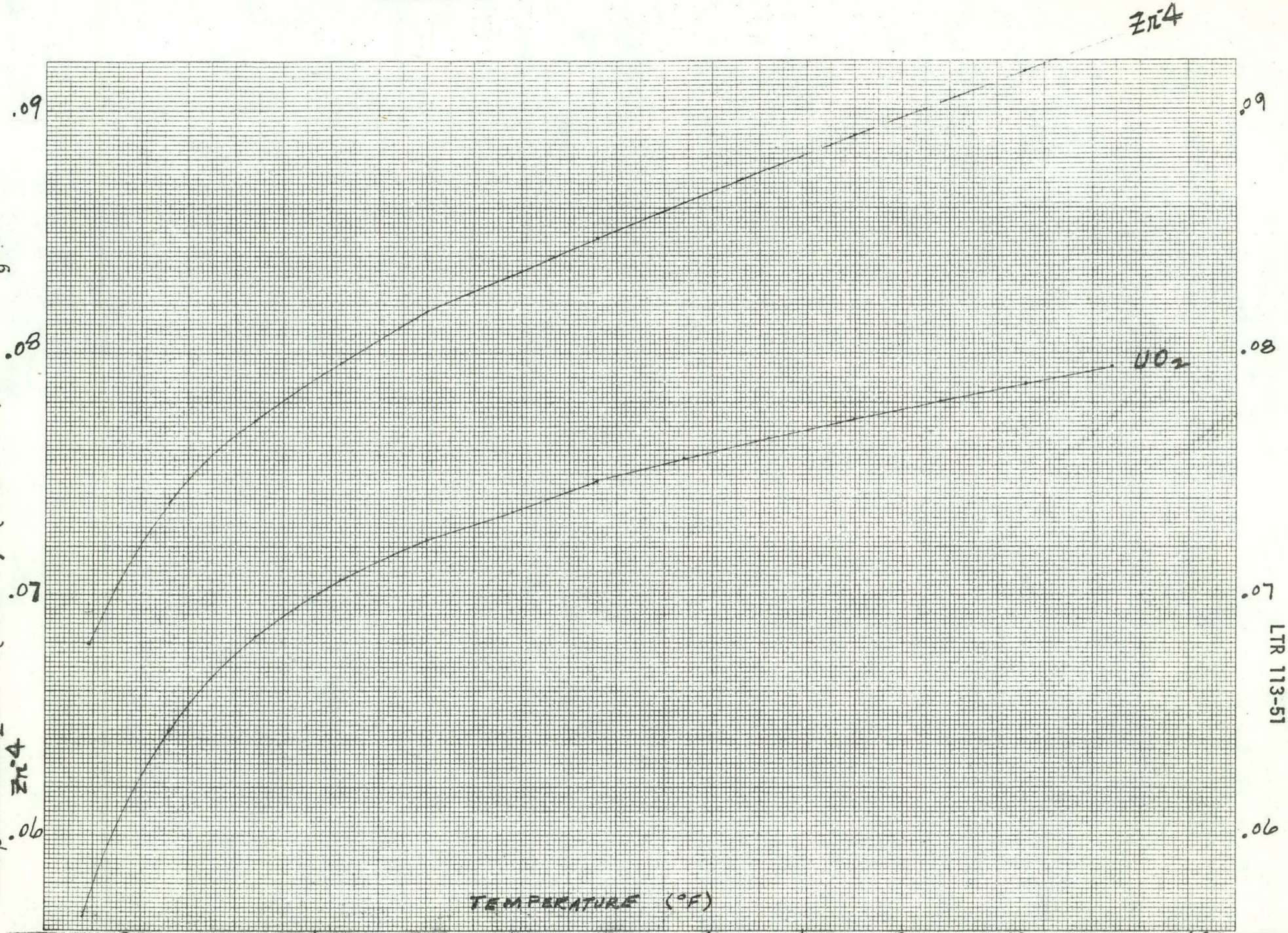

FIG. 1 SPECIFIC HEATS OF UO_2 AND ZR-4 (REACTOR HANDBOOK) GHH 3-78

FIG. 2 DECAY-ENERGY RELEASE RATES ANS-5.1/N18.6 (OCT 73); H.F. RHODES 1978

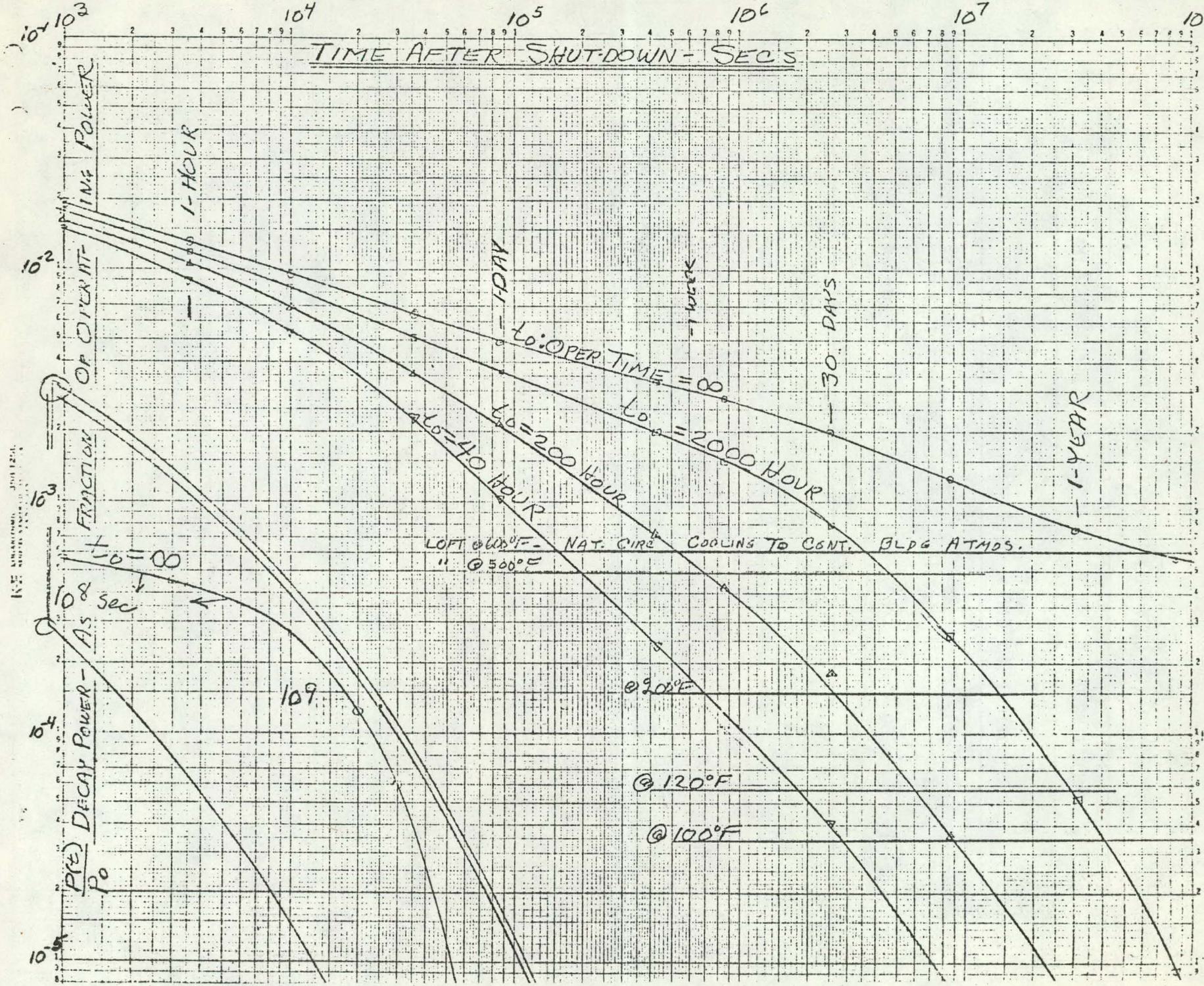

TABLE I

LOFT DECAY TIME TO 70 KW, HOURS

	OPERATING POWER, MW		OPERATING TIME, HOURS		
	Nominal	Upper Off-Nominal	40	200	2000
L2-2	25	28	8.8	17.9	65.3
Core-I	50	53	18.1	49.4	319.0

V. CORE-REFLOOD AND PLENUM-REFILL CONSIDERATIONS

Reference 12 shows that the reflood-rate without a bypass (e.g. with RABV disable) would be 0.6 in/sec following a LOCA from full power. The time required to reflood the 66-inch core length is 110 seconds or about 2 minutes. The core volume-reflood-rate is 0.1 ft^3/sec (10.7 ft^3 ÷ 110 seconds).

The above core-reflood rate of 0.6 in/sec is the net result of complex thermal-hydraulic phenomena associated with the introduction of ECC following a LOCA or LOCE.

An analysis for LOFT-structural sensible-heat removal following a LOCA or LOCE and ECC injection is reported in Reference 13. The time-variation of the sensible-heat removal rate from the vessel and vessel structural components, based on information in Table 2[13], is given in Table II. The sensible-heat removal rates reported here are 38 to 181 times greater than the core heat generation rate with a core decay power of 70 kW, in the time period of 1 to 12 minutes after ECC injection (reflood) begins. That is, when ECC is injected after a 20-min. delay when core decay power is only 70 kW, the sensible-heat removal rate will dominate the heat transfer to the ECC, and the contribution of the core decay power will be negligible.

Before core reflooding can be accomplished, the bottom plenum must be refilled. The LOFT L1-3 Experiment, representing a 200% cold-leg break with a system temperature of 540°F, showed that the bottom plenum was over half-full following the experiment.[14] Applying the core volume-rate-of-reflooding (0.1 ft^3/sec) to the refilling of the 22.7-ft^3 bottom plenum yields a refill-time of 114 seconds (0.5x22.7 ÷ 0.1) or about 2 minutes.

Therefore, a total period of 10 minutes is sufficient for plenum-refill and core-reflood to the top of the fuel, when the RABV's are disabled.

TABLE II

TIME-VARIATION OF SENSIBLE-HEAT REMOVAL

Time	Sensible Heat Removal Rate, MW
3.6 s	24.0
21.6 s	27.0
50.4 s	12.7
2.4 min	8.2
6.0 min	4.3
12.0 min	2.7

VI. CONCLUSION

Disabling of the automatic-actuation of ECCS can be utilized when the LOFT power decays to 70 kw. For the L2-2 Experiment operating power, the required decay-periods (with operating periods of 40 and 2000 hours) are about 9 and 66 hours, respectively. With operating periods of 40 and 200 hours at Core-I full power, the required decay-periods are about 19 and 320 hours, respectively. After these decay periods the automatic actuation of the LOFT ECCS can be disabled assuming a maximum delay of 20 minutes following a LOCA for manual actuation of ECCS. This 20 minutes includes an allowance for ECCS to refill to above the top of the fuel.

VII. REFERENCES

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