

N328. Doubts Persist on Decommissioning

Discussions at a recent conference on decommissioning, the last rites of nuclear power plants, shows that choices vary with national culture.

Decommissioning strategies vary widely from country to country.

- Japanese require that decommissioning be taken all the way, until the site is reduced to the proverbial green field, within 5 to 10 years of shutdown.
- At the other extreme in UK, there have been proposals for partial decommissioning followed by surveillance of the residual "safestone" for as long as 135 years
- The Americans are in the middle. LWRs need linger no longer than fifty to sixty years for dismantling. There is not much to be gained from further delay in terms of exposure levels, and manual access to the reactor vessel may turn out to be impossible even after long time periods

For more, "Doubts Persist re Decommissioning," by Arthur Conway. *Nuclear Engineering International*, pp. 34-35, August 1993.