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Formation of Fission and Fusion Energy

Felix Hemil*

Department of Physics, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China

***Corresponding author:** Felix Hemil, Department of Physics, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China; E-mail: felixhemil@znu.cn

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Description

Energy is a fundamental element of human civilization, powering our homes, industries, and transportation systems. As concerns about climate change and the need for sustainable energy sources grow, nuclear energy has gained attention as a potential solution. In particular, fission and fusion are two nuclear processes that hold link for meeting our future energy needs. Nuclear power plants currently use fission as a source of energy. In a typical nuclear power plant, fuel rods containing enriched uranium are placed in a reactor core. When a neutron strikes a U-235 nucleus, it undergoes fission, releasing a tremendous amount of energy in the form of heat. This heat is used to produce steam, which drives a turbine connected to a generator, producing electricity.

Fission energy

Fission is the process of splitting the nucleus of an atom into smaller fragments, accompanied by the release of a significant amount of energy. This process can occur in certain heavy isotopes, such as uranium-235 (U-235) and plutonium-239 (Pu-239), through a chain reaction in which the release of energy from one fission event triggers additional fission events. Fission energy has several advantages, including its high energy density and relatively low greenhouse gas emissions compared to fossil fuels. It is also a reliable source of base-load electricity, meaning it can provide a constant and steady supply of power to the grid. However, there are also concerns associated with fission energy, including the potential for accidents, such as the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters, and the long-term management of radioactive waste.

Fusion energy

Fusion is the process of combining the nuclei of light atoms, such as hydrogen isotopes, to form heavier nuclei, releasing a tremendous amount of energy. Fusion is the same process that powers the sun and other stars, and it has the potential to provide a nearly limitless and clean source of energy on Earth. One of the most promising fusion reactions is the deuterium-tritium (D-T) reaction, which involves the fusion of deuterium, an isotope of hydrogen with one neutron and one proton, and tritium, another isotope of hydrogen with two neutrons and one proton. The D-T reaction releases a tremendous amount of energy in the form of high-energy neutrons and helium, and it requires extremely high temperatures and pressures to overcome the electrostatic repulsion between the positively charged nuclei.

Conclusion

There are several approaches to achieve controlled fusion on Earth, including magnetic confinement fusion and inertial confinement fusion. In magnetic confinement fusion, plasma, which is a hot, charged gas, is confined and heated to high temperatures using magnetic fields. Examples of magnetic confinement fusion devices include tokamaks and stellarators. In inertial confinement fusion, a small pellet of fuel is rapidly compressed and heated using high-energy lasers or particle beams, causing the fuel to reach the conditions necessary for fusion to occur. Fusion energy offers several potential benefits, including its almost limitless fuel supply, minimal greenhouse gas emissions, and high energy yield. It also has the advantage of producing less radioactive waste compared to fission energy, as the fuel for fusion is not radioactive and the reaction does not produce long-lived radioactive isotopes. However, there are significant technical challenges to overcome, including the need to sustain the high temperatures and pressures required for fusion, and the development of materials that can withstand the extreme conditions in a fusion reactor.

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