
CHINA'S NUCLEAR DRAMA MAY BE LESS ALARMING THAN THE POLITICS BEHIND IT

- 17.06.2021

Bloomberg (16 June 2021)

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Problems at a Chinese nuclear power plant near Hong Kong probably aren't cause for any concern, experts said. Some of the politics behind the situation just might be.

An issue discovered inside China General Nuclear Power Corp.'s Taishan Unit 1 reactor, in which presumably damaged fuel rod casings leaked inert gas, has happened enough times in the industry that operators know how to manage it and it's usually not any kind of threat, according to Jeff Merrifield, a former U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner.

What's perhaps more disquieting is the seeming lack of communication between state-owned CGN and Electricite de France SA, the designer and minority owner of the plant. An EDF unit alerted the U.S. government on the issue, and on Monday the parent firm called for CGN to provide more information and to meet to discuss the operations issues.

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