
THE DILEMMA OF METSAMOR: ARMENIA'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS VERSUS REGIONAL SAFETY CONCERNS

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A recent assessment of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Station has raised significant concern regarding its safety and the potential risk it poses to the South Caucasus region. Despite being largely inoperative since the fall of the Soviet Union, Armenia has kept the second block of the plant operational [] providing 40 percent of the countrys energy needs. However, the outdated and decrepit condition of the facility is creating alarm among neighboring countries and beyond.

In 2020, the Armenian government itself acknowledged the need for substantial refurbishments, scheduling a five-month closure in 2021 for this purpose. The European Union has taken a more drastic stance, calling for the plants permanent shutdown given its inability to meet current international safety standards. An incident at Metsamor would have dire implications not just for Armenia, but also for Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia, and parts of southern Europe due to potential nuclear fallout.

Despite these concerns, experts like Imran Khalid suggest that Armenias commitment to nuclear energy is driven by a desire to increase its geopolitical influence and demonstrate technological prowess, potentially leading to enhanced international collaborations.

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