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Title:

Accelerator Transmutation of Nuclear Waste: Towards the Elimination of Long-Lived Radioactive Waste

Author(s):

H. J. Dewey

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September 29, 1993
13th Pyrochemical Workshop
October 18-21, 1993
Albuquerque, NM

**Accelerator Transmutation of Nuclear Waste:
Towards the Elimination of Long-Lived Radioactive Waste**

**Harry J. Dewey
Chemical Science and Technology Division
Los Alamos National Laboratory**

Abstract:

Researchers at Los Alamos have been developing transmutation concepts involving accelerator-driven nuclear systems. A medium energy, high current proton beam strikes a heavy metal target, producing a high flux of spallation neutrons. These neutrons are moderated to near-thermal energies in a blanket surrounding the target. Materials to be transmuted flow through the blanket region where they are fissioned or transmuted to stable nuclides. Stable or short-lived nuclides are separated while the long-lived radioactive species are returned to the blanket. For most applications the fission energy produced is much greater than that required to power the accelerator and can be directed to the commercial power grid.

A number of possible applications are envisioned for accelerator-driven nuclear systems. These include destruction of surplus weapons-grade plutonium, production of tritium, transmutation of commercial spent fuel, and even commercial power generation in next-generation nuclear power plants. Some of these applications will be discussed with particular emphasis on the required chemical separations for such systems.

Accelerator Transmutation of Nuclear Waste: Towards the Elimination of Long-lived Radioactive Waste

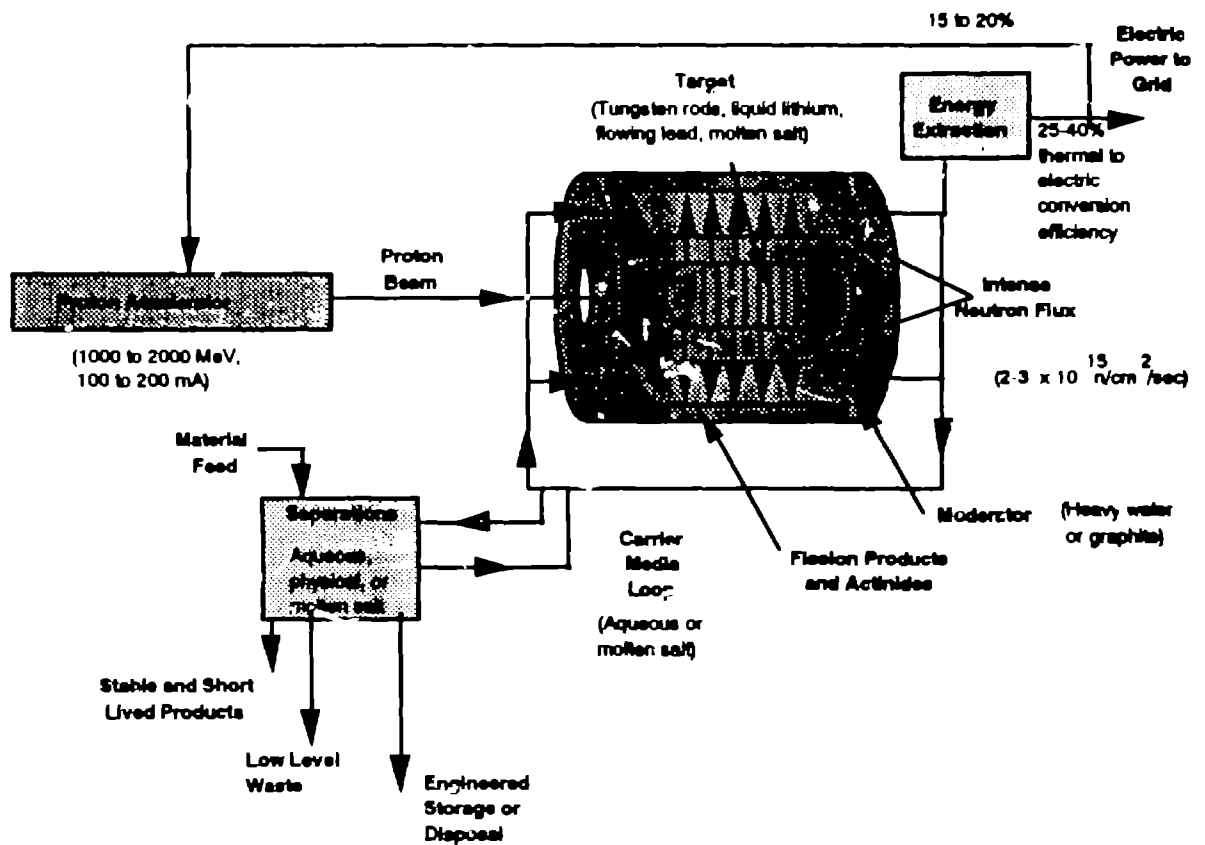
Harry J. Dewey

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General Features ATW System

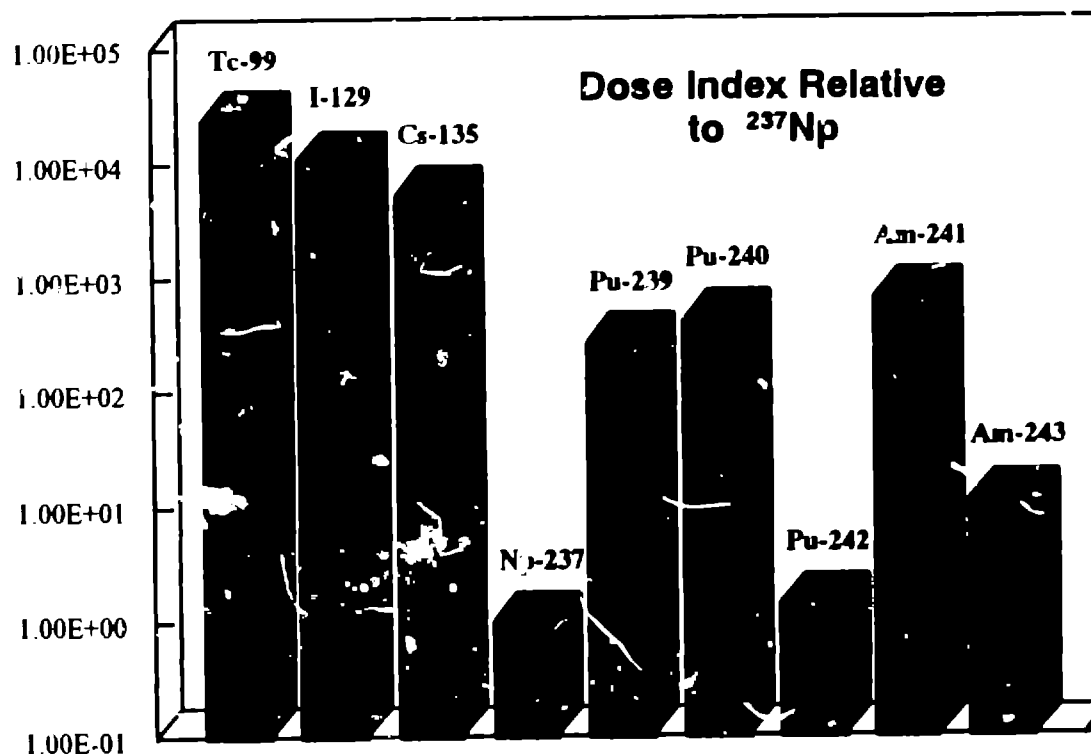
- Driven, sub critical system
- Intense thermal neutron fluxes
- High transmutation cross sections
- Minimal material inventories
- Continuous material feed
- Advanced separations



Nuclide	Half-Life (years)	Isotopic Abundance	ATW Production Rate (g/kg fissioned)	Capture Cross Section (CANDU) (barns)
⁷⁹Se	6.50x10⁴	11.24%	0.13	1.188
⁹³Zr	1.50x10⁶	19.30%	13.75	2.123
⁹⁹Tc	2.13x10⁵	100%	19.94	16.620
¹⁰⁷Pd	6.50x10⁶	21.21%	15.02	6.760
¹²⁶Sn	1.00x10⁵	40.41%	0.88	0.167
¹²⁹I	1.57x10⁷	72.88%	5.27	15.370
¹³⁵Cs	2.30x10⁶	7.30%	5.09	5.882

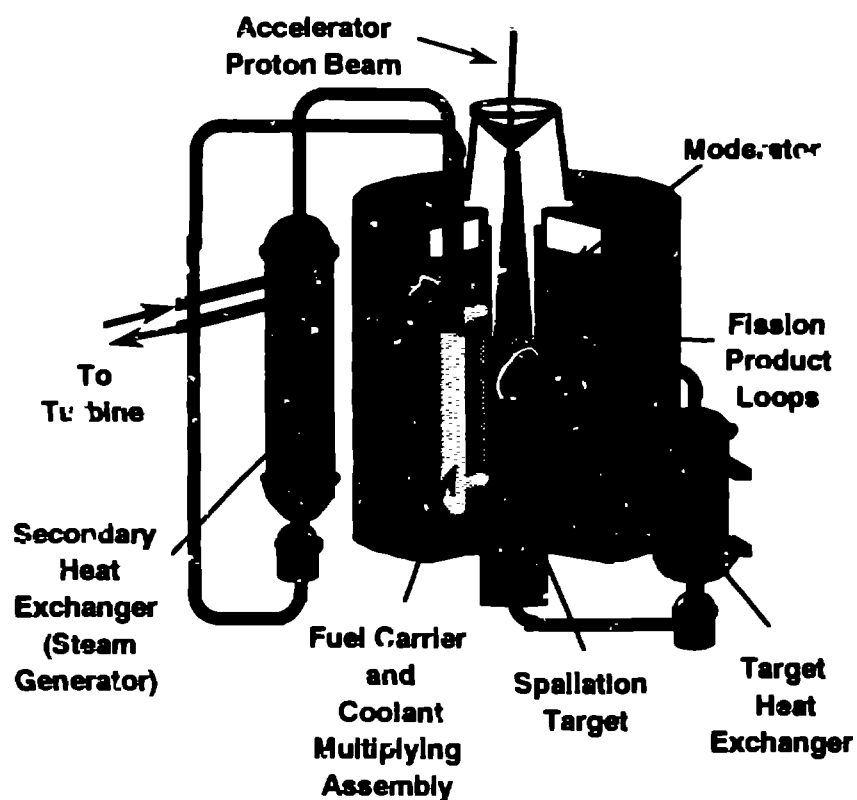
Radiation Dose from Contaminated Water from Proposed U.S. Repository is Dominated by Fission Products

<u>Species</u>	<u>Halflife (yrs)</u>
⁹⁹ Tc	213,000
¹²⁹ I	15,700,000
¹³⁵ Cs	2,300,000
²³⁷ Np	2,140,000
²³⁹ Pu	24,100
²⁴⁰ Pu	6,560
²⁴² Pu	375,000
²⁴¹ Am	433
²⁴³ Am	7370



Dose Index = (Repository Inventory)(Fractional Dissolution Rate)(Dose Conversion Factor)

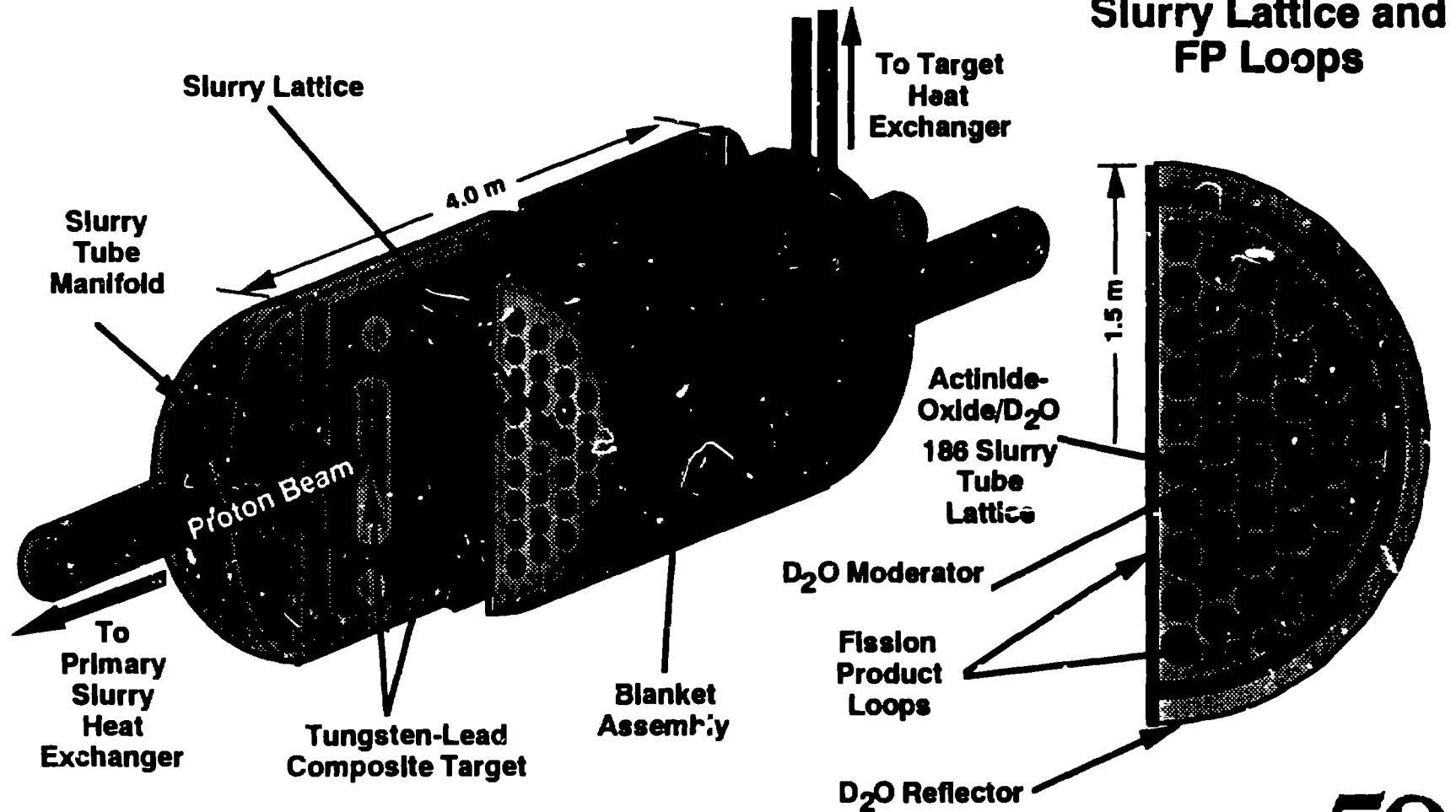
Target and Blanket Approaches



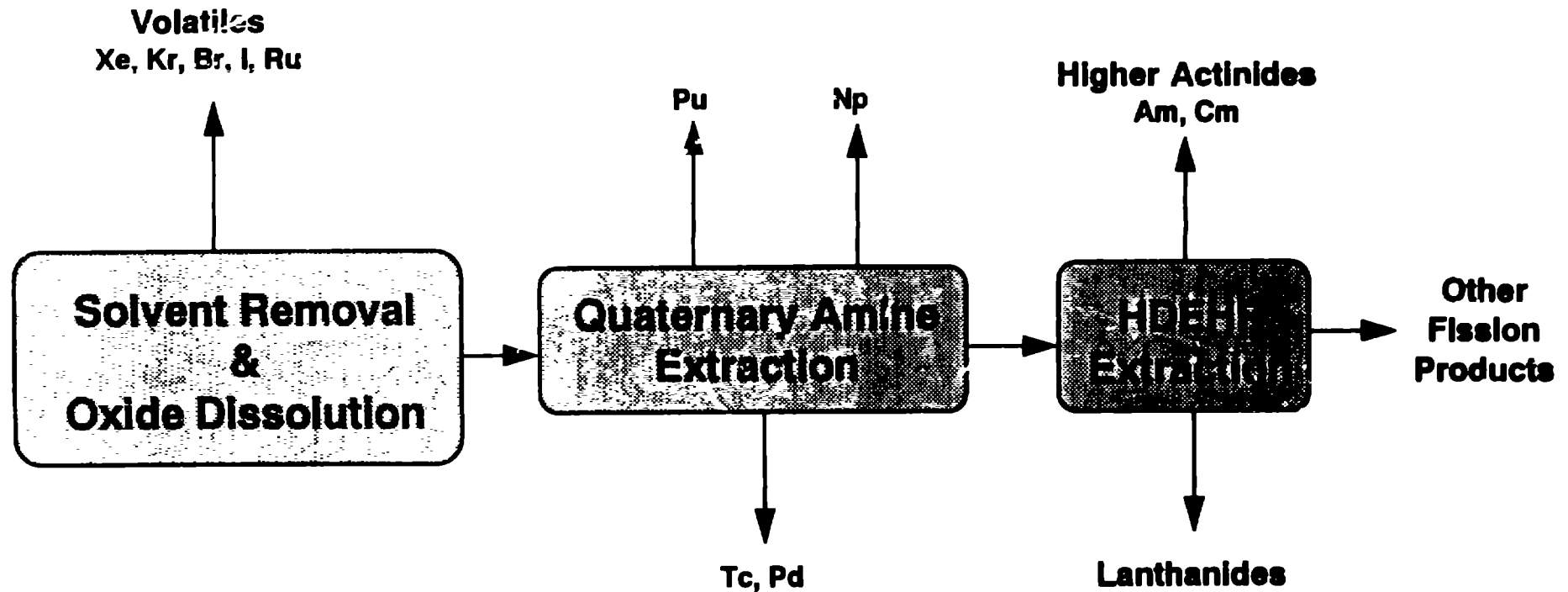
<u>Technical Approach</u>	<u>Aqueous (Reference)</u>	<u>Non Aqueous (Advanced)</u>
<u>Target</u>	Solid Tungsten/Lead	Flowing Metal
<u>Multiplying Blanket</u>		
Moderator Fluid Fuel	D ₂ O Oxide Slurry	Graphite Molten Fluoride Salt
<u>Features</u>	Allows concept "existence proof"	Superior neutronics, economics
<u>Separations</u>	Demonstrated	Advanced

AQUEOUS-BASED ATW /ABC TARGET-BLANKET CONCEPT

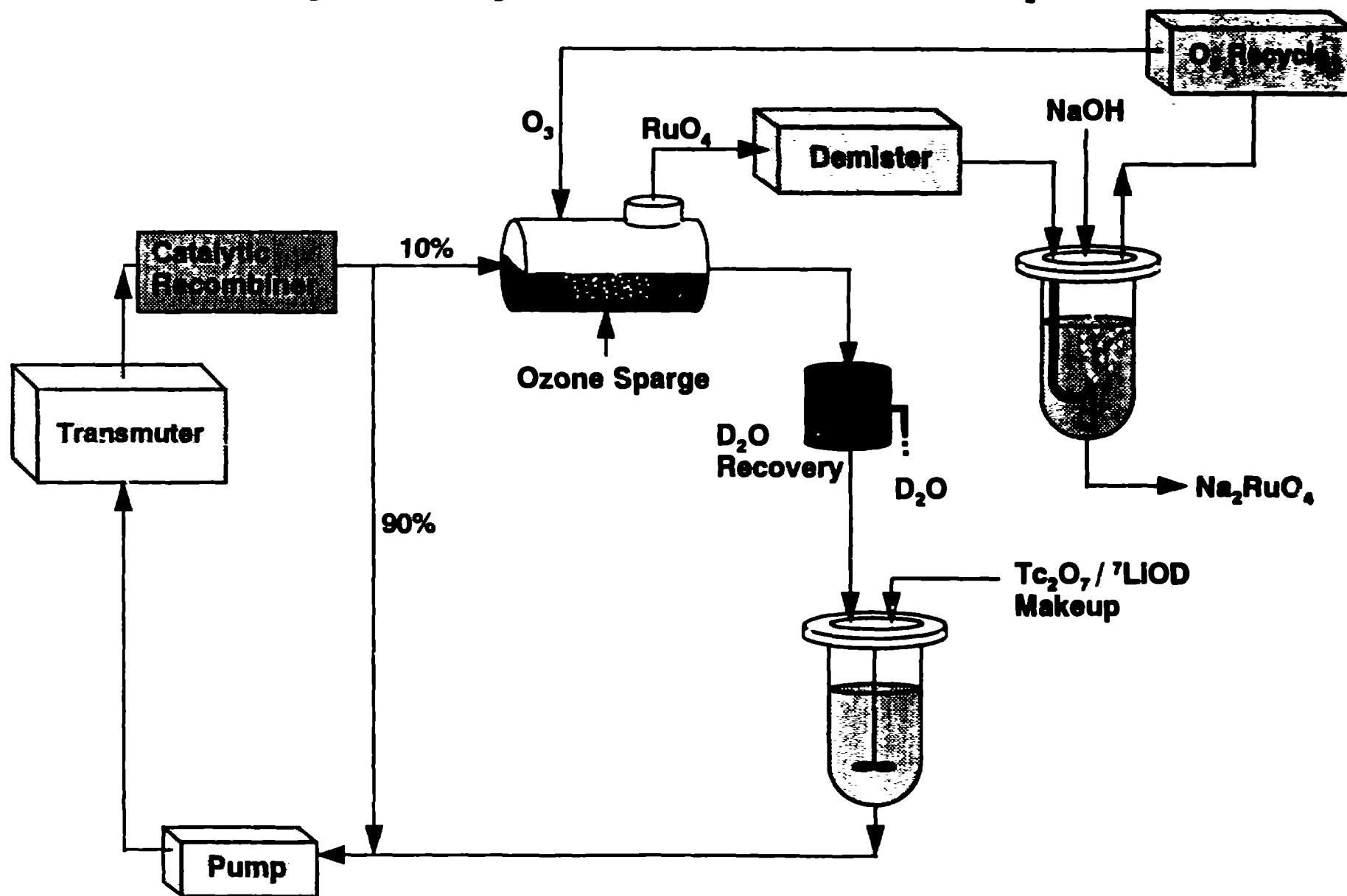
Target-Blanket Configuration



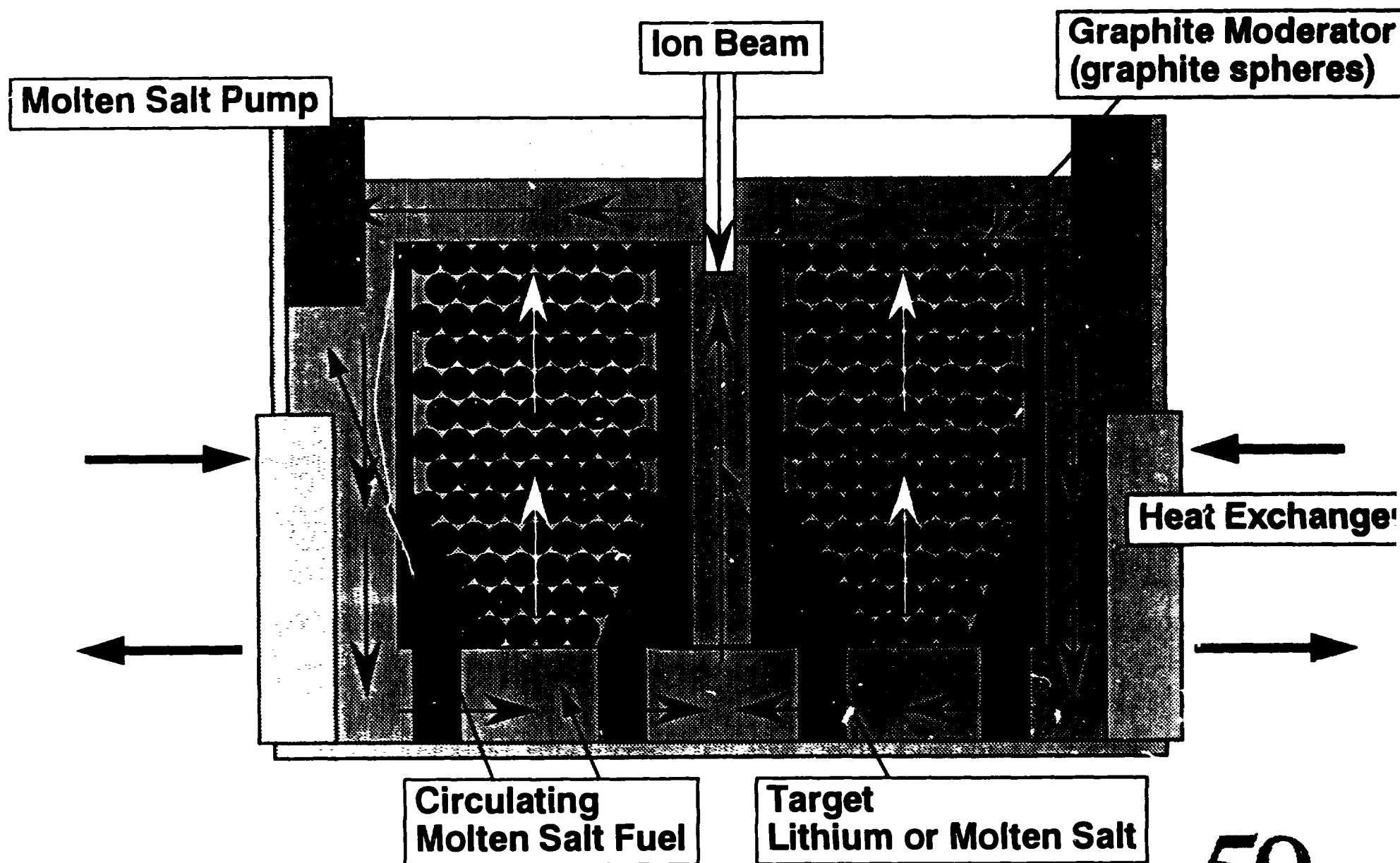
Example of an Aqueous Approach to ATW Separations



Ozonolysis Option for Tc/Ru Separation



Schematic layout of the non-aqueous target/blanket assembly



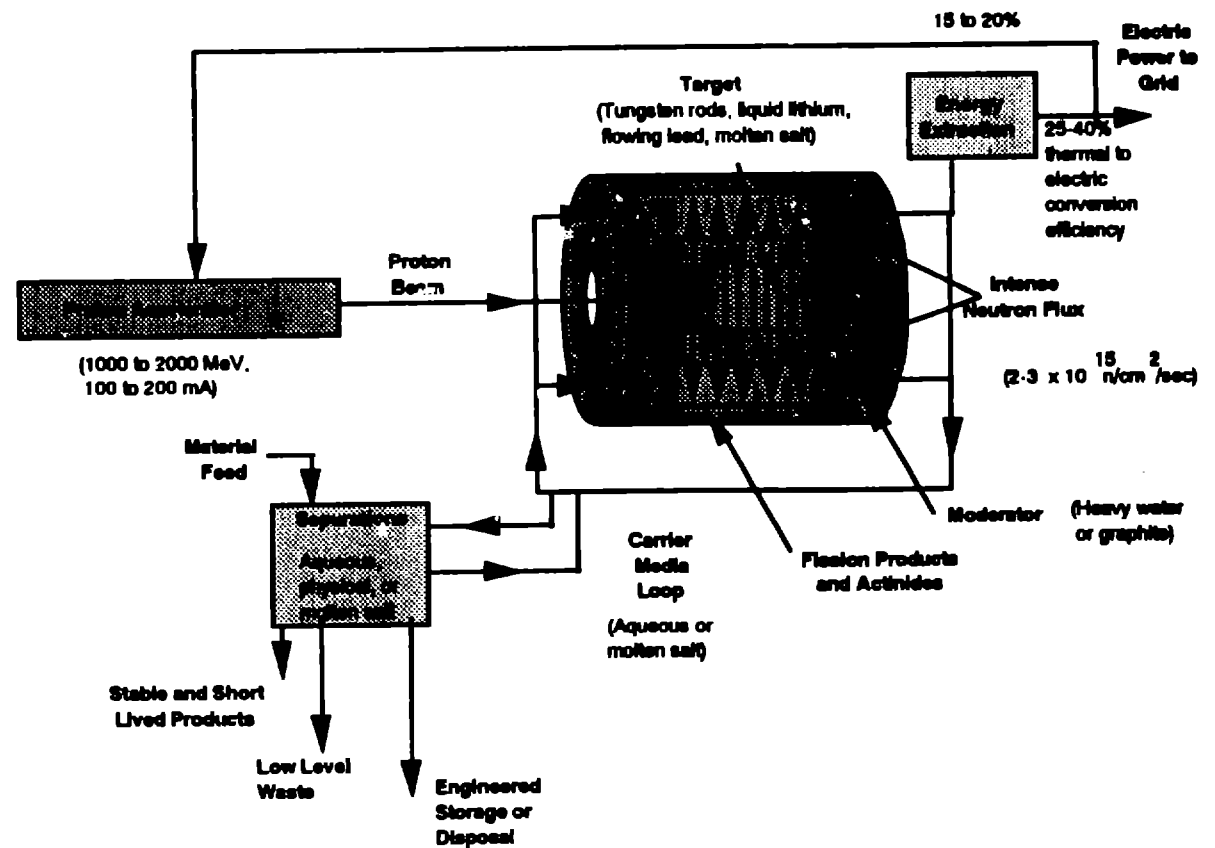
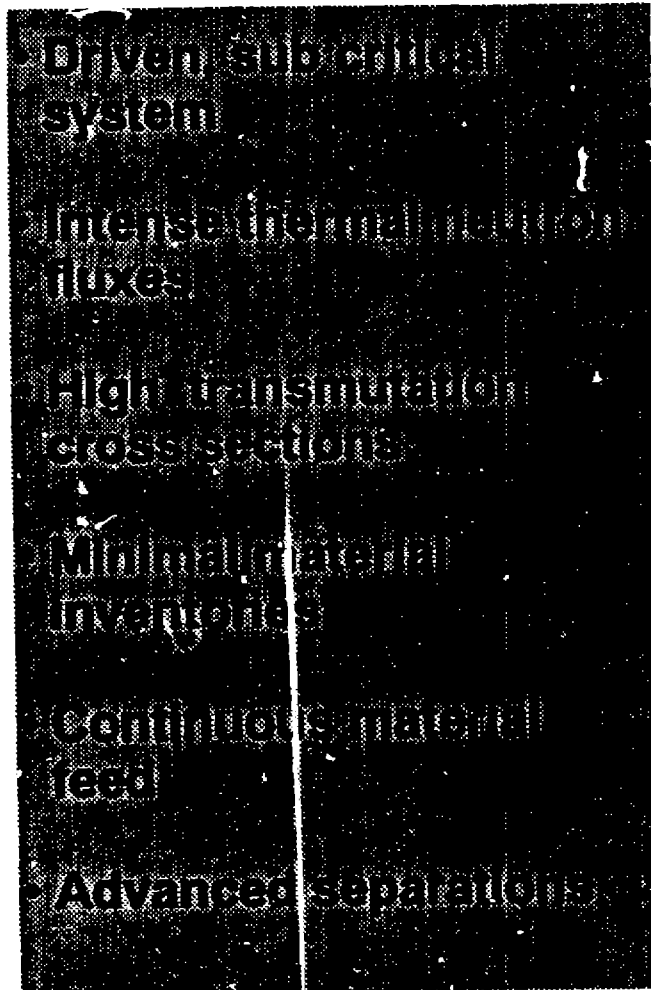
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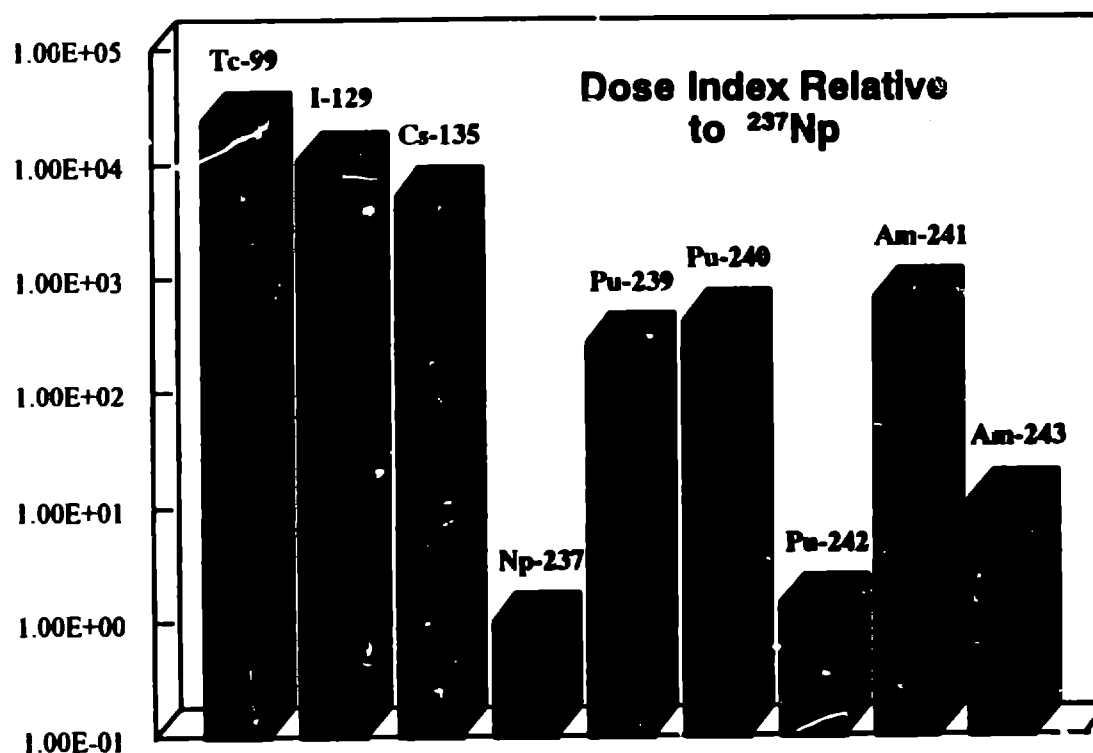
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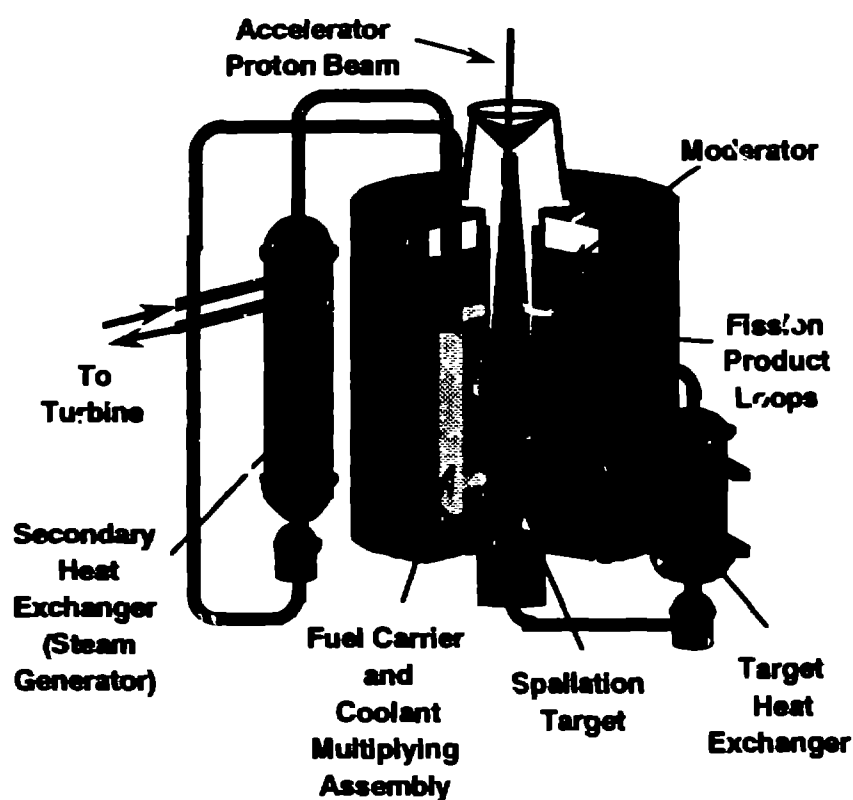
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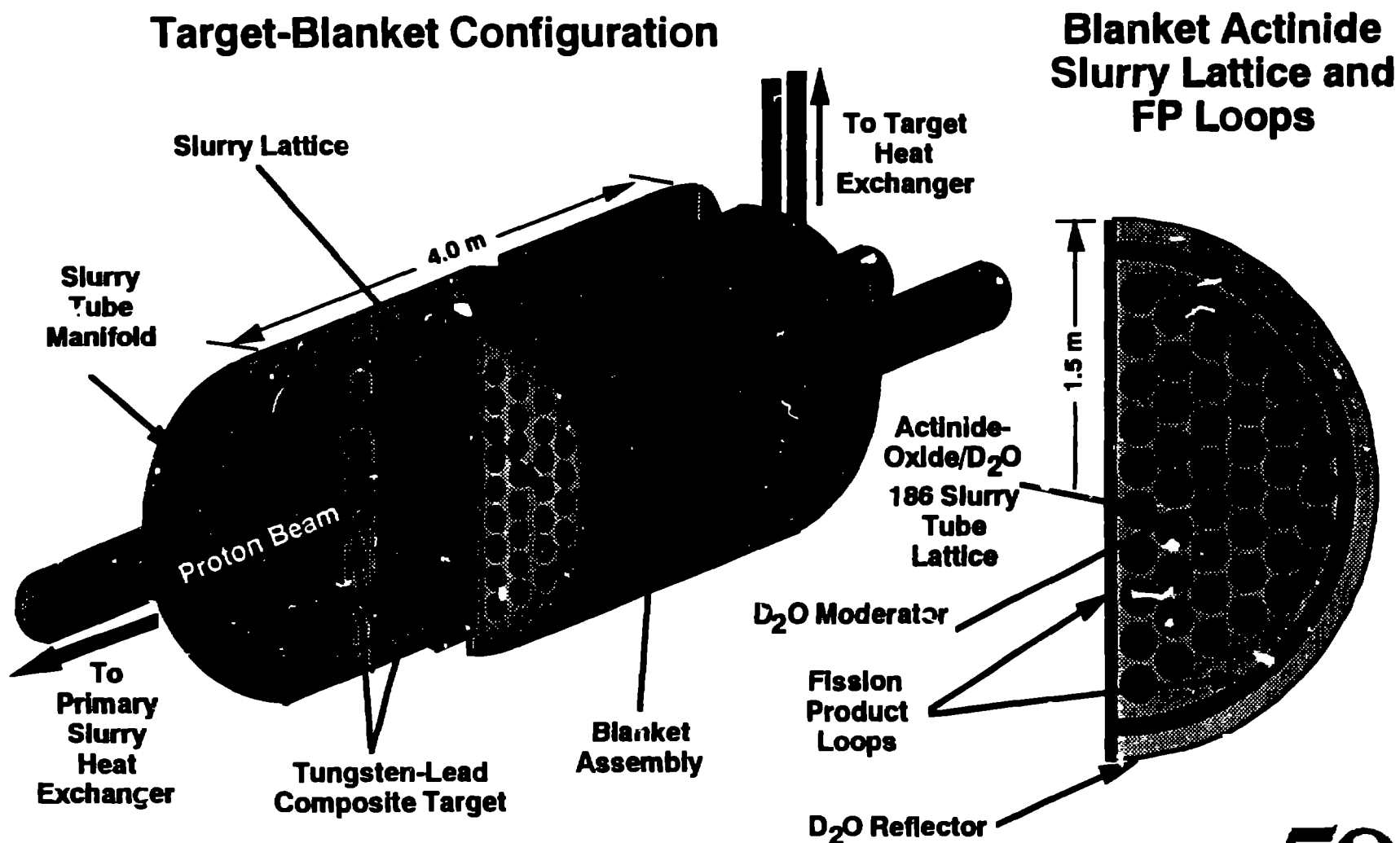
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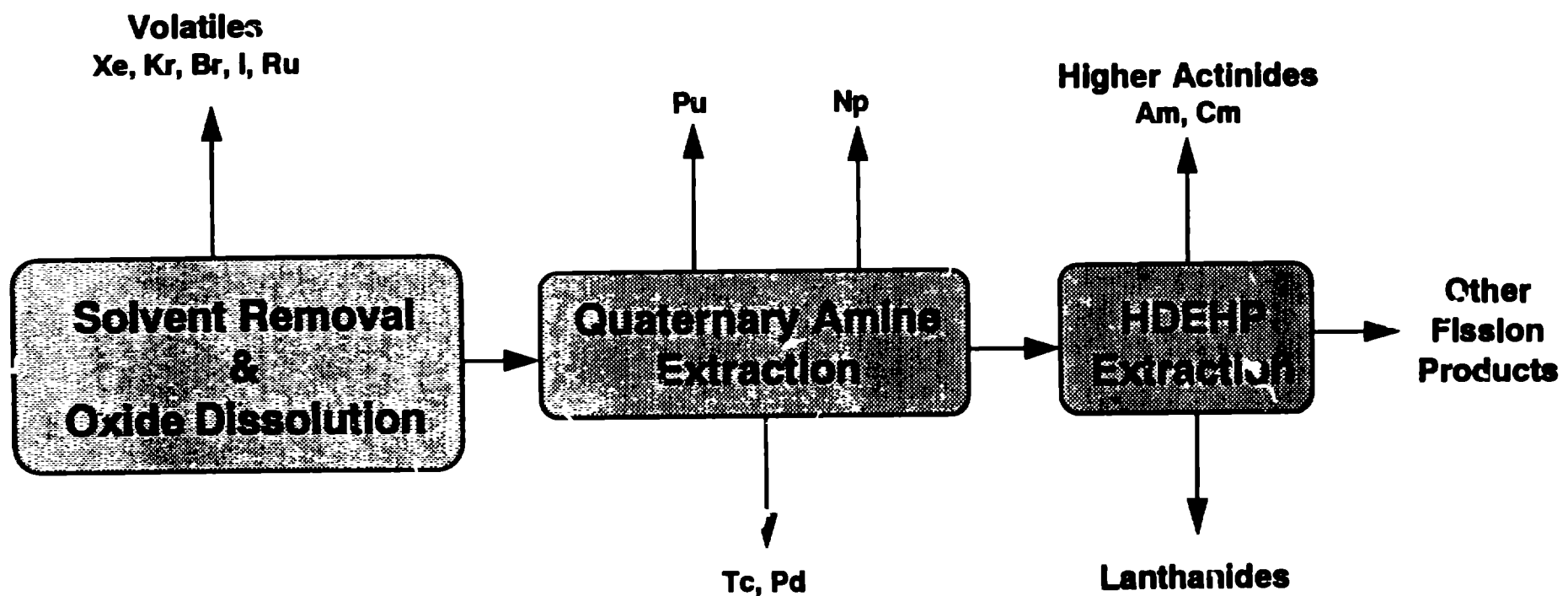


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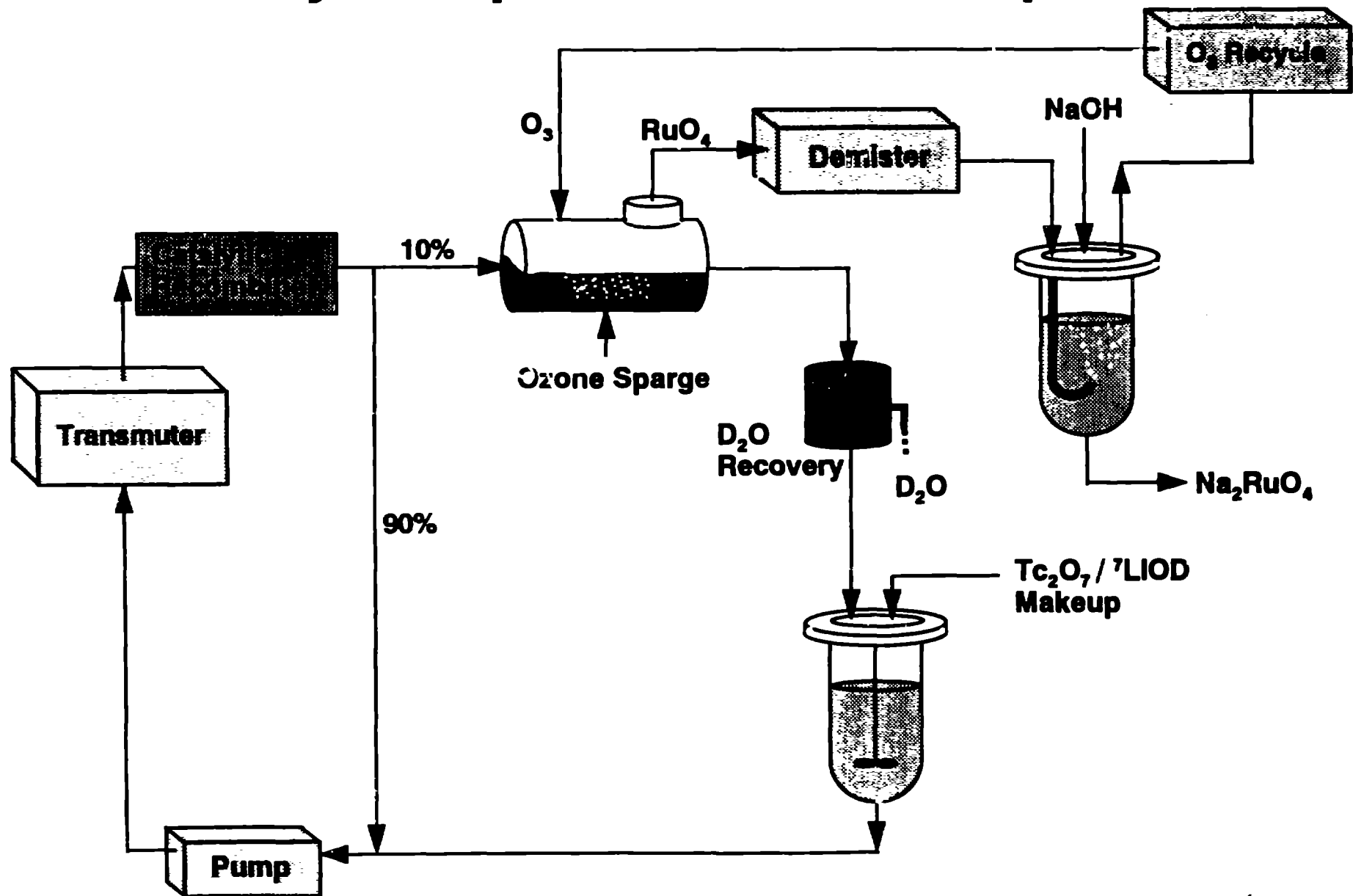
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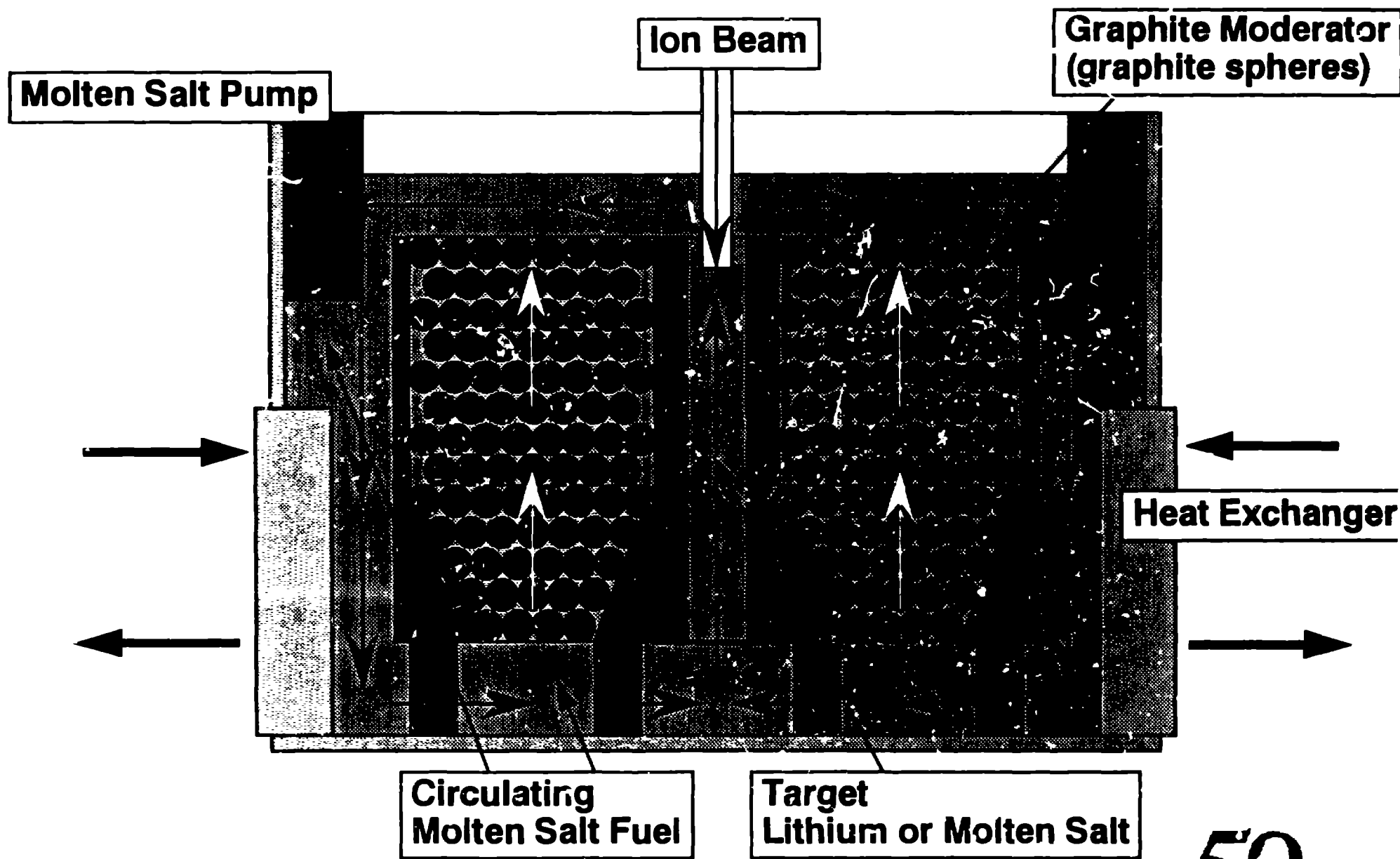
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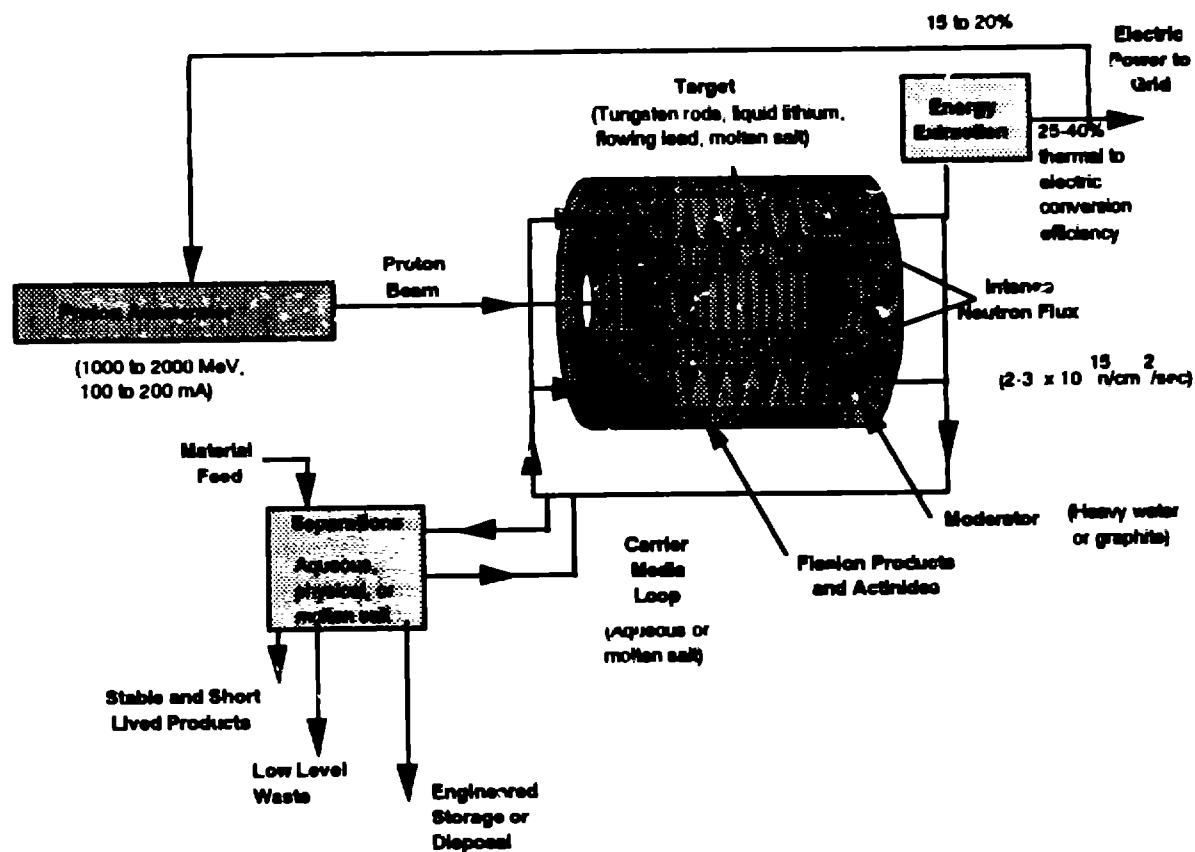
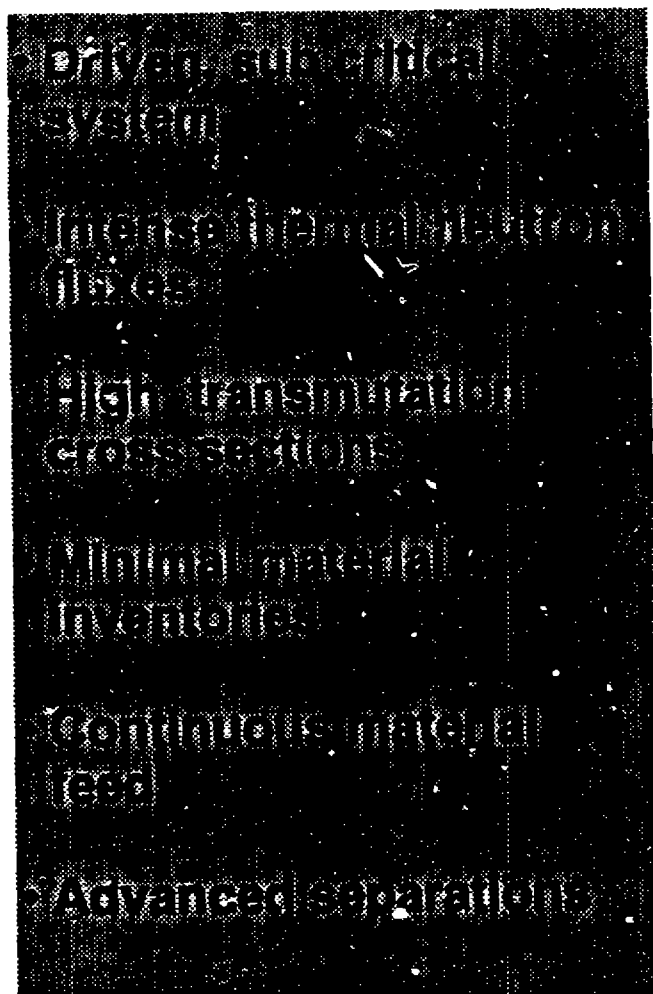
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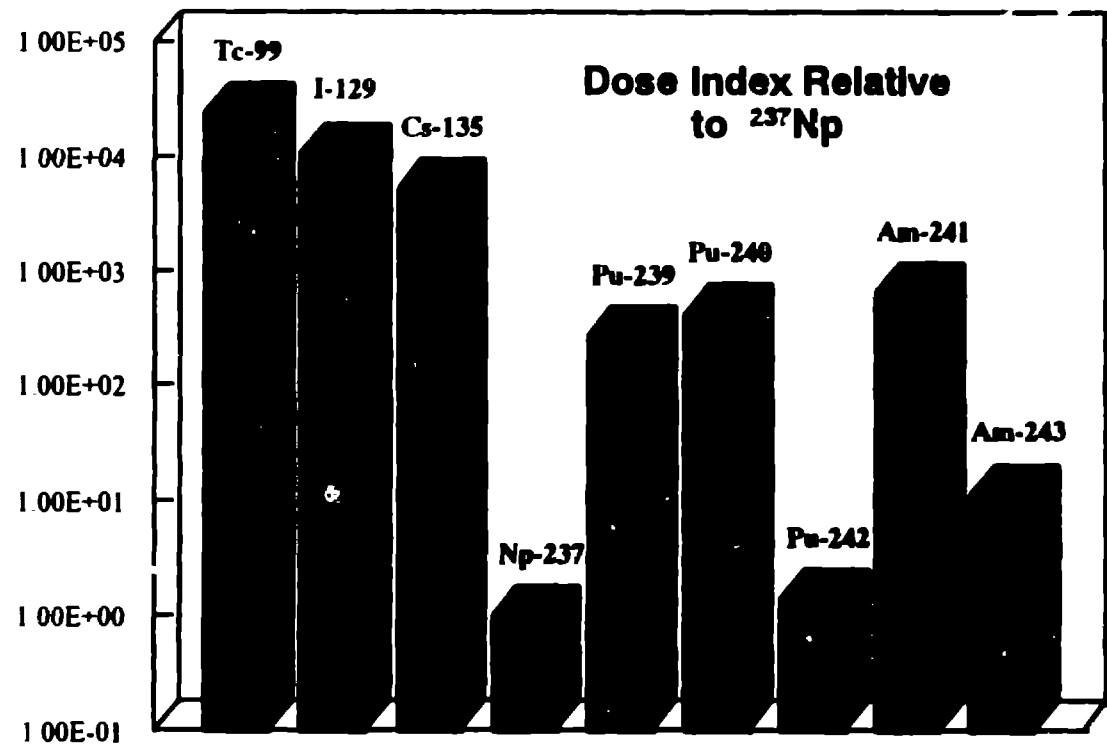
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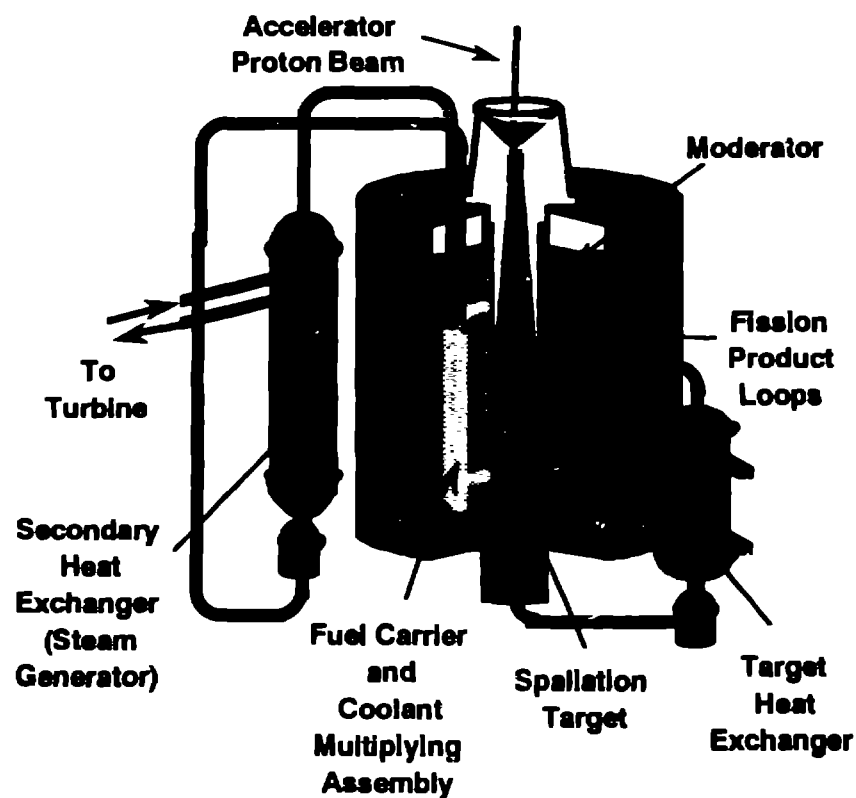
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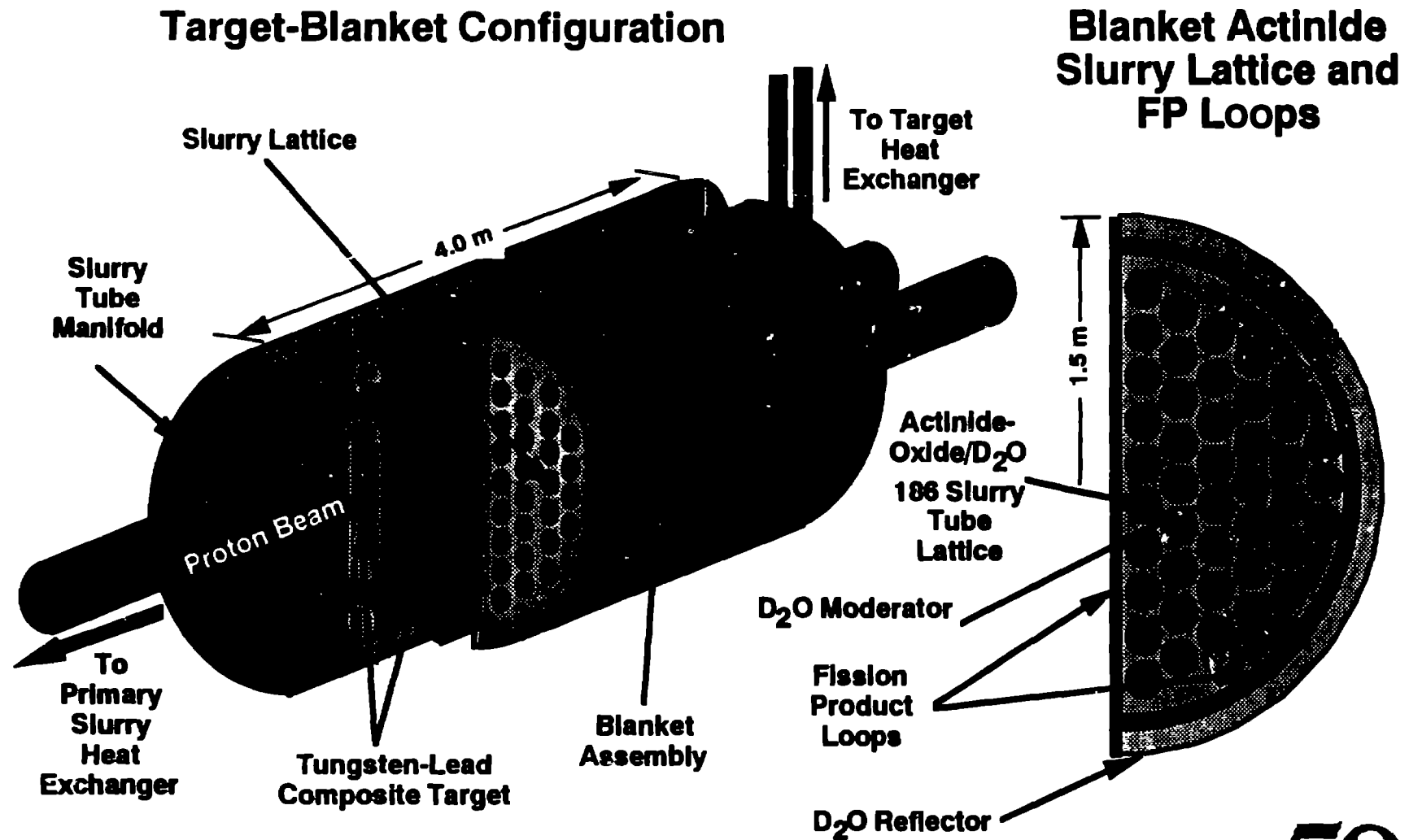
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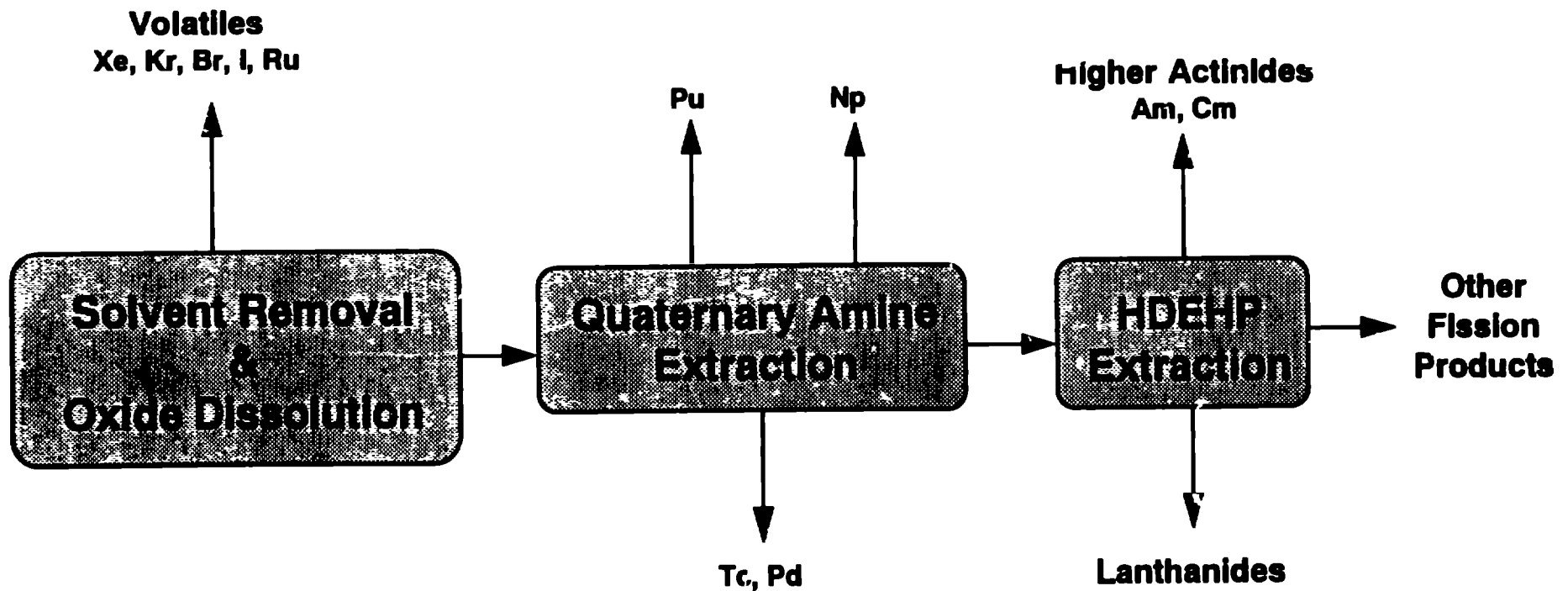


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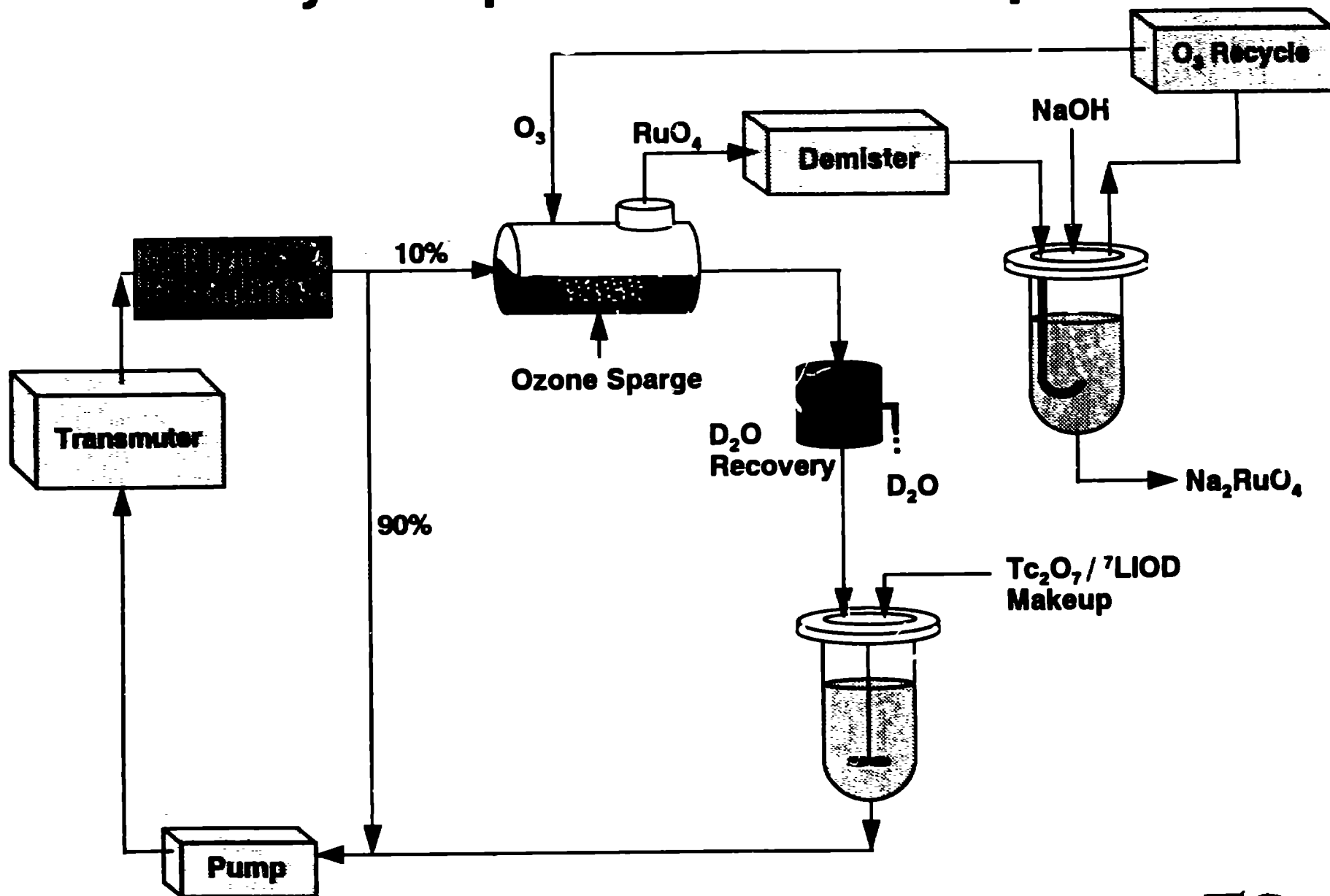
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