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China Literally Doubles Down On Nuclear Power

Posted By [Andrew Follett](#) On 11:48 AM 03/24/2016 In | [No Comments](#)

China will literally double the amount of nuclear power it uses over the next five years.

China's [latest Five-Year Plan](#) calls for 58 gigawatts of nuclear generating capacity in operation by 2020, up from the current capacity of roughly 27 gigawatts, [according to World Nuclear News](#). China will start building more nuclear power plants by 2020.

China plans to have 150 gigawatts of nuclear power by 2030, [according to the World Nuclear Association](#). A gigawatt of power [provides enough energy for roughly 700,000 homes](#).

China is currently operating 30 nuclear reactors, from which it derives 2.5 percent of its electricity. The country is building another 24 reactors under the Five-Year Plan and will [accelerate construction of a large commercial scale reprocessing plant](#), which will reprocess spent nuclear fuel.

China's State Council says the transition to nuclear power will be great for the environment and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 to 45 percent by 2020. The State Council also plans to export Chinese reactor technology, [including to countries like Great Britain](#).

The Five Year Plan is a major shift in Chinese policy, which has traditionally been extremely skeptical of nuclear power. The kind of [modern nuclear reactors](#) China plans to build are much safer and [actually emit less radiation than the coal plants they replace](#).

Globally, installed nuclear capacity is expected to [grow 60 percent by 2040](#), according to the International Energy Agency, while American capacity will likely only grow by 16 percent over the same time period.

Of the 59 new nuclear reactors under construction worldwide to help meet [increasing demand for electricity](#), only four of them are being built in the United States — just enough to compensate for [shutting down aging nuclear reactors](#). America's youngest nuclear plant, Tennessee's Watts Bar 1, entered service in 1996.

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