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Waste/Rock Interactions Technology
Program

Status Report on LWR Spent Fuel IAEA Leach Tests

Y. B. Katayama
D. J. Bradley
C. O. Harvey

March 1980

Prepared for the
Office of Nuclear Waste Isolation
under its Contract with the
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Pacific Northwest Laboratory
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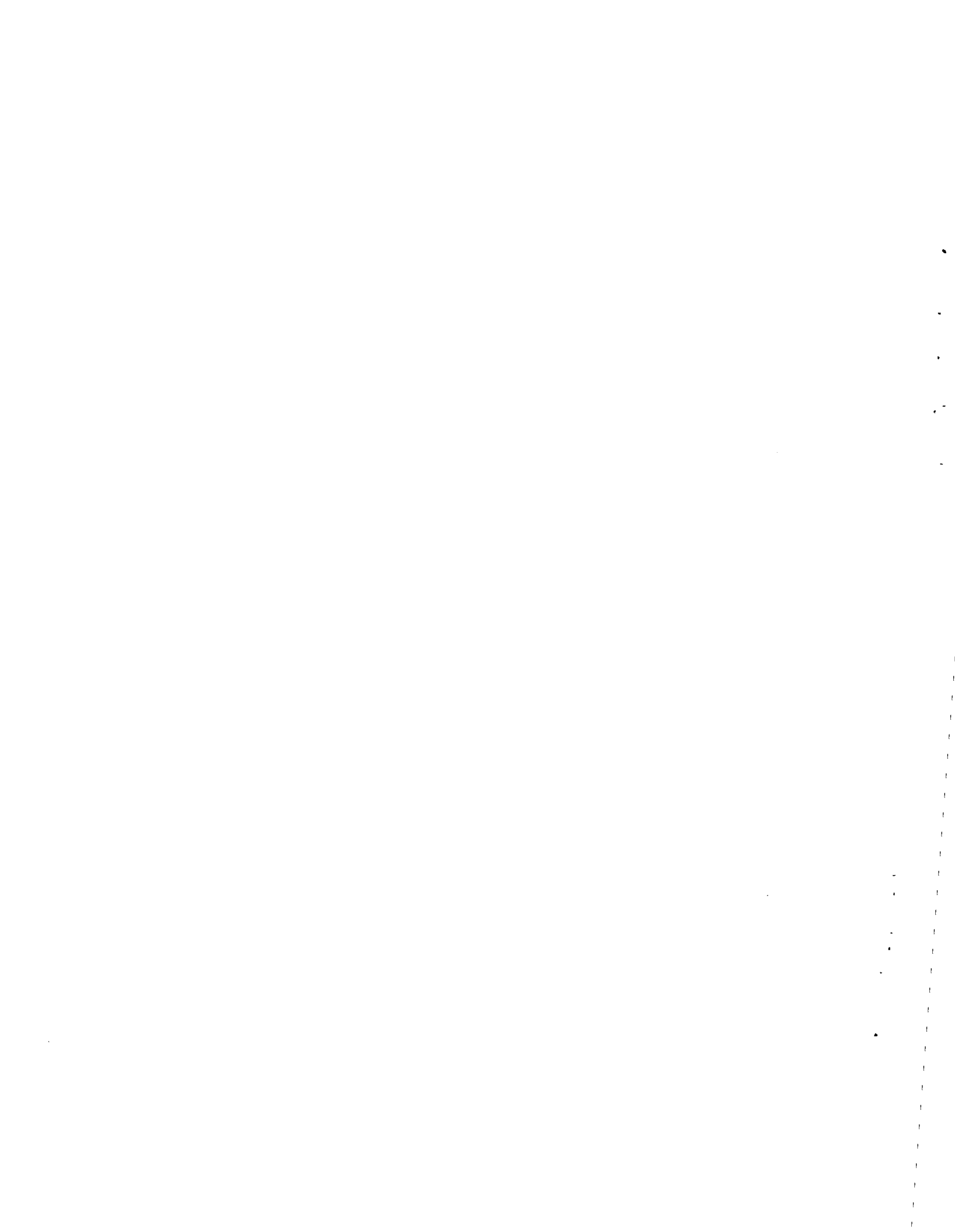


SUMMARY

Spent light-water-reactor (LWR) fuel with an average burnup of 28,000 MWd/MTU was leach-tested at 25°C using a modified version of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) procedure. Leach rates were determined from tests conducted in five different solutions: deionized water, sodium chloride (NaCl), sodium bicarbonate (NaHCO₃), calcium chloride (CaCl₂) and Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) "B" brine solutions. Elemental leach rates are reported based on the release of ⁹⁰Sr + ⁹⁰Y, ¹⁰⁶Ru, ¹³⁷Cs, ¹⁴⁴Ce, ¹⁵⁴Eu, ²³⁹⁺²⁴⁰Pu, ²⁴⁴Cm and total uranium.

After 467 days of cumulative leaching, the elemental leach rates are highest in deionized water. The elemental leach rates in the different solutions generally decreased from deionized water to the 0.03M NaCl solution to the WIPP "B" brine solution to the 0.03M NaHCO₃ solution and was a factor of 20 lower in 0.015M CaCl₂ solution than in deionized water.

The leach rates of spent fuel and borosilicate waste-glass were also compared. In sodium bicarbonate solution, the leach rates of the two waste forms were nearly equal, but the glass was increasingly more resistant than spent fuel in calcium chloride solution, followed by sodium chloride solution, WIPP "B" brine solution and deionized water. In deionized water the glass, based on the elemental release of plutonium and curium, was 50 to 400 times more leach resistant than spent fuel.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In 1977, the Pacific Northwest Laboratory (PNL), operated by Battelle Memorial Institute for the Department of Energy, started a task to study spent-fuel leaching as a part of the Waste Isolation Safety Assessment Program (WISAP). Radionuclide release information from spent fuel, a candidate waste form for geologic disposal, is needed to evaluate the safety of repository storage of spent fuels. These data are used both in release-consequence modeling and as source terms for radionuclide migration experiments.

There are many types of leach tests being used to evaluate solidified waste forms (Mendel 1973). At PNL spent fuels have been leach-tested by three different procedures: Paige tests, static leach tests, and the IAEA procedure. Paige leach tests on spent LWR fuels have been previously reported (Katayama 1979), and results from static leach tests of spent fuel will be reported as radiochemical analyses of stored and ongoing leachant samples are completed. The static leach tests are designed to give detailed data on spent fuel solubilities at 25° and 75°C. This status report presents results from leach-testing LWR spent fuel with an average burnup of 28,000 MWd/MTU using a modified version of the IAEA procedure at 25°C. Release rates are discussed as a function of the duration of the leach tests and of the solution type.

This and future status reports on spent-fuel leaching will be reported as a part of the Waste/Rock Interactions Technology Program (WRIT). The WRIT Program, started in FY-1980 at PNL, includes Tasks 2 and 4 of WISAP.

EXPERIMENTAL METHODS AND MATERIALS

MATERIAL

The spent fuel used in this study originated from a fuel bundle discharged on June 6, 1974 from the HB Robinson II Reactor and has an average burnup of 28,000 MWd/MTU. The fuel was removed from the fuel rods at the Battelle-Columbus Hot Laboratory and was received at PNL as a mixture of unclad fuel fragments. A sample of this material was submitted to the Hanford Engineering Development Laboratory for radiochemical analysis. These analytical values for the radionuclides were used as the initial concentration in the leach rate calculations.

A randomly selected batch of the as-received fuel fragments was screened to provide a particle size distribution (see Table 1). Samples for the leach tests were taken from particle fractions retained on screens #5 and #10 (greater than 2-mm particles).

TABLE 1. Particle Size Distribution of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel

<u>Sieve Number</u>	<u>Sieve Opening, mm</u>	<u>Weight, g</u>	<u>Fraction Retained</u>
3	6.73	0	0
4	4.73	192.883	1.007×10^{-1}
5	4.00	634.765	3.331×10^{-1}
10	2.00	1031.170	5.384×10^{-1}
20	0.841	35.205	1.838×10^{-2}
40	0.420	11.242	5.869×10^{-3}
60	0.250	4.979	2.599×10^{-3}
80	0.177	1.424	7.434×10^{-4}
100	0.149	1.042	5.440×10^{-4}
140	0.105	1.204	6.286×10^{-4}
200	0.074	0.769	4.015×10^{-4}
200	0.074	0.737	3.848×10^{-4}

Samples of the as-received spent fuel were also mounted, polished and examined by metallography for microstructural characterization of the fuel. Metallographic examination of spent-fuel fragments from the HB Robinson II reactor showed the presence of closed porosity (see Figure 1). Cathodic etching of the surface showed equiaxed grains with little change in size from the center of the pellet to the outer edge (magnified portion in Figure 1 is typical of entire sample).

Chemical-concentration profiles for selected radionuclides were recorded as fluorescence X-ray intensities on a shielded electron-beam microprobe X-ray analyzer. Various fuel fragments, typical of the samples in our leach tests, are now being analyzed. The data presented here are for a fragment of fuel with a burnup of 28,000 MWd/MTU. Figure 2 shows a segment of a transverse section. The microprobe was programmed to step-scan the sample from point A at the outside diameter of the pellet to point B near the center of the pellet. Concentration profiles for elements measured by step scanning are expressed as X-ray intensities in Figures 3, 4 and 5.

Plutonium, cesium, ruthenium, technetium, barium, zirconium and cerium showed enrichment near the outer edge (point A). Iodine and tellurium showed no indication of enrichment at the outer edge. Plutonium showed the highest gradient from edge to center (point A to point B), with a 47% reduction in X-ray intensity 300 μm inward from point A and an additional 28% drop over the next 3600 μm to point B.

LEACH TEST

The modified IAEA leach test involves the immersion of a spent-fuel sample in a solution according to a fixed ratio of 1:10 (cm^2/cm^3) of exposed surface area of sample to volume of solution. The solution is then left in contact with the sample for progressively longer time intervals. The solution is changed after each time interval. Between each sampling period the system is not disturbed via stirring or shaking. Although the leach container is left static during the leaching interval, the thermal power of the spent fuel of about $5 \text{ cal h}^{-1} \text{ g}^{-1}$ is a source of convective (thermal) agitation at the

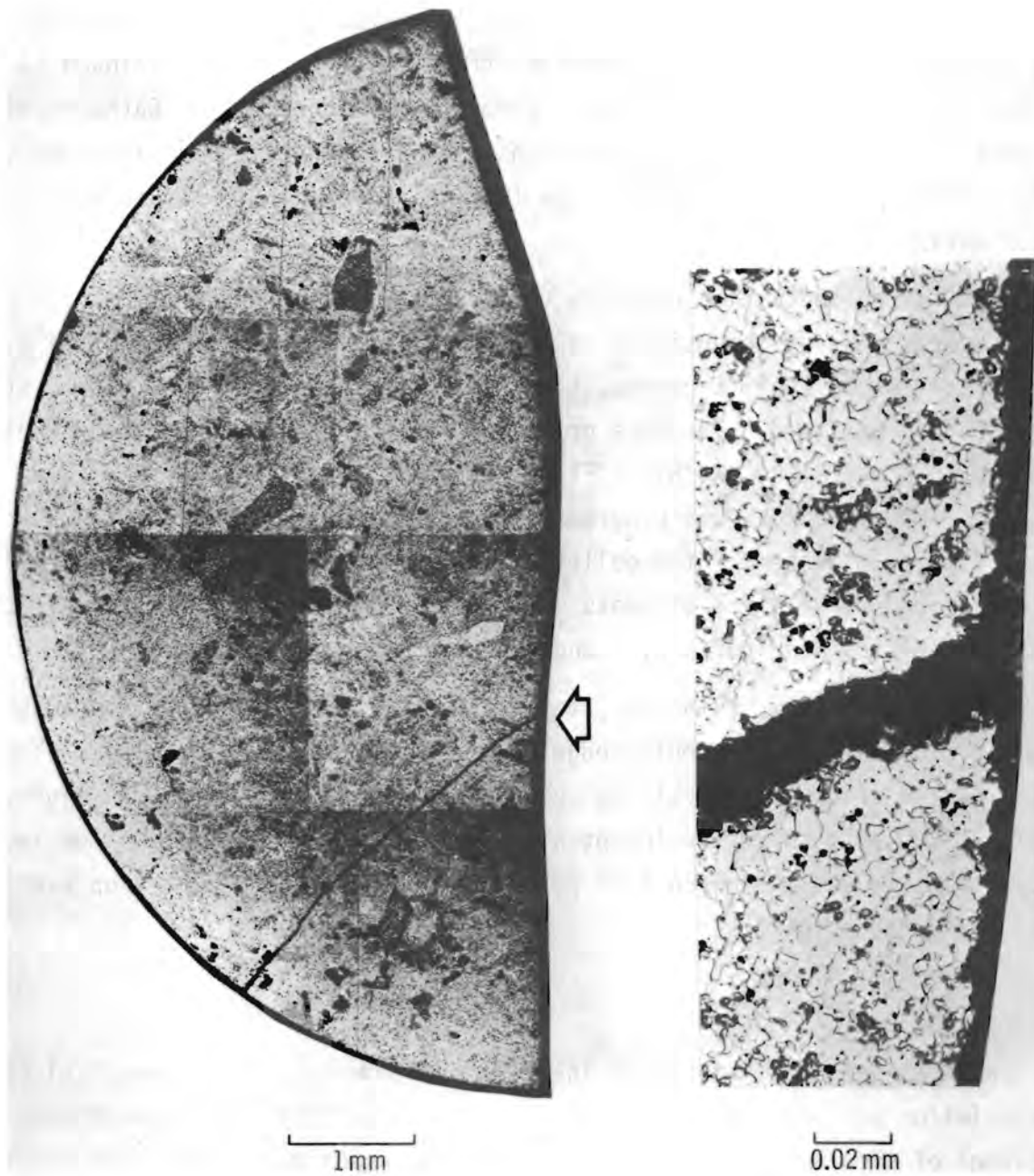


FIGURE 1. Appearance of Spent Fuel with a Burnup of 28,000 MWd/MTU

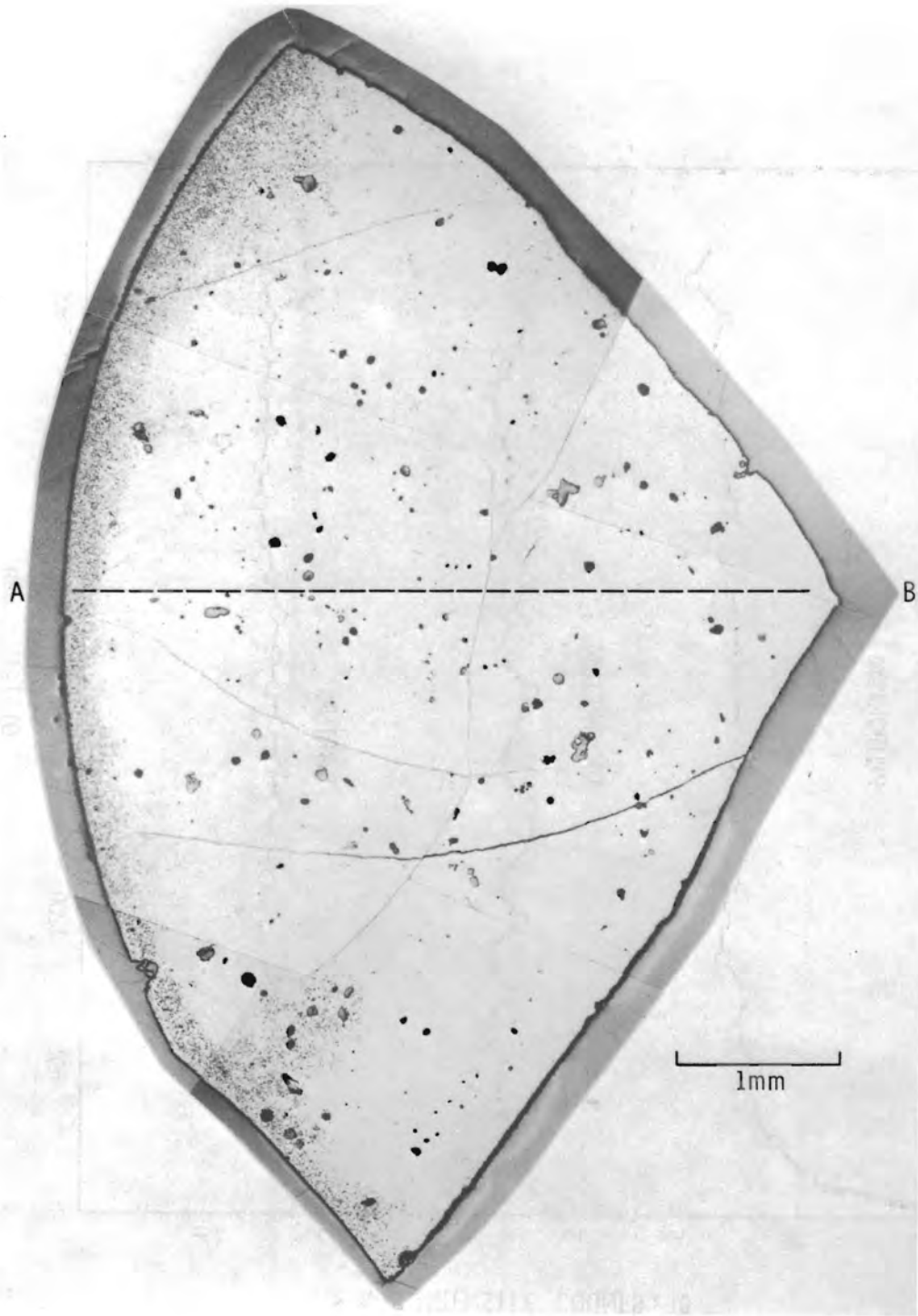


FIGURE 2. Fragment of HB Robinson II Fuel, 28,000 MWd/MTU, Showing Microprobe Step-Scanning Path From point A to point B (Edge to Center)

A-B \approx 4.7 mm

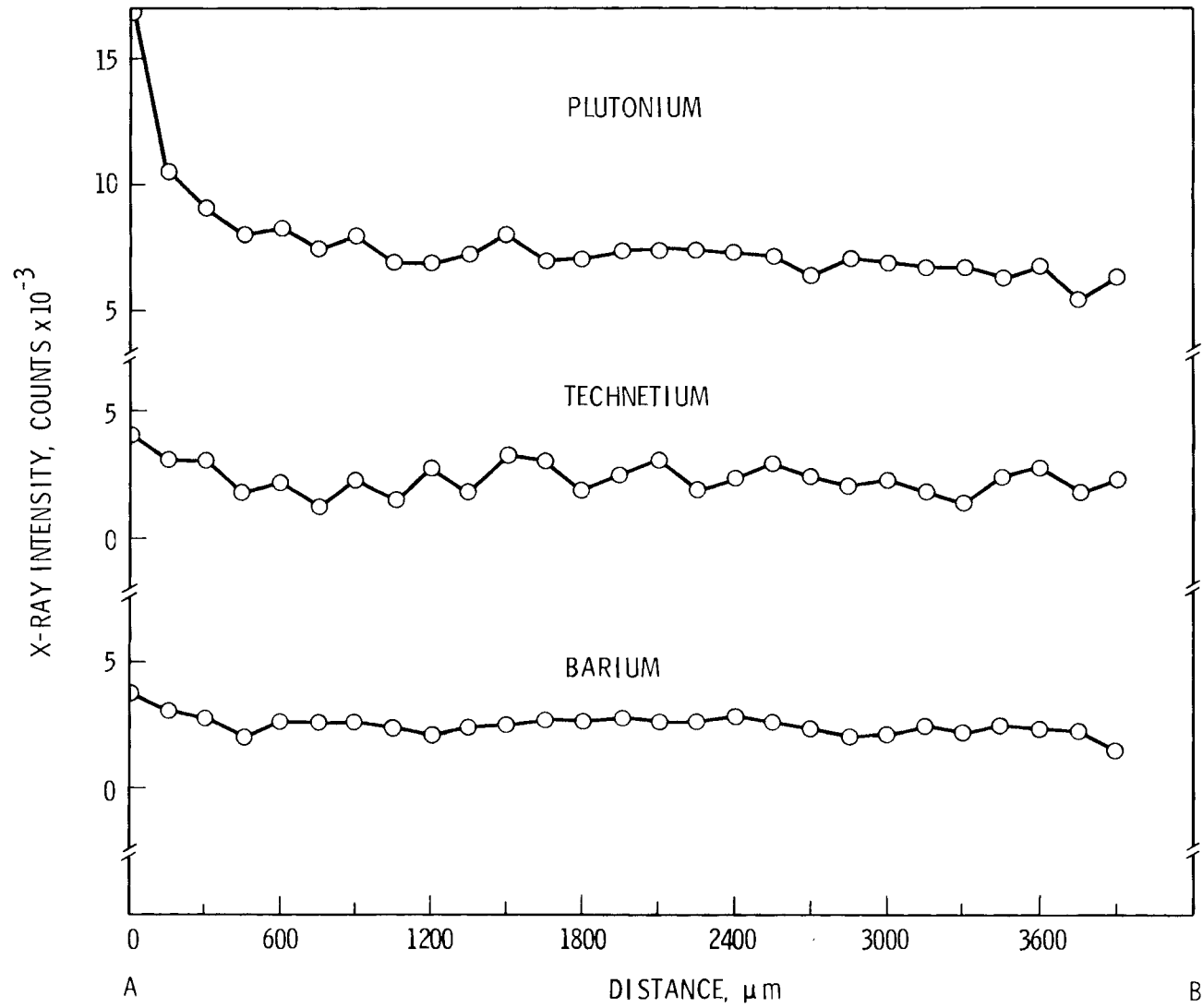


FIGURE 3. Microprobe Measured X-Ray Intensities for Plutonium, Technetium and Barium.

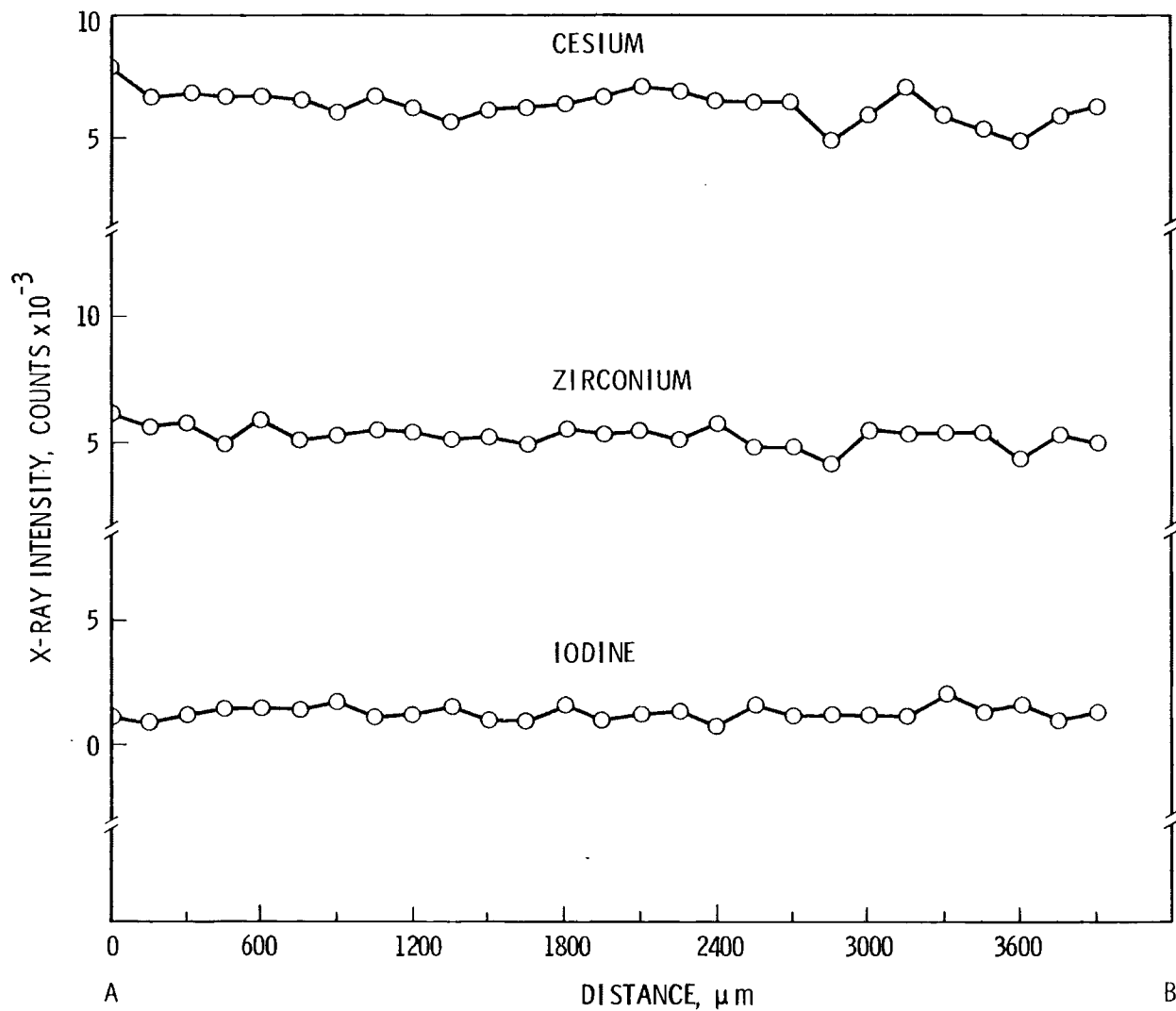


FIGURE 4. Microprobe Measured X-Ray Intensities for Cesium, Zirconium and Iodine

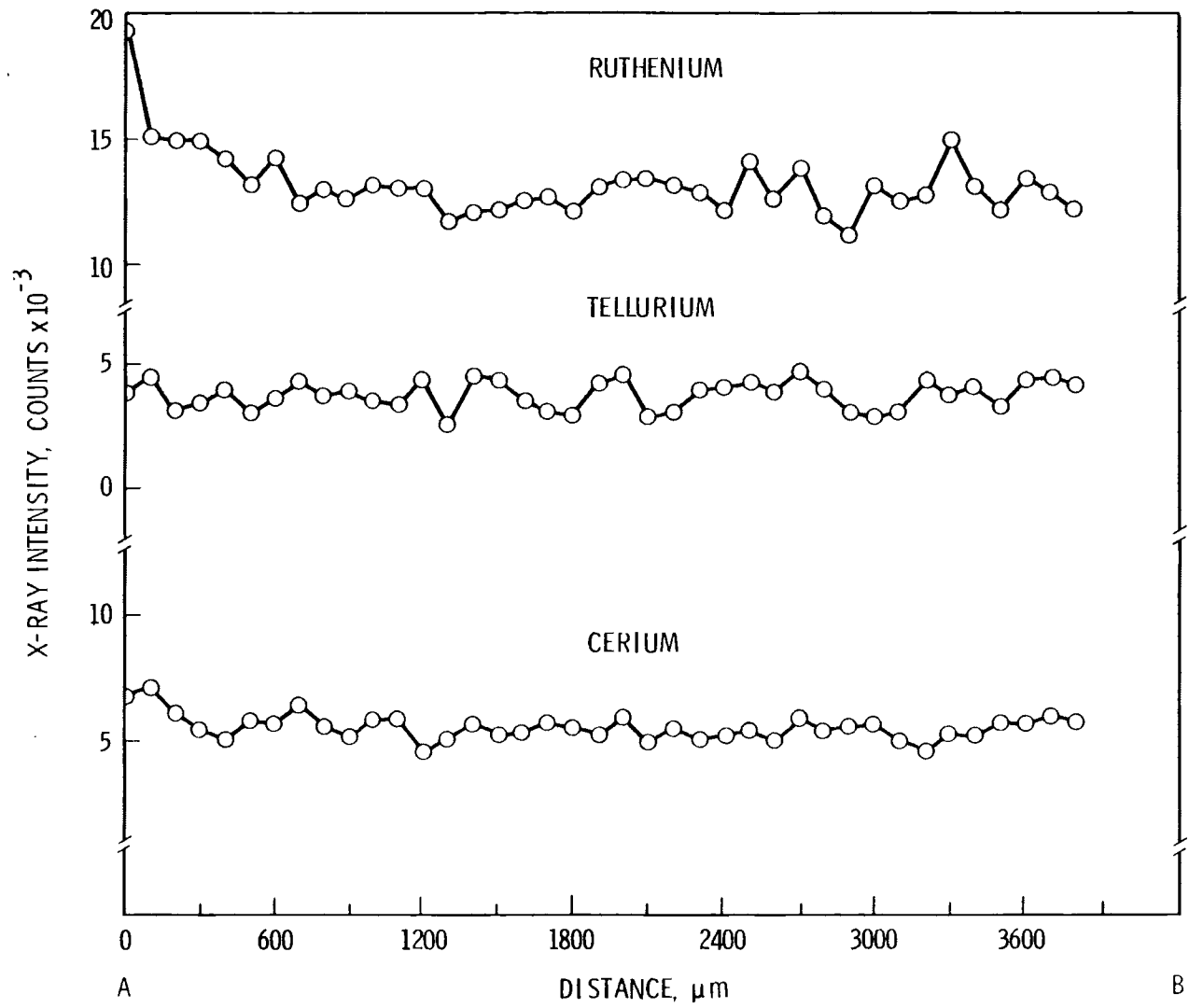


FIGURE 5. Microprobe Measured X-Ray Intensities for Ruthenium, Tellurium and Cerium

fuel-solution interface. Thus, the transfer of radionuclides to the bulk of the leach solution may not be wholly dependent on diffusion. Table 2 shows the sampling schedule for the IAEA test used.

Approximately 15 g of fuel fragments (see Figure 6), having a geometric surface area of approximately 30 cm², were used per test. Figure 7 shows the details of the leach-test container. For these tests the solution volume was 300 ml. The solutions used for the spent-fuel leach tests were:

- salt brine, WIPP "B" salt brine (Dosch and Lynch 1978)
- synthetic high-ionic-strength calcium groundwater (0.015M CaCl₂)
- synthetic high-bicarbonate groundwater (0.03M NaHCO₃)
- synthetic high-ionic-strength sodium groundwater (0.03M NaCl)
- deionized water.

Table 3 shows the composition of WIPP "B" salt brine.

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The tests were run in triplicate, making a total of 15 tests. On each sample collection day, the basket holding the spent-fuel fragments was carefully removed, and after swirling the jar of solution, a 10-ml sample of solution was withdrawn. This sample was then acidified to approximately pH 1 using concentrated nitric acid to prevent radionuclides from adhering to the walls of the glass sample-container. The addition of nitric acid was found to be effective in preventing nuclide plateout in IAEA leach testing of doped glass beads (Bradley, Harvey and Turcotte 1979).

After discarding the remaining leach solution, the leach-test polypropylene jars (see Figure 7) were then filled with 300 ml of 5M HNO₃ + 0.5M HF. This solution was used to remove any radionuclides that had adhered to the leach-test jar walls. After one to two days, a 10-ml sample was withdrawn and analyzed. The result of this radionuclide concentration analysis was added to that from the original leach solution to arrive at a leach rate of a given radionuclide from the spent fuel. The measurements of radionuclides were all made using common radiochemical analysis methods. Gamma emitters were measured by gamma-energy analysis using a multi-channel analyzer with a Ge-Li detector.

TABLE 2. IAEA Leach-Test Schedule

<u>Cumulative Days Leached</u>	<u>Solution Change, Series Number</u>	<u>Leach Solutions to be Analyzed</u>
1	1	x ^(a)
2	2	x ^(a)
3	3	x ^(a)
4	4	x ^(a)
11	5	x ^(a)
18	6	x
25	7	x ^(a)
32	8	x
39	9	
46	10	x
53	11	
60	12	x ^(a)
91	13	x
122	14	
154	15	x ^(a)
187	16	
215	17	x
246	18	
277	19	x ^(a)
310	20	
341	21	x
374	22	
404	23	x ^(a)
433	24	
467	25	x ^(a)
495	26	
529	27	x

(a) Results presented in this report.

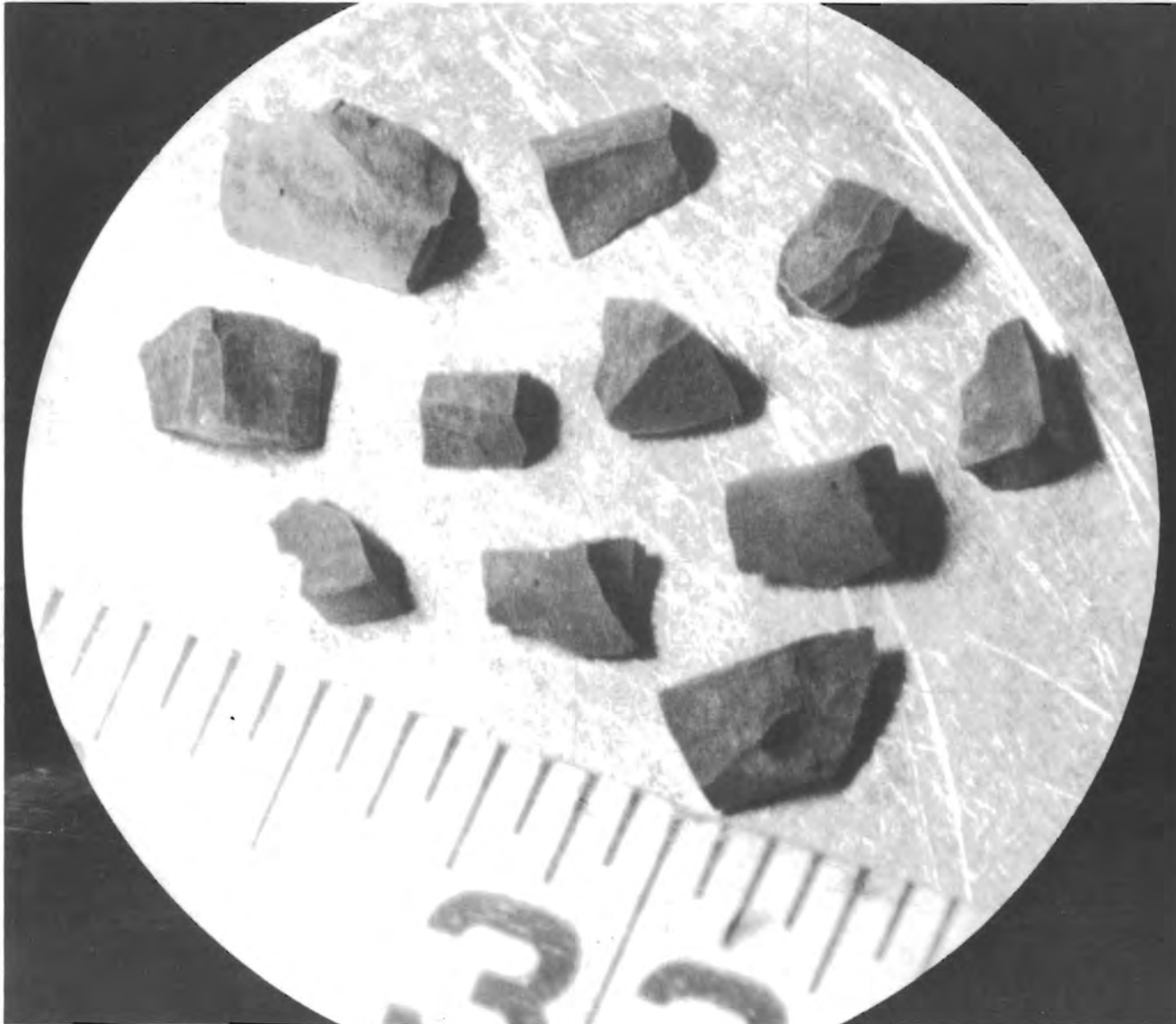


FIGURE 6. Spent LWR Fuel Fragments Photographed Through Hot-Cell Periscope (a)

(a) each division on scale equals 1/16 in.

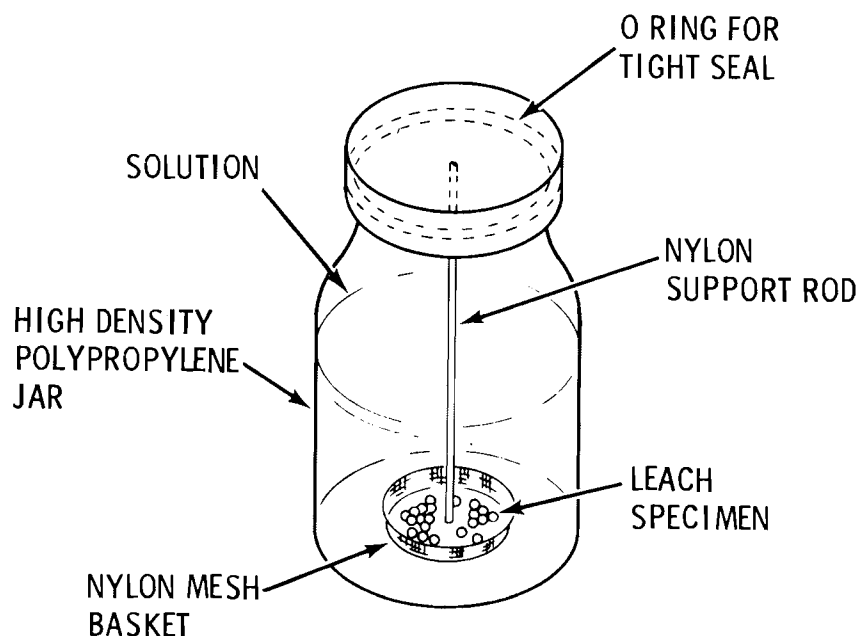


FIGURE 7. IAEA Leach-Test Container

TABLE 3. Chemical and Ionic Composition of Salt Brine(a)

Compound	Concentration, g/L	Ion	Concentration, mole/L
NaCl	287.0	Na ⁺	5.0
Na ₂ SO ₄	6.2	K ⁺	0.00038
Na ₂ B ₄ O ₇ · 10H ₂ O	0.0160	Rb ⁺	0.000012
NaHCO ₃	0.0140	Cs ⁺	0.000008
NaBr	0.5200	Mg ⁺⁺	0.00041
KCl	0.0290	Ca ⁺⁺	0.022
KI	0.0130	Sr ⁺⁺	0.00017
MgCl ₂	0.0400	Fe ⁺⁺⁺	0.000036
CaCl ₂ · 2H ₂ O	0.0033	Cl ⁻	4.94
FeCl ₃	0.0060	Br ⁻	0.0050
SrCl ₂ · 2H ₂ O	0.0330	I ⁻	0.000079
Rb ₂ SO ₄	0.0016	HCO ₃ ⁻	0.00016
CsCl	0.0013	SO ₄ ⁻	0.036
Total dissolved solids	297.2	B (BO ₃ ⁻⁻⁻)	0.00017

(a) pH (adjusted) = 6.5

To improve the measurement of minor constituents, the majority of the cesium was removed by extraction with tetraphenylboron in amylacetate (Finston 1961) and the sample recounted.

Plutonium and curium analyses, with the exception of brine samples, were done by alpha-energy analysis of a direct mount of the sample. In brine samples, the plutonium was extracted into TTA-xylene (Moore and Hudgens 1957), plated and counted on an alpha proportional counter. Curium was separated by ion exchange, plated and alpha counted.

Strontium was separated by ion exchange and was beta-counted. Repeat counts were made and the ^{90}Sr was calculated from the ^{90}Y ingrowth (Koltoff and Elving 1966). Uranium analysis was done by fluorometry (Centanni and DeSesa 1956; Price, Perritti and Swaitly et al. 1953).

CALCULATIONS

All the leach rates in this report are incremental leach rates and are average leach rates for the sampling interval. The equation used to calculate the incremental leach rate is as follows:

$$R_i = \frac{a_i}{A_0 S t}, \text{ where}$$

R_i = incremental leach rate, $\text{g}/\text{cm}^2\text{-day}$

a_i = activity of isotope in leachate, counts s^{-1}

A_0 = specific activity of isotope in sample before leaching, $\text{counts s}^{-1} \text{g}^{-1}$

S = geometric surface area of sample, cm^2

t = incremental leaching period, days.

RESULTS/DISCUSSION

Figures 8 through 16 are graphs of incremental leach rates for nine radioactive elements plotted as a function of time. In each figure, leach curves for the five leachants are shown for one element. Each data point represents the average of three samples, and tabulations of the data are given in the Appendix. The elemental leach curves for the five solutions diverge with cumulative leaching time, and for the elements analyzed the spread in the leach rate curves is greatest at the last data point reported (467 days). The leach rates based on cesium, antimony and ruthenium release appear to be the least affected by the different leach solutions. For the other six elements, the leach rate curves for the five different leach solutions are spread out up to 2-1/2 orders of magnitude. The leach rate curves in Figures 8 through 16 are summarized in Table 4. Table 4 contains a tabulation of the observed ranking of leach solutions from the highest to lowest elemental releases. Deionized water had the highest release for all the isotopes. The lowest release for the isotopes was in CaCl_2 solution except for cerium, ruthenium and europium where the CaCl_2 solution was next to lowest.

Figure 17 is a graph of leach rate curves in deionized water for the nine elements measured. The spread in the curves at the first day of leaching covers two orders of magnitude and decreases to a spread of one order of magnitude at 467 days of cumulative leaching. Cesium has the highest initial leach rate and continues to exhibit a high leach rate at the last sampling period. Ruthenium has the lowest initial leach rate and continues to exhibit the lowest leach rate after 467 days.

Figure 18 is a graph of leach rate curves in 0.03M NaCl solution for the nine elements measured. The spread in the leach curves at the first day of leaching covers about 1-1/2 order of magnitude and decreases to about one order of magnitude at 467 days of cumulative leaching. Cesium tends to have the highest leach rate and ruthenium the lowest leach rate during the 467 days, which is the same general behavior as in deionized water.

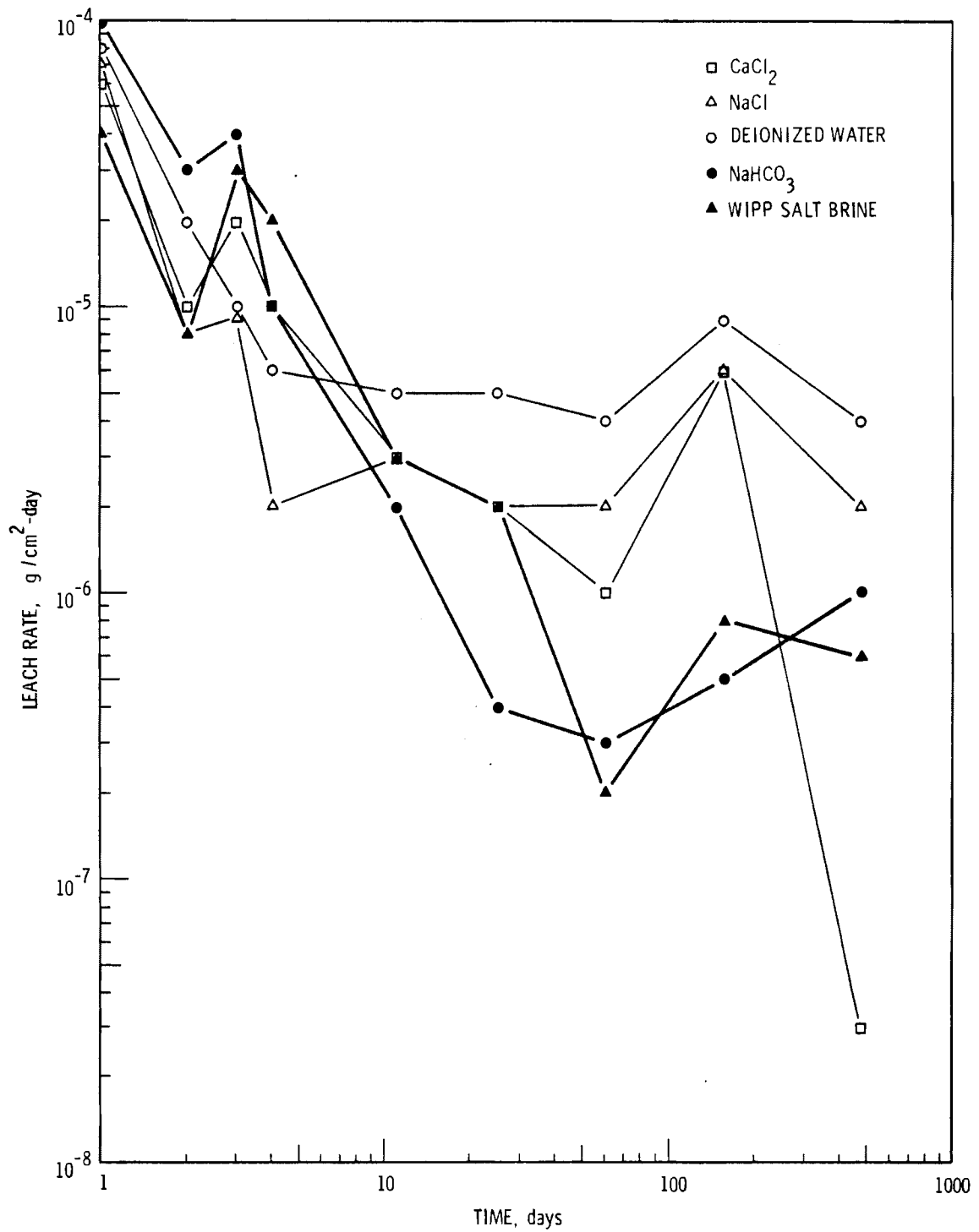


FIGURE 8. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of Uranium

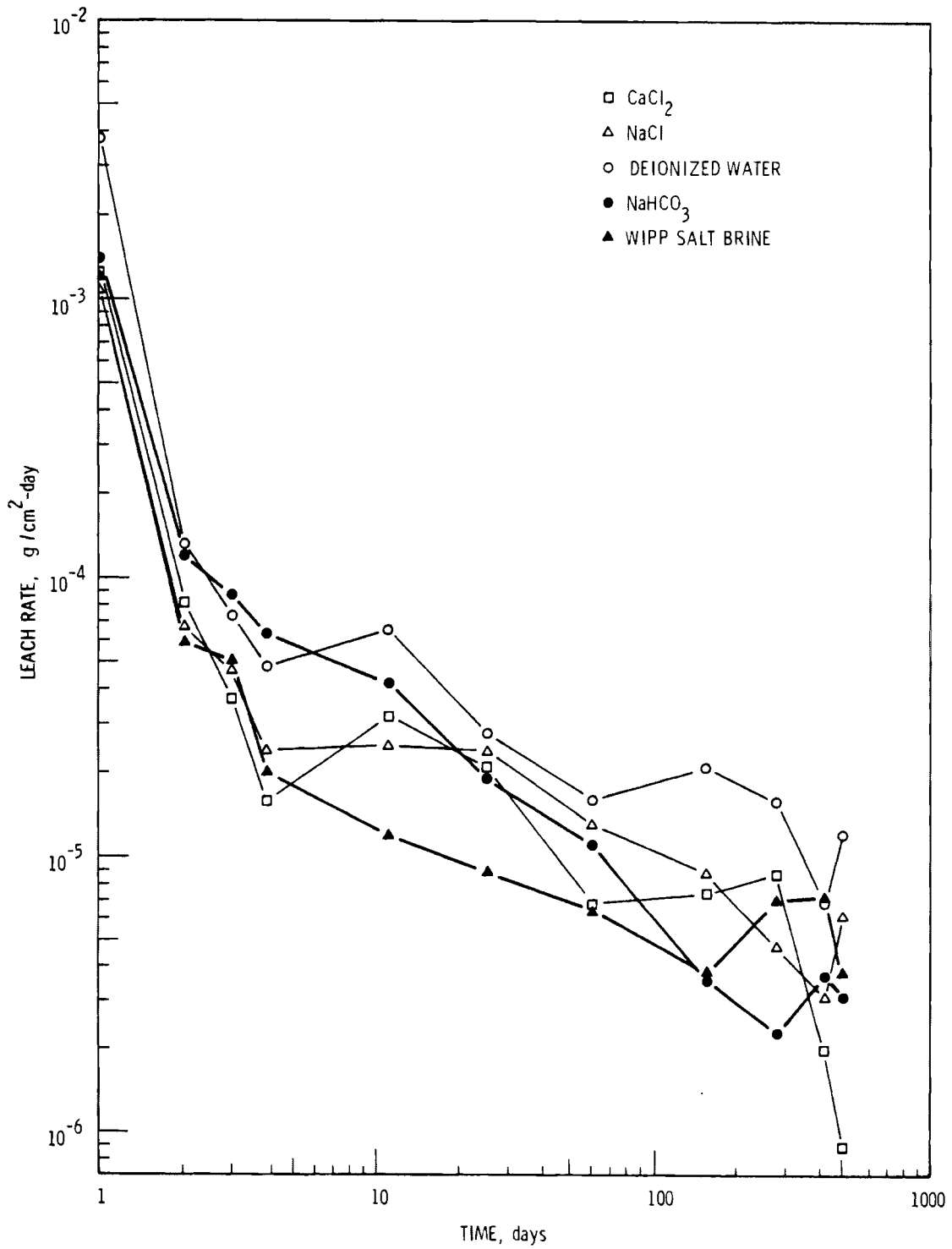


FIGURE 9. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C
Based on Release of ^{137}Cs

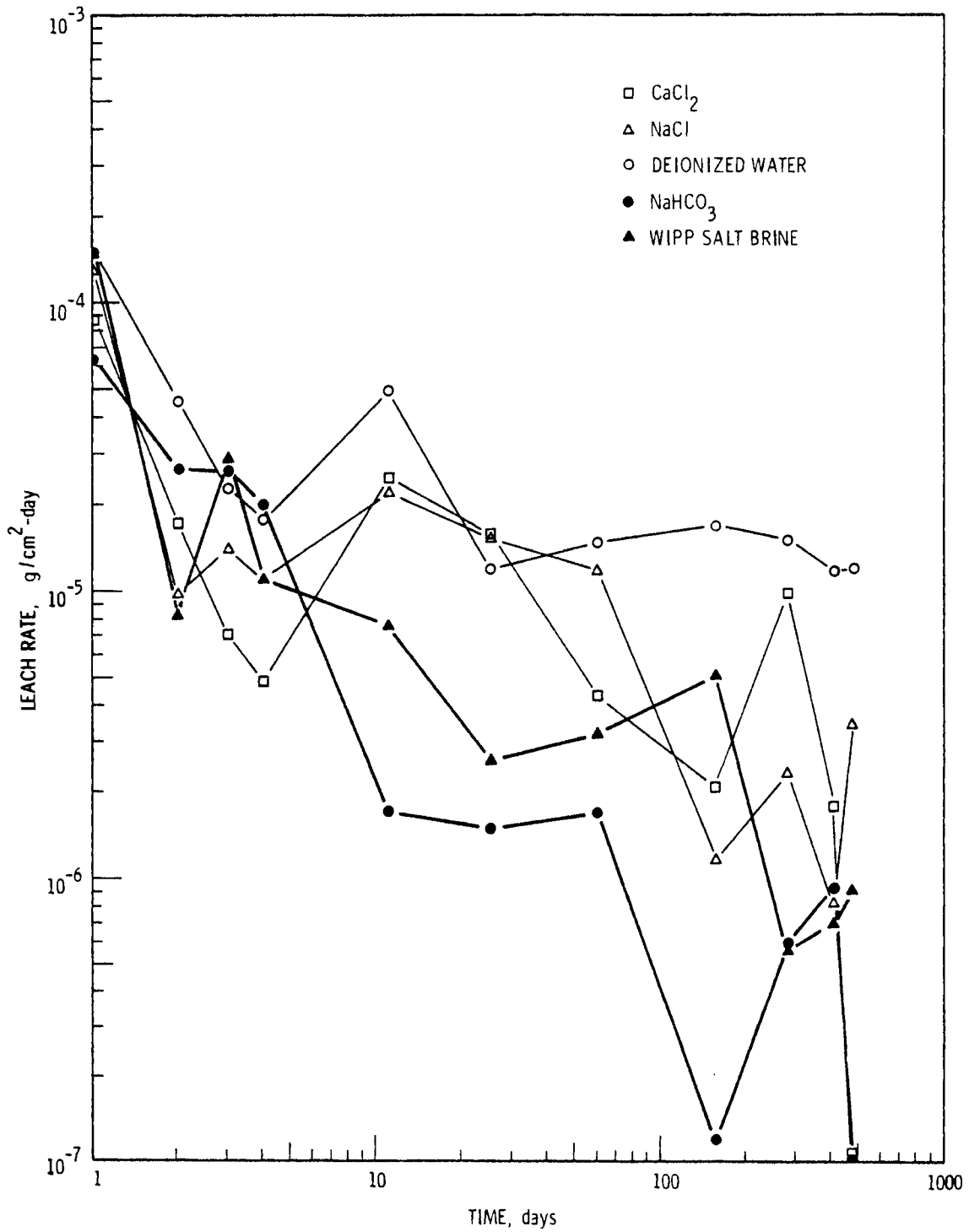


FIGURE 10. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of ¹⁴⁴Ce

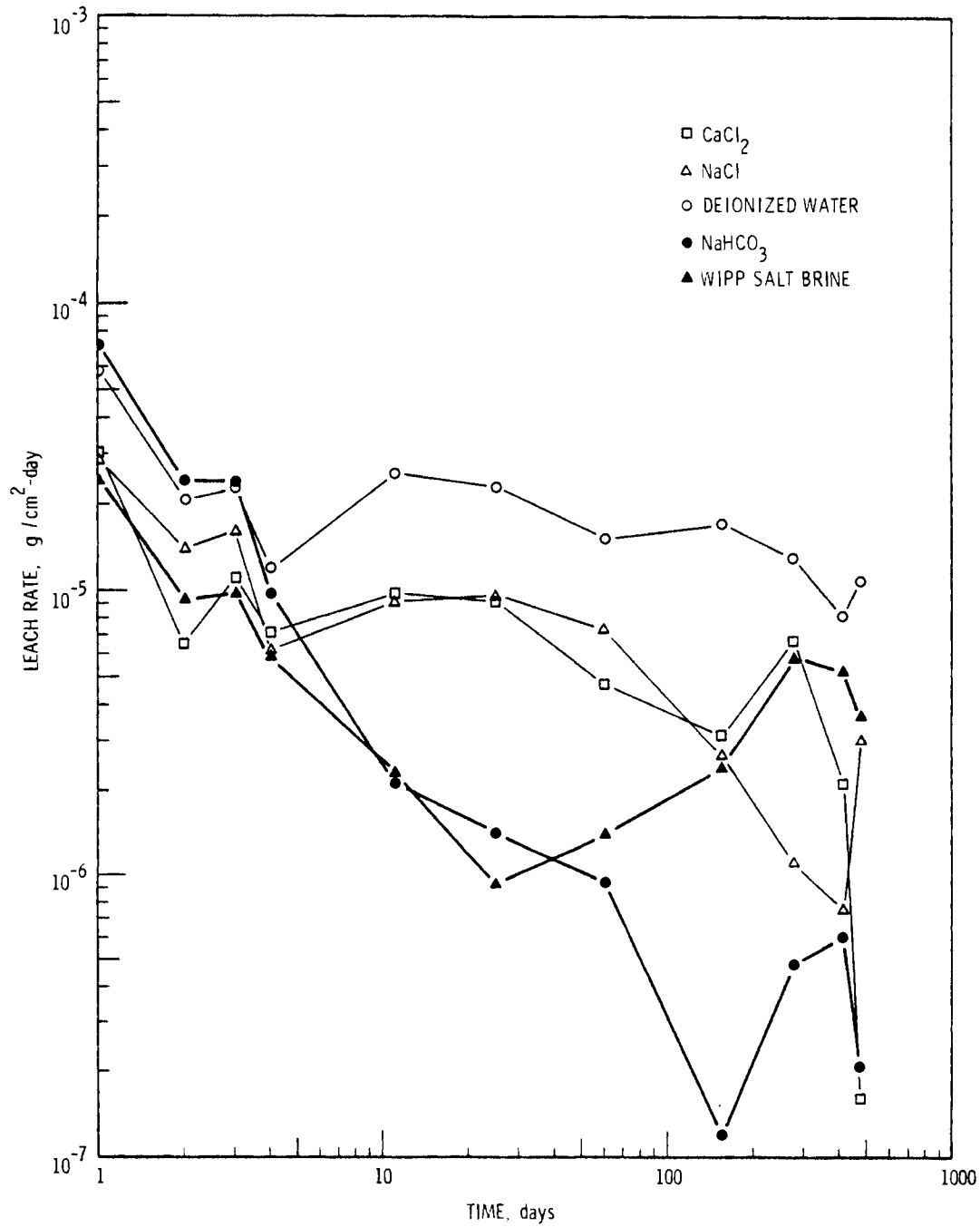


FIGURE 11. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of 239+240p_u

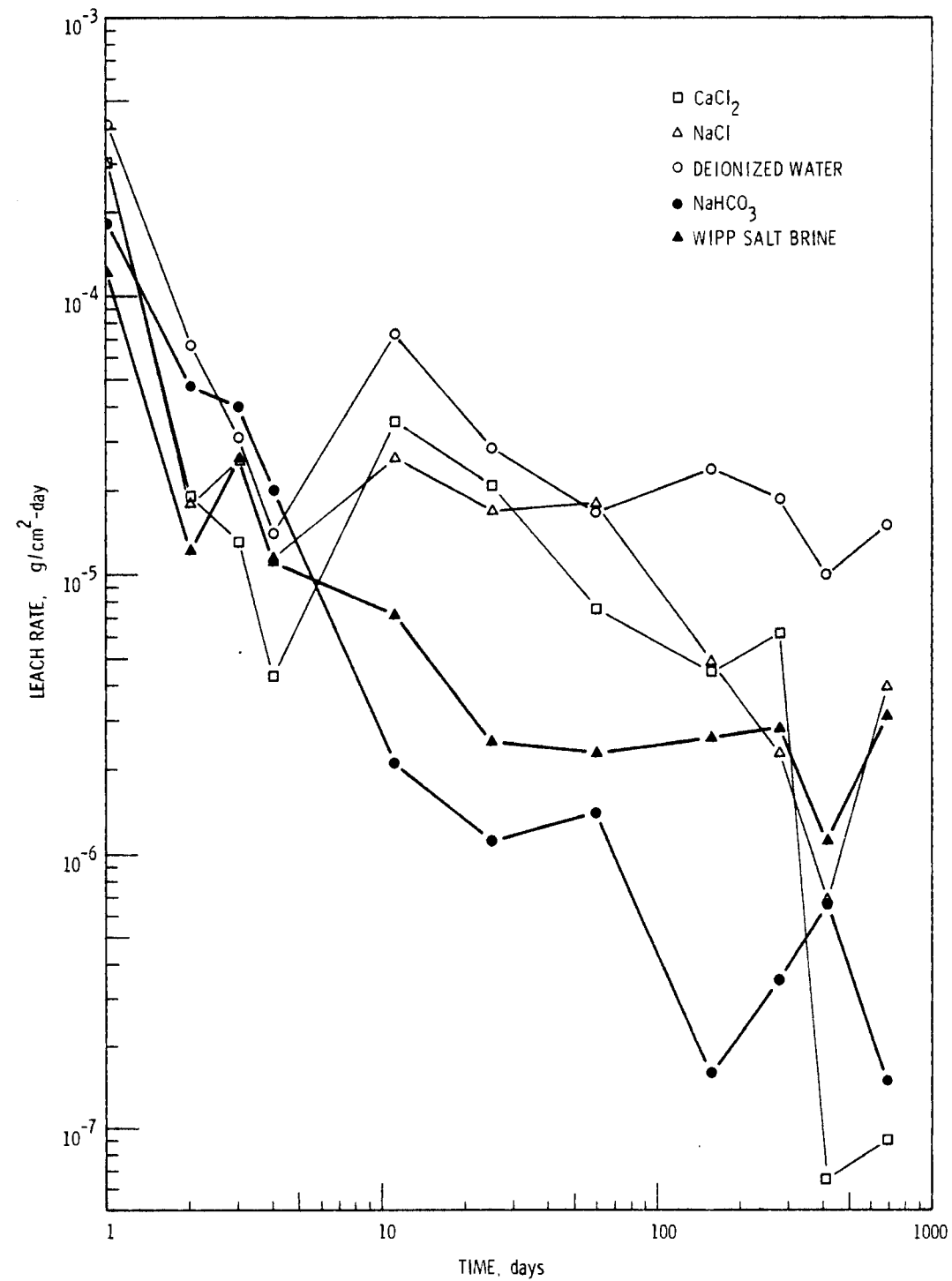


FIGURE 12. Leach Rate of 28,000 Mwd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of 244Cm

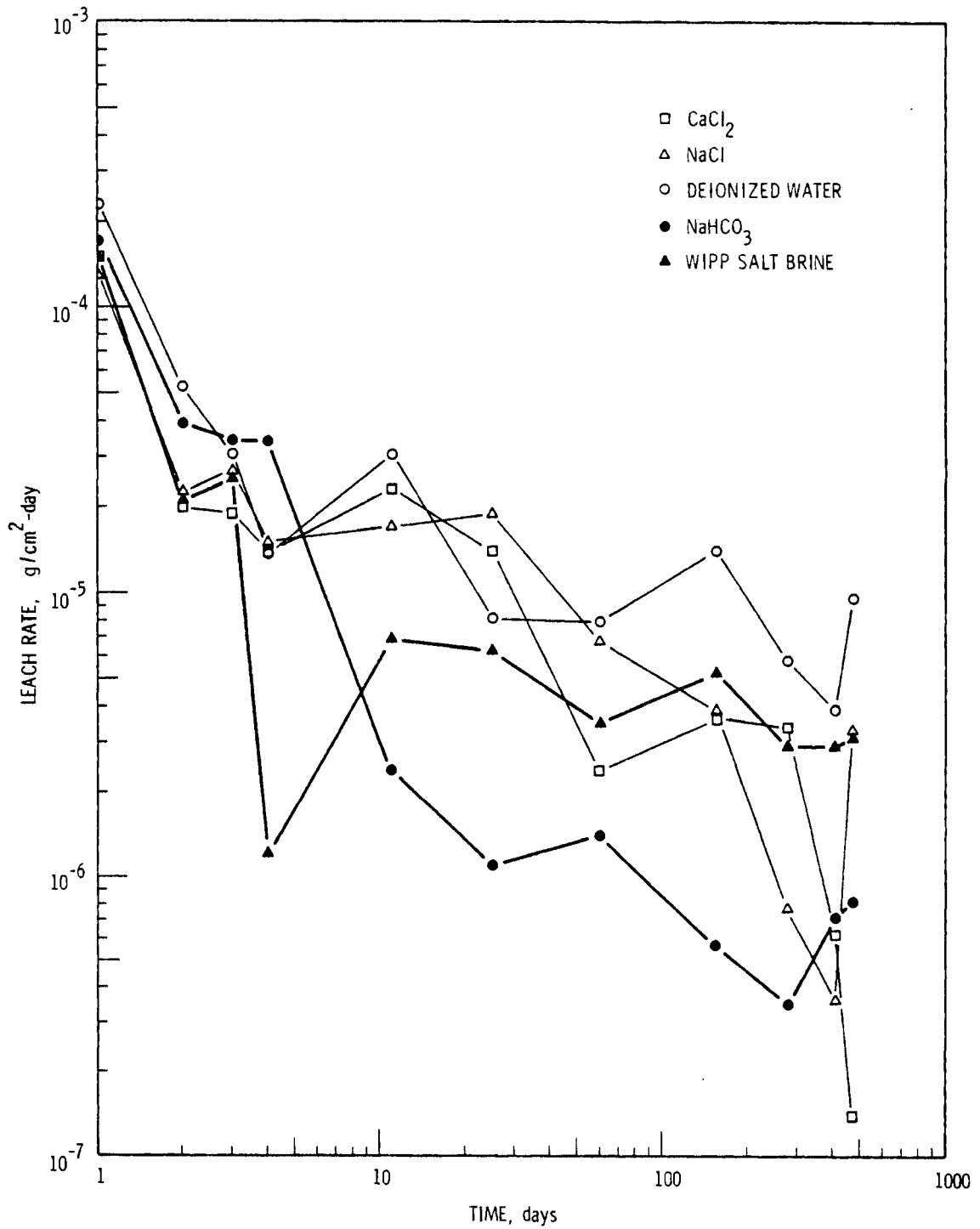


FIGURE 13. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of ⁹⁰Sr + ⁹⁰γ

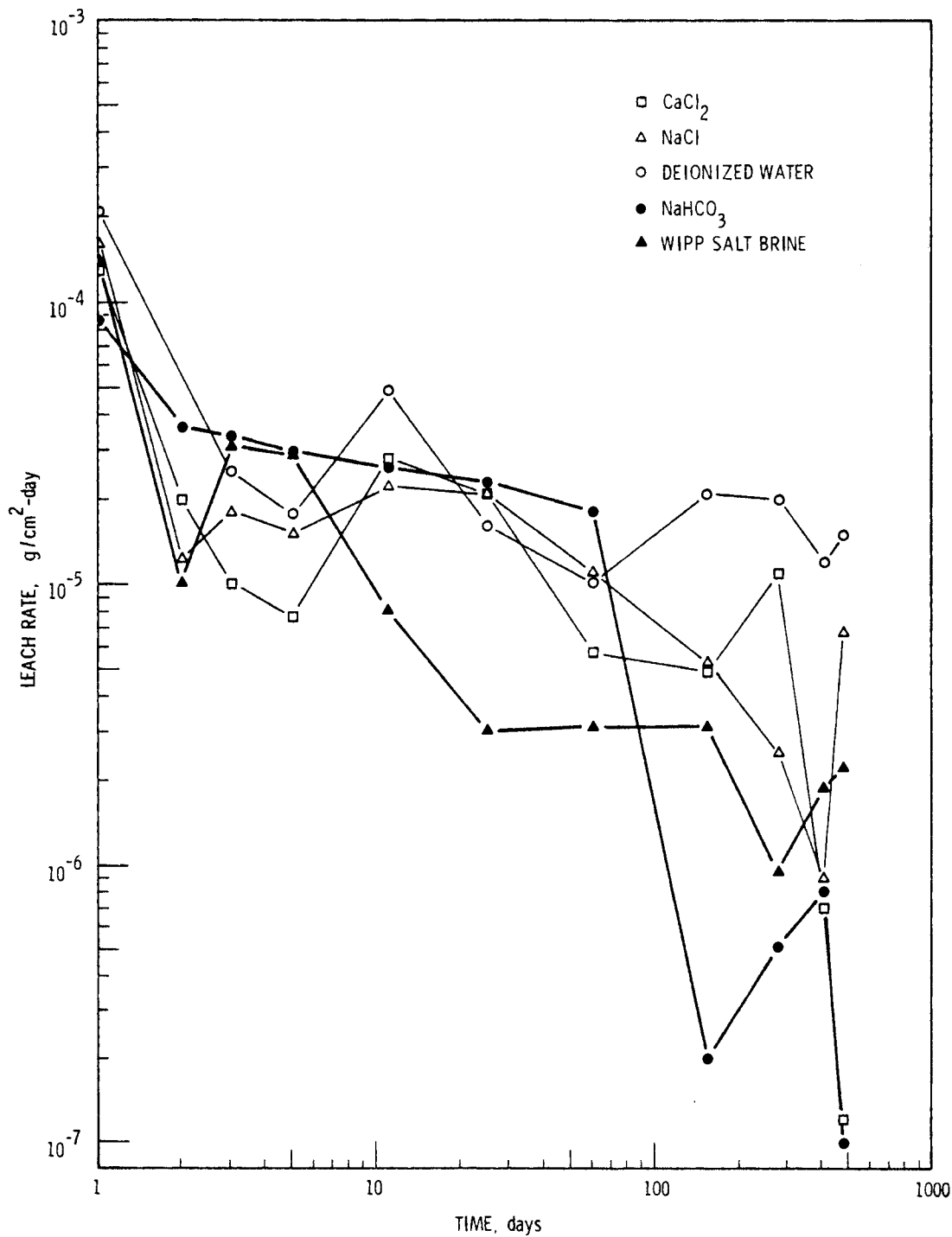


FIGURE 14. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of ¹⁵⁴Eu

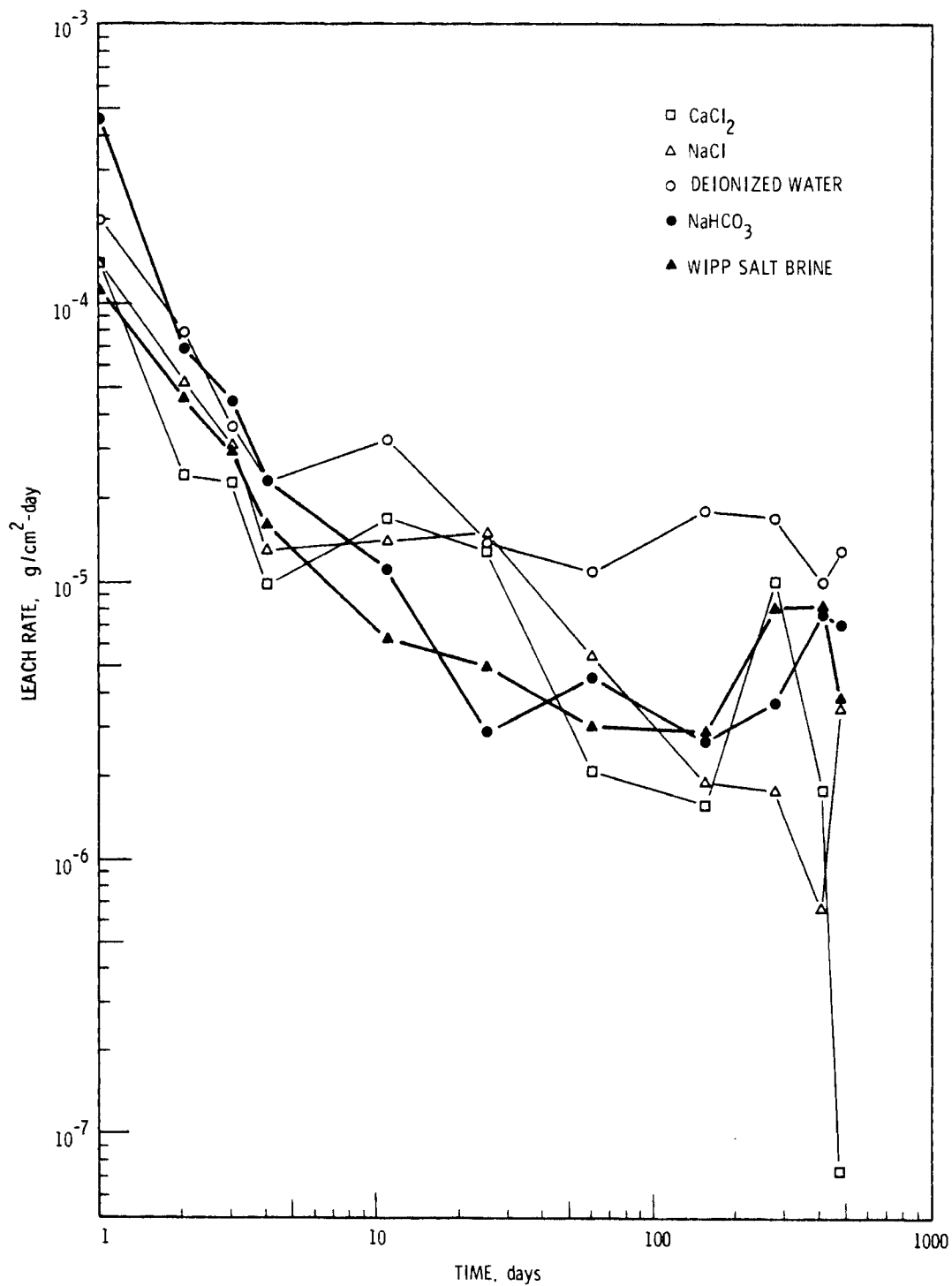


FIGURE 15. Leach Rate of 28,000 Mwd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of ¹²⁵Sb

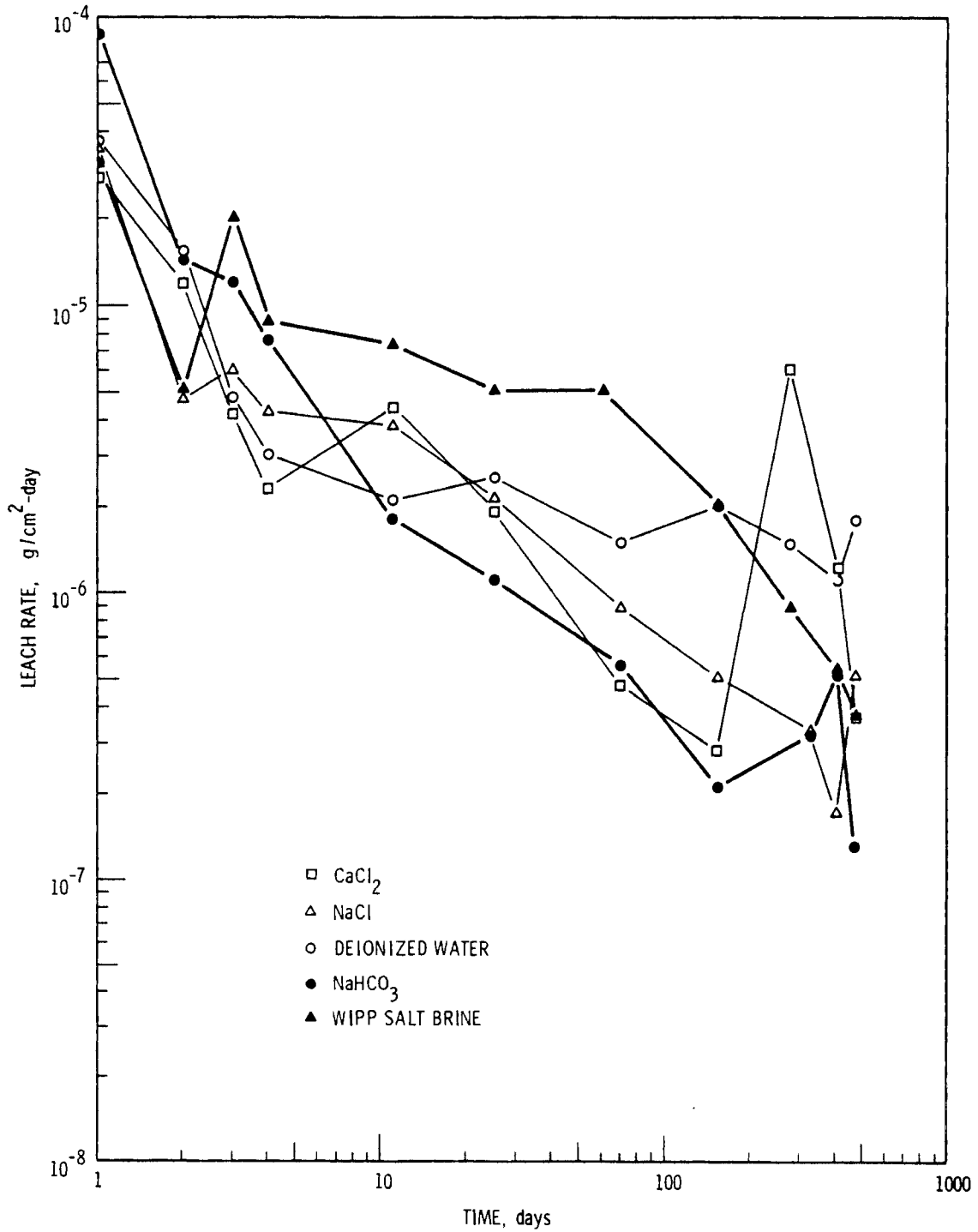


FIGURE 16. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel at 25°C Based on Release of ¹⁰⁶Ru

TABLE 4. Results of Effects of Solution Type on Each Element (Figures 8 through 16)

<u>Element</u>	<u>Observed Ranking of Solutions From Highest to Lowest Element Release (467 days)</u>
Uranium	DiW, ^(a) NaHCO ₃ , NaCl, WIPP, CaCl ₂
¹³⁷ Cs	DiW, NaCl, WIPP, NaHCO ₃ , CaCl ₂
¹⁴⁴ Ce	DiW, NaCl, WIPP, CaCl ₂ , NaHCO ₃
²⁴⁰ + ²³⁹ Pu	DiW, WIPP, NaCl, NaHCO ₃ , CaCl ₂
²⁴⁴ Cm	DiW, NaCl, WIPP, NaHCO ₃ , CaCl ₂
⁹⁰ Sr + ⁹⁰ Y	DiW, NaCl, WIPP, NaHCO ₃ , CaCl ₂
¹⁵⁴ Eu	DiW, NaCl, WIPP, CaCl ₂ , NaHCO ₃
¹²⁵ Sb	DiW, NaHCO ₃ , WIPP, NaCl, CaCl ₂
¹⁰⁶ Ru	DiW, NaCl, WIPP, CaCl ₂ , NaHCO ₃

(a) DiW = deionized water.

Figure 19 is a graph of leach rate curves in a saturated WIPP "B" brine solution for the nine elements measured. The spread in the leach curves at the first day of leaching covers about 1-1/2 orders of magnitude and decreases to a spread of about one order of magnitude after 467 days of cumulative leaching. Cesium has the highest initial leach rate and continues to stay near the highest value for the 467 days. Ruthenium has the lowest leach rate for the first two days and the last 63 days during the 467 days of cumulative leaching. In between these two low periods, the ruthenium leach rate increases to become the second highest (next to cesium) at 154 days of cumulative leaching.

Figure 20 is a graph of leach rate curves in a 0.03M NaHCO₃ solution for the nine elements measured. The spread in the leach curves at the first day of leaching covers about 1-1/3 order of magnitude and spreads to about two orders of magnitude at 467 days of cumulative leaching. Cesium has the highest initial leach rate and remains the highest until the antimony leach rate overtakes cesium at 200 days. All the other elements are grouped near the lower portion of the spread in the leach curves.

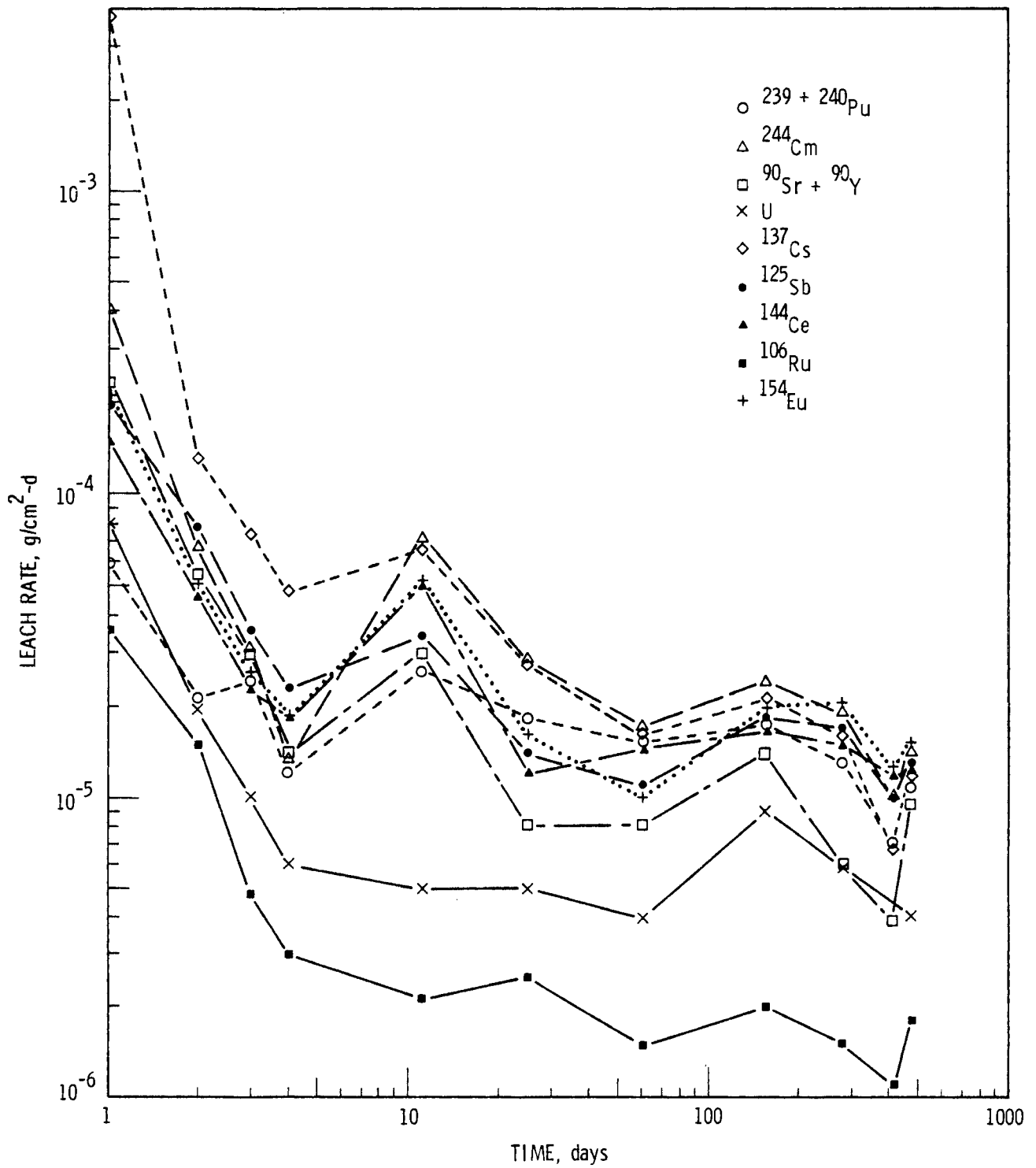


FIGURE 17. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel in Deionized Water at 25°C Based on Selected Elements

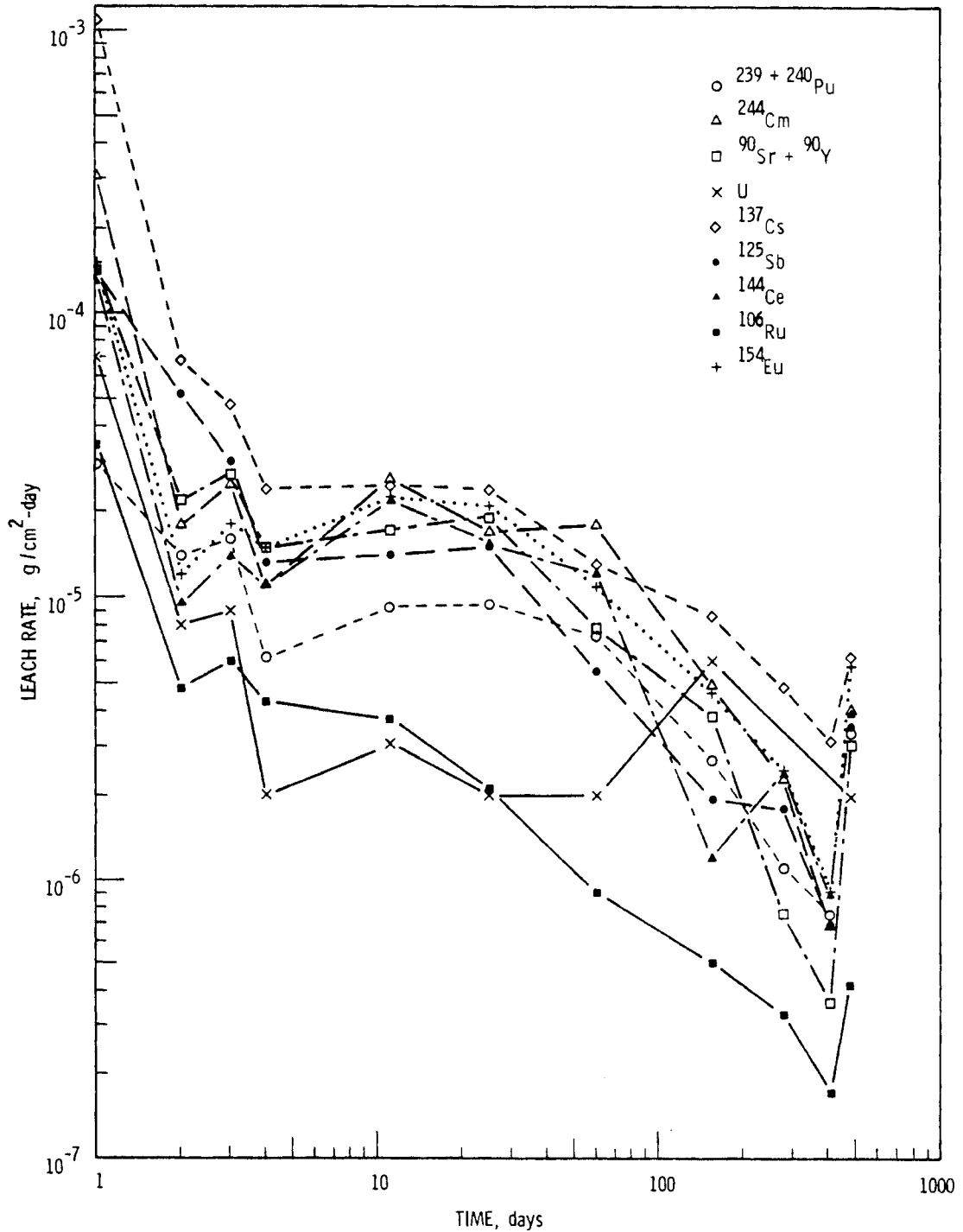


FIGURE 18. Leach Rate of 28,000 Mwd/MTU Spent Fuel in 0.03M NaCl at 25°C Based on Selected Elements

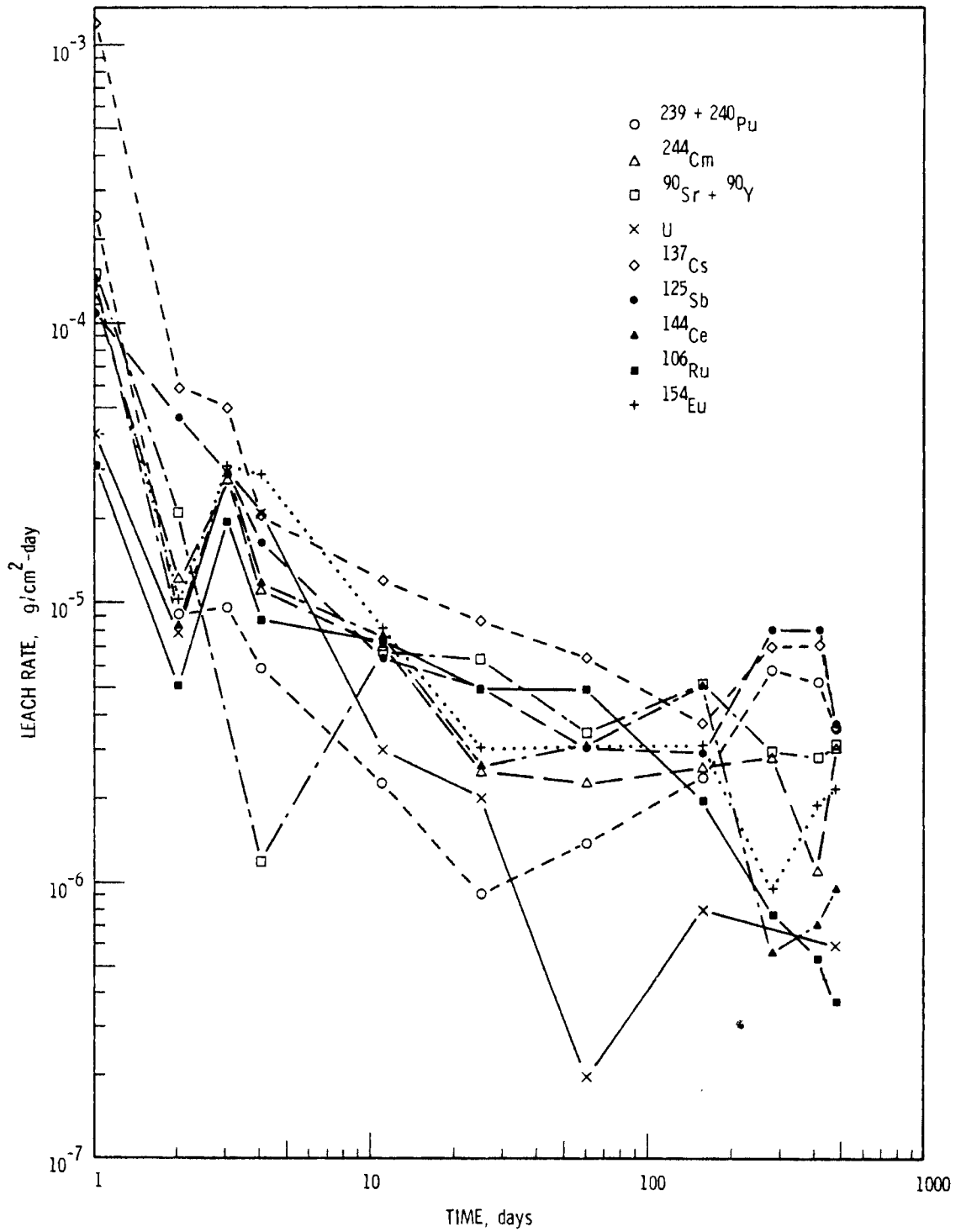


FIGURE 19. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel in WIPP "B" Saturated Brine Solution at 25°C Based on Selected Elements

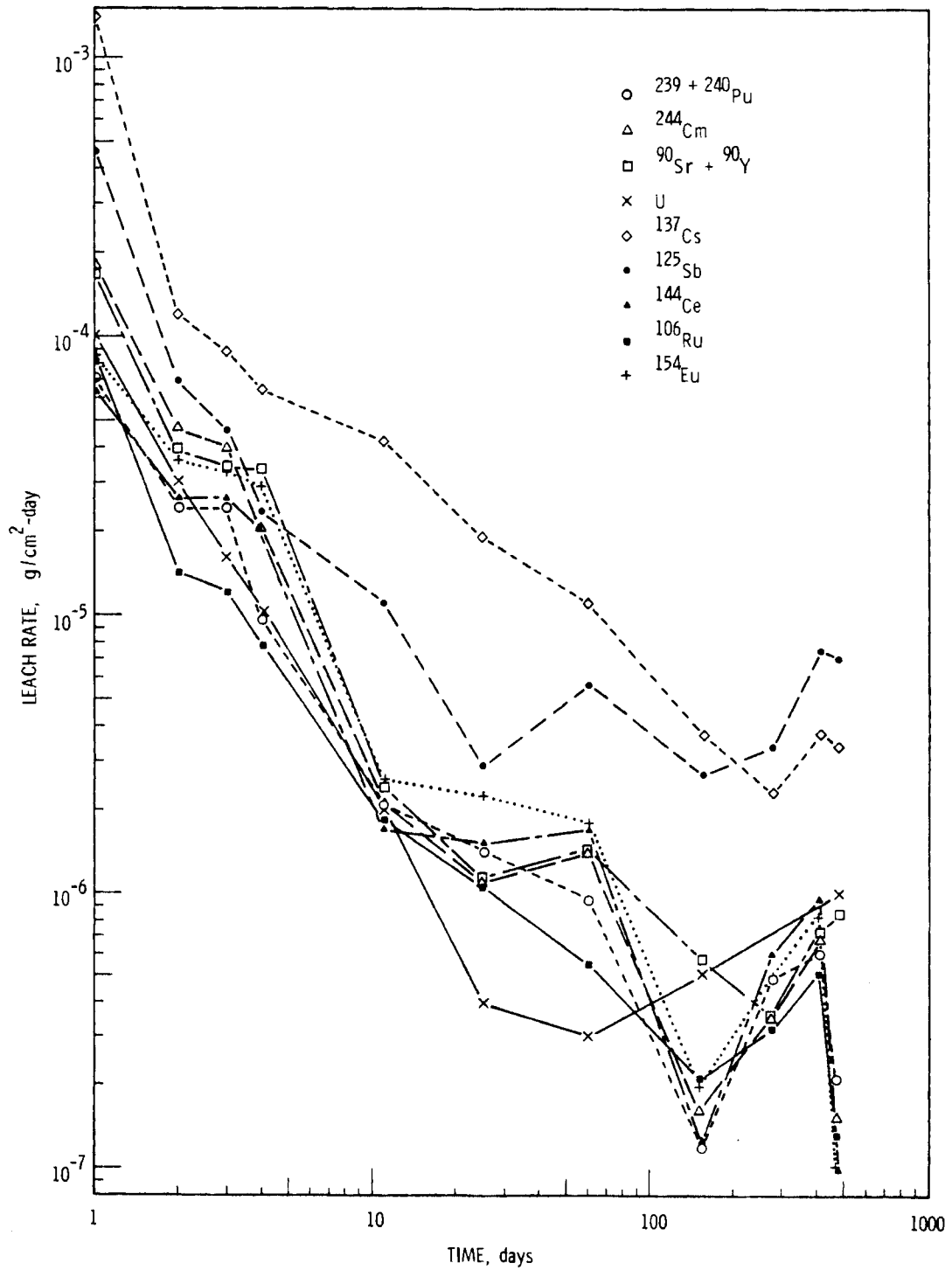


FIGURE 20. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel in 0.03M NaHCO_3 at 25°C Based on Selected Elements

Figure 21 is a graph of leach rate curves in a 0.015M CaCl_2 solution for the nine elements measured. The spread in the leach curves at the first day of leaching covers about 1-1/2 orders of magnitude, and after 467 days of cumulative leaching the spread is still about 1-1/2 orders of magnitude. After the first week of leaching, the uranium and ruthenium leach curves tend to follow the lower bounds of the spread in the leach curves and the other elements tend to follow the upper portion of the spread.

The elemental leach rate curves for the five leach solutions start at similar values, but the general trends with cumulative time of leaching are lower for the NaCl, WIPP "B" brine, NaHCO_3 and CaCl_2 solutions than for deionized water. For comparison purposes, if we choose the midpoint of the spread in elemental leach curves after 467 days of cumulative leaching as the average leaching value for that solution, then the relative leachability of the spent fuel in the five leach solutions can be calculated. Table 5 lists the midpoint of the spread in leach curves after 467 days, where the relative leachability value is given with deionized water as a reference of 1.00. In WIPP "B" brine solution the leach rate of spent fuel is only 20% of the value in deionized water. The leachability of spent fuel in 0.015M CaCl_2 solution is only 4% of the rate in deionized water.

In Table 6 the observed ranking of element release from highest to lowest is tabulated based on the incremental leach rate status at 467 days. Cesium is the element with the highest release rate in WIPP "B" brine, 0.015M CaCl_2 and 0.03M NaCl. It has the second highest release rate in 0.03M NaHCO_3 and ranks fifth in deionized water. Ruthenium is the lowest for all leachants. Uranium and cerium are also low-release elements in all the leachants.

Spent-fuel leach rates measured by the Paige procedure were found to be comparable to the first-generation borosilicate glasses vitrified during the Waste Solidification Engineering Prototype demonstration at PNL (Katayama 1976). Comparisons of spent-fuel and glass leach rates using the IAEA procedures are tabulated in Table 7. The ^{244}Cm and $^{239+240}\text{Pu}$ based glass leach rates are for a second-generation borosilicate glass coded 76-68 (Bradley, Harvey and Turcotte 1979). In the reference, deionized water leach solution, the spent-fuel leach rates for the actinides plutonium and curium were 50 to

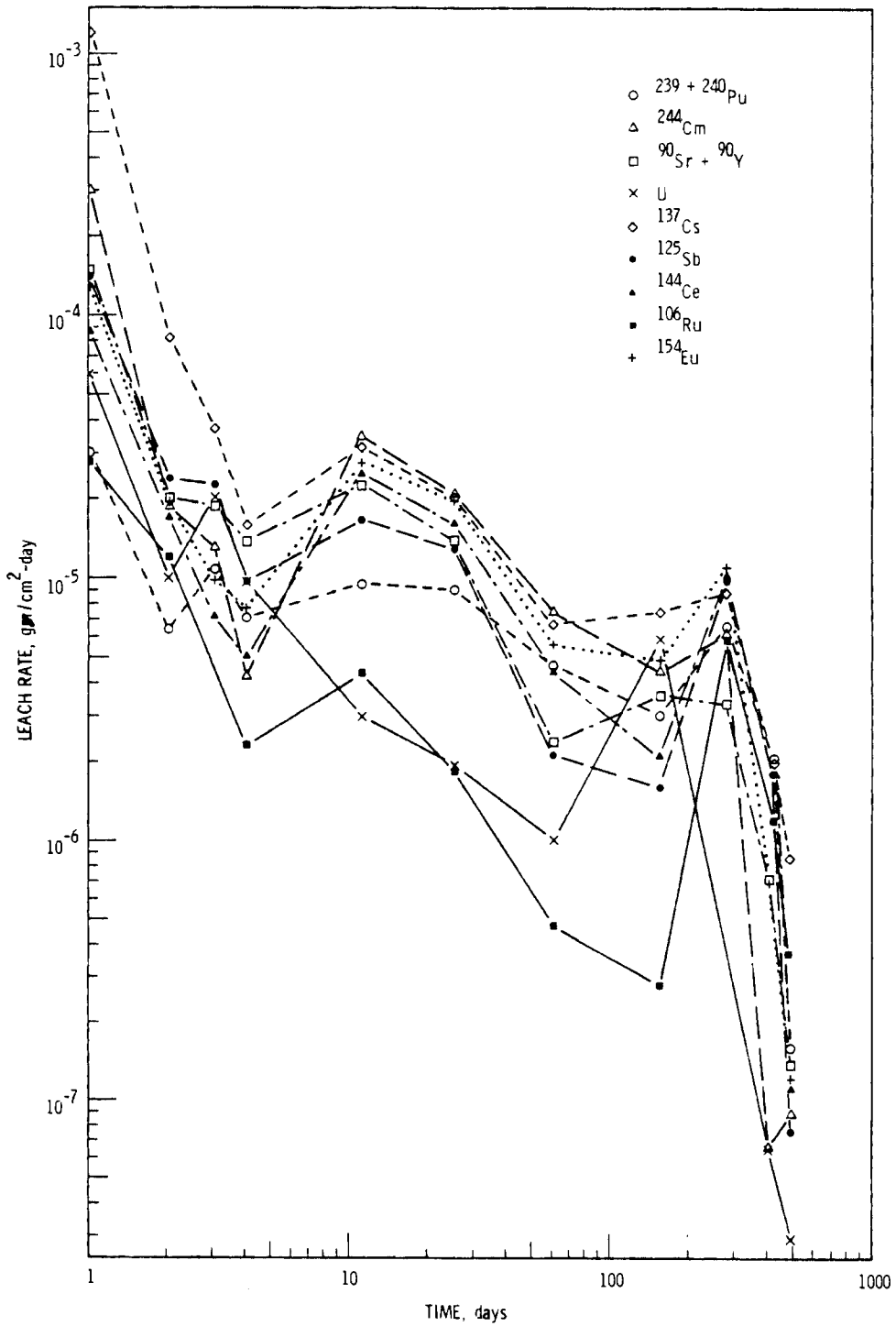


FIGURE 21. Leach Rate of 28,000 MWd/MTU Spent Fuel in 0.015M CaCl₂ Solution at 25°C Based on Selected Elements

TABLE 5. Relative Leachability of Spent Fuel in Various Leach Solutions Based on Average Trend of Leach Curves After 467 Days of Cumulative Leaching

<u>Solution</u>	<u>Midpoint of Leach Curves at 467 Days, g/cm²-day</u>	<u>Relative Leachability</u>
Deionized Water	5 x 10 ⁻⁶	1.00
0.03M NaCl	2 x 10 ⁻⁶	0.40
Saturated WIPP "B"	1 x 10 ⁻⁶	0.20
0.03M NaHCO ₃	8 x 10 ⁻⁷	0.16
0.015M CaCl ₂	2 x 10 ⁻⁷	0.04

TABLE 6. Results of Comparing Incremental Leach Rates of Elements for Each Solution Type (Figures 17 through 21)

<u>Solution</u>	<u>Observed Ranking of Element Release From Highest to Lowest (467 Days)</u>
Deionized Water	Eu, Cm, Sb, Ce, Cs, Pu, Sr+Y, U, Ru
WIPP "B"	Cs, Sb, Pu, Sr+Y, Cm, Eu, Ce, U, Ru
NaHCO ₃	Sb, Cs, U, Sr+Y, Pu, Cm, Ru, Eu, Ce
NaCl	Cs, Eu, Cm, Ce, Sb, Pu, Sr+Y, U, Ru
CaCl ₂	Cs, Ru, Pu, Sr+Y, Eu, Ce, Cm, Sb, U

TABLE 7. Comparison of IAEA Leach Rates at 25°C

<u>Solution</u>	<u>240+239Pu Leach Rates(a), g/cm²-day</u>		<u>244Cm Leach Rates(b), g/cm²-day</u>	
	<u>76-68 Glass</u>	<u>Spent Fuel</u>	<u>76-68 Glass</u>	<u>Spent Fuel</u>
Deionized Water	5 x 10 ⁻⁸	2 x 10 ⁻⁵	4 x 10 ⁻⁷	2 x 10 ⁻⁵
WIPP "B" Brine	2 x 10 ⁻⁸	2 x 10 ⁻⁶	1 x 10 ⁻⁸	3 x 10 ⁻⁶
NaCl	7 x 10 ⁻⁸	3 x 10 ⁻⁶	2 x 10 ⁻⁷	4 x 10 ⁻⁶
CaCl ₂	2 x 10 ⁻⁸	3 x 10 ⁻⁶	1 x 10 ⁻⁷	9 x 10 ⁻⁸
NaHCO ₃	2 x 10 ⁻⁷	1 x 10 ⁻⁷	2 x 10 ⁻⁷	2 x 10 ⁻⁷

(a) 151 days.

(b) 454 days.

400 times higher than that of glass. The differences decrease as tests progress from deionized water to the WIPP "B" Brine to the 0.03M NaCl solution to the 0.015M CaCl₂ solution, and nearly disappear in 0.03M NaHCO₃ solution.

The IAEA leach rates are higher than the published Paige-test leach rates (Katayama 1979) for the same spent fuel after 467 days of cumulative leaching. This comparison is given in Table 8. The IAEA test results are about one order in magnitude higher than the Paige-test results. In WIPP "B" brine (287 g/L NaCl) and sodium chloride groundwater (1.76 g/L NaCl), the IAEA cesium-based leach rates are 4×10^{-6} and 6×10^{-6} g/cm²-day, respectively, whereas the Paige cesium-based leach rate in sea brine (28 g/L NaCl) is 6×10^{-7} g/cm²-day. These differences may be due to radionuclide plate-out on the Paige apparatus, which can not be measured.

The pH of the deionized water used in the experiment averaged 6.6, and the pH at the end of the incremental leach period averaged 4.3. The net result was a decrease in the pH of the deionized water during the incremental leach test period which averaged 2.3 pH units. This decrease in the pH value is the opposite of that reported by Grandstaff (1976) for the leaching of uraninite. Such a difference may be due to the difference of chemistry between the spent LWR fuel and the uraninite. Decreases in pH were also found in the WIPP "B", 0.015M CaCl₂ and 0.03M NaCl solutions. Actinide solid-induced radiolysis of similar synthetic groundwater solutions have been observed to cause similar pH drops (Rai et al. in press). However, increases in pH were found for the 0.03M NaHCO₃ solution.

There is a subtask in the WRIT program at PNL entitled "Spent-Fuel Special Studies." The major thrust of this task is directed toward understanding the mechanisms and kinetics for spent fuel release in aqueous solutions. The non-uniform release of uranium to the leach solution (see Figure 11), the effects of oxygen, and solubility constraints are being investigated. The progress of these experiments will be presented in the next status report.

The leach rate data presented in this report show that uranium has a lower leach rate than most of the elements studied. This indicates the absence of congruent dissolution. Preliminary results from our electrochemical experiments (part of the Spent-Fuel Special Studies Subtask within WRIT) with fused,

TABLE 8. Comparison of IAEA Leach Rates to Paige-Test Leach Rates (467 days)

<u>Solution</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Leach Rates (g/cm²-day)</u> <u>at 25°C</u>	
		<u>Paige</u>	<u>IAEA</u>
Deionized water	¹³⁷ Cs	2 x 10 ⁻⁶	1 x 10 ⁻⁵
Deionized water	²³⁹⁺²⁴⁰ Pu	9 x 10 ⁻⁷	1 x 10 ⁻⁵
Deionized water	Uranium	7 x 10 ⁻⁷	4 x 10 ⁻⁶
Deionized water	²⁴⁴ Cm	1 x 10 ⁻⁷	4 x 10 ⁻⁶
NaCl groundwater	¹³⁷ Cs	--	6 x 10 ⁻⁶
Sea brine	¹³⁷ Cs	6 x 10 ⁻⁷	--
WIPP "B"	¹³⁷ Cs	--	4 x 10 ⁻⁶

single crystal UO₂ indicates that a film forms on the surface of the UO₂ in the standard WRIT leach solutions (those used in this report). If such a hydrolyzed, gelatinous, uranium oxide film forms on the surface of the spent fuel, the uranium release to the leach solution may be lower than the other radionuclides that may pass through this film. The fluctuations in the uranium leach rates presented in this report do not relate to the leach rate trends of the other elements studied. This incongruity in the leach rates lends support to the possibility of a hydrolyzed uranium oxide film forming on our spent-fuel samples. Thus, the observed uranium leach rate may be dependent on the formation, dissolution and partial spallation of such a film.

CONCLUSIONS

The leach rates of antimony, cerium, cesium, curium, europium, plutonium, ruthenium, strontium + yttrium, and uranium were determined from LWR spent fuel (unclad) with a burnup of 28,000 MWd/MTU in five different leach solutions. These solutions were deionized water, 0.03M sodium chloride solutions, 0.03M sodium bicarbonate solution, 0.015M calcium chloride solution and a saturated WIPP "B" brine solution. On the average, of the five solutions studied deionized water produced the highest elemental leach rate. The leach rates in the bicarbonate solution were second lowest, with the CaCl_2 solution exhibiting the lowest leach rates. The two brines were intermediate.

Cesium had the highest leach rate in three solutions (WIPP "B" brine, 0.03M NaCl and 1.015M CaCl_2). Europium had the highest leach rate in deionized water and antimony the highest in 0.03M NaHCO_3 . Ruthenium had the lowest leach rate in three solutions (deionized water, 0.03M NaCl and WIPP "B" brine). Cerium had the lowest elemental leach rate in 0.015M NaHCO_3 and uranium the lowest in 0.03M CaCl_2 solution.

Based on the release of plutonium and curium, spent fuel has a leach rate comparable to 76-68 glass in sodium bicarbonate solution and is 50 to 400 times less leach resistant than 76-68 glass in deionized water and WIPP "B" brine solution.

The spent-fuel leach rates calculated from the IAEA procedure are one order of magnitude higher than the values reported for the Paige procedure. The discrepancy may be caused by nuclide plate-out on the walls of the Paige apparatus, which can not be measured during testing. Thus, to be conservative one should perform leaching tests by the modified IAEA procedure rather than the Paige procedure.

The leach rate data in this status report show that spent fuel may not leach congruently with uranium.

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APPENDIX

LEACH DATA

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{244}Cm (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	1.2 E-4	3.0 E-4	3.0 E-4	1.8 E-4	4.1 E-4
2	2	1.2 E-5	1.9 E-5	1.8 E-5	4.7 E-5	6.7 E-5
3	3	2.6 E-5	1.3 E-5	2.5 E-5	4.0 E-5	3.1 E-5
4	4	1.1 E-5	4.3 E-6	1.1 E-5	2.0 E-5	1.4 E-5
5	11	7.1 E-6	3.5 E-5	2.6 E-5	2.1 E-6	7.2 E-5
7	25	2.5 E-6	2.1 E-5	1.7 E-5	1.1 E-6	2.8 E-5
12	60	2.3 E-6	7.6 E-6	1.8 E-5	1.4 E-6	1.7 E-5
15	154	2.6 E-6	4.5 E-6	4.9 E-6	1.6 E-7	2.4 E-5
19	277	2.8 E-6	6.2 E-6	2.3 E-6	3.5 E-7	1.9 E-5
23	404	1.1 E-6	6.7 E-8	6.8 E-7	6.8 E-7	1.0 E-5
25	467	3.1 E-6	9.1 E-8	4.0 E-6	1.5 E-7	1.5 E-5

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON U (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	4E-5	6E-5	7E-5	1E-4	8E-5
2	2	8E-6	1E-5	8E-6	3E-5	2E-5
3	3	3E-5	2E-5	9E-6	4E-5	1E-5
4	4	2E-5	1E-5	2E-6	1E-5	6E-6
5	11	3E-6	3E-6	3E-6	2E-6	5E-6
7	25	2E-6	2E-6	2E-6	4E-7	4E-6
12	60	2E-7	1E-6	2E-6	3E-7	4E-6
15	154	8E-7	6E-6	5E-6	5E-7	9E-6
19	277	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
23	404	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)
25	467	6E-7	3E-8	2E-6	1E-6	4E-6

(a) analysis not available at time of reporting.

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{125}Sb (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	1.1 E-4	1.4 E-4	1.4 E-4	4.6 E-4	2.0 E-4
2	2	4.6 E-5	2.4 E-5	5.1 E-5	6.9 E-5	7.9 E-5
3	3	2.9 E-5	2.3 E-5	3.0 E-5	4.5 E-5	3.6 E-5
4	4	1.6 E-5	9.8 E-6	1.3 E-5	2.3 E-5	2.3 E-5
5	11	6.2 E-6	1.7 E-5	1.4 E-5	1.1 E-5	3.4 E-5
7	25	5.0 E-6	1.3 E-5	1.5 E-5	2.9 E-6	1.4 E-5
12	60	3.0 E-6	2.1 E-6	5.4 E-6	5.6 E-6	1.1 E-5
15	154	2.9 E-6	1.6 E-6	1.9 E-6	2.7 E-6	1.8 E-5
19	277	8.1 E-6	1.0 E-5	1.8 E-6	3.7 E-6	1.7 E-5
23	404	8.2 E-6	1.8 E-6	6.7 E-7	7.7 E-6	1.0 E-5
25	467	3.8 E-6	7.6 E-8	3.5 E-6	7.0 E-6	1.3 E-5

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{144}Ce (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	1.5 E-4	8.8 E-5	1.3 E-4	6.3 E-5	1.5 E-4
2	2	8.2 E-6	1.7 E-5	9.6 E-6	2.6 E-5	4.6 E-5
3	3	2.9 E-5	7.1 E-6	1.4 E-5	2.6 E-5	2.3 E-5
4	4	1.1 E-5	4.9 E-6	1.1 E-5	2.0 E-5	1.8 E-5
5	11	7.7 E-6	2.5 E-5	2.2 E-5	1.7 E-6	5.0 E-5
7	25	2.6 E-6	1.6 E-5	1.5 E-5	1.5 E-6	1.2 E-5
12	60	3.2 E-6	4.4 E-6	1.2 E-5	1.7 E-6	1.5 E-5
15	154	5.1 E-6	2.1 E-6	1.2 E-6	1.2 E-7	1.7 E-5
19	277	5.6 E-7	1.0 E-5	2.4 E-6	6.0 E-7	1.5 E-5
23	404	7.0 E-7	1.8 E-6	8.4 E-7	9.7 E-7	1.2 E-5
25	467	9.4 E-7	1.1 E-7	3.5 E-6	1.0 E-7	1.2 E-5

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON $^{90}\text{Sr} + ^{90}\text{Y}$ (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	1.5 E-4	1.5 E-4	1.4 E-4	1.7 E-4	2.3 E-4
2	2	2.1 E-5	2.0 E-5	2.2 E-5	3.9 E-5	5.4 E-5
3	3	2.5 E-5	1.9 E-5	2.7 E-5	3.4 E-5	3.1 E-5
4	4	1.2 E-6	1.4 E-5	1.5 E-5	3.4 E-5	1.4 E-5
5	11	6.8 E-6	2.3 E-5	1.7 E-5	2.4 E-6	3.1 E-5
7	25	6.3 E-6	1.4 E-5	1.9 E-5	1.1 E-6	8.1 E-6
12	60	3.5 E-6	2.4 E-6	6.8 E-6	1.4 E-6	8.1 E-6
15	154	5.2 E-6	3.6 E-6	3.9 E-6	5.7 E-7	1.4 E-5
19	277	2.8 E-6	3.4 E-6	7.6 E-7	3.5 E-7	5.8 E-6
23	404	2.8 E-6	7.2 E-7	3.6 E-7	7.1 E-7	3.9 E-6
25	467	3.1 E-6	1.4 E-7	3.3 E-6	8.2 E-7	9.6 E-6

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{137}Cs (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	1.2 E-3	1.2 E-3	1.1 E-3	1.4 E-3	3.8 E-3
2	2	5.9 E-5	8.1 E-5	6.8 E-5	1.2 E-4	1.3 E-4
3	3	5.1 E-5	3.8 E-5	4.8 E-5	8.9 E-5	7.5 E-5
4	4	2.0 E-5	1.6 E-5	2.4 E-5	6.4 E-5	4.8 E-5
5	11	1.2 E-5	3.2 E-5	2.5 E-5	4.2 E-5	6.6 E-5
7	25	8.9 E-6	2.1 E-5	2.4 E-5	1.9 E-5	2.8 E-5
12	60	6.4 E-6	6.7 E-6	1.3 E-5	1.1 E-5	1.6 E-5
15	154	3.8 E-6	7.5 E-6	8.8 E-6	3.7 E-6	2.1 E-5
19	277	7.0 E-6	8.8 E-6	4.8 E-6	2.3 E-6	1.6 E-5
23	404	7.1 E-6	2.0 E-6	3.1 E-6	3.8 E-6	6.8 E-6
25	467	3.8 E-6	8.9 E-7	6.1 E-6	3.3 E-6	1.2 E-5

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{154}Eu (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	1.4 E-4	1.3 E-4	1.6 E-4	8.7 E-5	2.1 E-4
2	2	1.0 E-5	2.0 E-5	1.2 E-5	3.6 E-5	5.1 E-5
3	3	3.1 E-5	1.0 E-5	1.8 E-5	3.4 E-5	2.5 E-5
4	4	2.9 E-5	7.8 E-6	1.5 E-5	2.9 E-5	1.8 E-5
5	11	8.0 E-6	2.8 E-5	2.2 E-5	2.6 E-6	4.9 E-5
7	25	3.0 E-6	2.1 E-5	2.1 E-5	2.3 E-6	1.6 E-5
12	60	3.1 E-6	5.7 E-6	1.1 E-5	1.8 E-6	1.0 E-5
15	154	3.1 E-6	4.9 E-6	5.3 E-6	2.0 E-7	2.1 E-5
19	277	9.5 E-7	1.1 E-5	2.5 E-6	5.1 E-7	2.0 E-5
23	404	1.9 E-6	7.0 E-7	9.0 E-7	8.2 E-7	1.2 E-5
25	467	2.2 E-6	1.2 E-7	6.9 E-6	9.9 E-6	1.5 E-5

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{239}Pu + ^{240}Pu (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 MWd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	2.4 E-5	3.0 E-5	2.9 E-5	7.1 E-5	5.9 E-5
2	2	9.2 E-6	6.5 E-6	1.4 E-5	2.4 E-5	2.1 E-5
3	3	9.7 E-6	1.1 E-5	1.6 E-5	2.4 E-5	2.4 E-5
4	4	5.9 E-6	7.1 E-6	6.1 E-6	9.7 E-6	1.2 E-5
5	11	2.3 E-6	9.7 E-6	9.2 E-6	2.1 E-6	2.6 E-5
7	25	9.2 E-7	9.1 E-6	9.5 E-6	1.4 E-6	2.3 E-5
12	60	1.4 E-6	4.7 E-6	7.4 E-6	9.5 E-7	1.5 E-5
15	154	2.4 E-6	3.1 E-6	2.7 E-6	1.2 E-7	1.7 E-5
19	277	5.8 E-6	6.7 E-6	1.1 E-6	4.8 E-7	1.3 E-5
23	404	5.3 E-6	2.1 E-6	7.5 E-7	6.0 E-7	8.1 E-6
25	467	3.7 E-6	1.6 E-7	3.0 E-6	2.1 E-7	1.1 E-5

IAEA LEACH RATE BASED ON ^{106}Ru (g/cm²-day)
FOR 28,000 Mwd/MTU SPENT FUEL AT 25°C

<u>Series</u>	<u>Cumulative Days</u>	<u>WIPP Brine</u>	<u>CaCl₂ Solution</u>	<u>NaCl Solution</u>	<u>NaHCO₃ Solution</u>	<u>Deionized Water</u>
1	1	3.1 E-5	2.8 E-5	3.5 E-5	8.7 E-5	3.7 E-5
2	2	5.1 E-6	1.2 E-5	4.8 E-6	1.4 E-5	1.5 E-5
3	3	2.0 E-5	4.2 E-6	6.0 E-6	1.2 E-5	4.8 E-6
4	4	8.9 E-6	2.3 E-6	4.3 E-6	7.6 E-6	3.0 E-6
5	11	7.3 E-6	4.4 E-6	3.8 E-6	1.8 E-6	2.1 E-6
7	25	5.0 E-6	1.9 E-6	2.1 E-6	1.1 E-6	2.5 E-6
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23	404	5.4 E-7	1.2 E-6	1.7 E-7	5.1 E-7	1.1 E-6
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