

The far-off fusion race

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Ions glow inside an electrostatic fusion reactor at the University of Wisconsin.

UW-Madison

One of the nation's top fusion researchers is worried that America is already falling behind in an energy race that won't start for 30 or 40 years.

"We're losing our lead to other countries in the world," Gerald Kulcinski, director of the [Fusion Technology Institute](#) at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, told me in his office last week.

How can that be, when most of the world's top technological powers are working together on a \$13 billion nuclear fusion research project that hasn't even started construction yet? Kulcinski's answer demonstrates why an "Apollo-scale" effort to solve America's energy woes just might require more thought and time than the original Apollo moon effort.