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## **China, South Korea oppose fusion project perks for Japan - Kyodo**

By David Brunnstrom

TOKYO (Reuters) - Japan may have a hard time winning all the incentives it wants in return for giving up its bid to build an experimental nuclear fusion reactor due to opposition from China and South Korea, Kyodo news agency said on Saturday.

Japanese media reports have said that Japan, which has been wrangling with France for more than a year over which of them should host the 10 billion euro (\$12.03 billion) reactor, was edging toward conceding its bid.

A final decision on the location of the reactor known as ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) is expected to be made at a ministerial meeting in Moscow on Tuesday.

Kyodo said China and South Korea have expressed reservations about an agreement reached between Japan and the European Union, which is backing France, that would provide a number of incentives to the side that gives up its bid.

ITER -- also Latin for "the way" -- is backed by the United States, the European Union, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea. It aims to mimic the way the sun produces energy, potentially providing an inexhaustible source of low-cost energy using seawater as fuel.

In earlier negotiations Japan and the EU agreed on a number of measures that included giving the conceding country positions amounting to 20 percent of the 200 researchers needed for the project, Kyodo said.

The deal also called for the building of related research facilities in the country that gave up its bid, Kyodo said.

Under the agreement, the host country would cover 50 percent of the construction and operational costs of the reactor while the five other countries in the project would equally split the remaining cost, it added.

China and South Korea, however, were unhappy with the deal, questioning why Japan should get preferential treatment even though they would bear the same cost, Kyodo said.

Japan's ties with China and South Korea have been frayed recently due to disputes stemming from Japan's invasion and occupation of parts of Asia in the first half of the 20th century.

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## **China, S. Korea frown on 'perks' for Japan in nuke fusion project**

(Kyodo) \_ China and South Korea have frowned on Japan over the multibillion-dollar international nuclear fusion project, dubbed ITER, for perks Japan is said to be attaining in exchange for ceding a bid to host the project's key reactor facility, citing likely unfair financial burdens, Japanese government sources said Saturday.

While an official announcement has yet to be made, the sources said earlier this week that Japan has given up its bid for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor and in exchange agreed on some arrangements in negotiations with the European Union.

The arrangements include a plan for Japan to build a related materials research facility in Japan with the European Union shouldering half the construction costs, and another for Japan to gain 20 percent of the posts for 200 researchers at ITER while providing only 10 percent of expenses, the sources said.

The reported agreement between Japan and the European Union calls for the host country, France, to cover 50 percent of the construction and operational costs of the reactor with the remainder of the costs equally split by the five others participating in the project -- Japan, China, South Korea, the United States and Russia.

Seoul and Beijing, which Japan sounded out about the arrangements, frowned on Japan concerning the perks Japan would be getting, questioning why Japan should be given preferential treatment when they are also equally funding the project, the government sources said.

There are also chances the European Union may not honor all the arrangements and Japan may have to give up part of them, the sources said.

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Tokyo officials are hoping to seek agreement from the countries about the arrangements ahead of a ministerial meeting in Moscow on Tuesday, where the final decision on the location of the reactor is scheduled to be made, the sources said.

The ITER plant is an experimental facility for thermonuclear fusion, at which nuclear fusion reactions that occur on the sun are to be produced by fusing the nuclei of heavy hydrogen and tritium at temperatures of more than 100 million C.

The construction of the reactor is expected to take 10 years, after which researchers will conduct experiments over a period of 20 years. The total cost of the project, including 570 billion yen in construction costs, is estimated at 1,300 billion yen.