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Also on the agenda would be the protracted dispute with Japan regarding rival bids to host the multi-billion dollar International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), one of the most exciting ventures in international science.

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## FRANCE'S CHIRAC TO MEET KOIZUMI, EMPEROR, ON JAPAN VISIT

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**T**OKYO, March 11 (AFP) - French President Jacques Chirac will meet Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi when he visits Japan on an official visit later this month, the Japanese foreign ministry said Friday.

Chirac and his wife Bernadette will start their three-day official visit on March 26, during which they are also scheduled to meet Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the ministry said.

The French president will also attend a sumo tournament in western Japan's Osaka and a seminar on sustainable development during his visit, according to diplomats.

Visiting French Foreign Trade Minister Francois Loos said last month Chirac would also attend the six-month World Exposition in central Aichi prefecture.

Japan hopes 15 million people will visit the World Expo, which will run from March 25 to September 25 with the main theme of how to make technology friendly to the environment.

A political issue during Chirac's visit would be a plan championed by France to end the European Union embargo on selling arms to China, which has drawn concern from Japan and its close ally the United States.

The arms embargo has been in place since the massacre of pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

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