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## Koizumi says Japan still hoping to host international nuclear fusion reactor

Contentious negotiations between Japan and France to locate a multibillion dollar nuclear fusion reactor will likely go down to the wire, Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Tuesday.

Koizumi denied reports saying that Japan would give up on hosting the US\$13 billion (Â€10 billion) International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project.

"There are still last-minute negotiations to find a solution that the six parties can agree on," Koizumi told a group of reporters. "We have been negotiating so we can meet the expectations" from the businesses and the town in northern Japan hoping to become a host, he said.

The ITER plant aims to show that nuclear fusion presents a vast, safe source of energy that can wean the world off pollution-producing fossil fuels. Nuclear fusion produces no greenhouse gas emissions and only low levels of radioactive waste.

Representatives from the six parties involved in the project \_ Japan, the United States, South Korea, Russia, China and the European Union \_ are expected to meet in Russia later this month to discuss the project.

The six parties have been divided over where to locate the plant. Japan, the United States and South Korea want it at Rokkasho in northern Japan. Russia, China and the EU want it at Cadarache, in southern France.

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News reports have said that Japan is prepared to concede its bid to host the plan to France in return for a bigger research and operations role in the project.

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