Bush backs Japan ITER bid
Chirac tells Koizumi EU supports France's proposal

SEA ISLAND, Ga. (Kyodo) U.S. President George W. Bush told Prime Minister
Junichiro Koizumi on Tuesday that he continues to support Japan's bid to host an
international nuclear reactor project, Japanese officials said.

Bush and Koizumi held a luncheon meeting ahead of the Sea Island Summit of the
Group of Eight powers. Japan wants to host the International Thermonuclear
Experimental Reactor project in Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture.

Bush made the remark after Koizumi thanked him for his support, they said.

The six members of the project -- Japan, China, South Korea, Russia, the European
Union and the United States -- have been discussing whether the world's first
sustained nuclear fusion reactor should be situated in Japan or in the French town of
Cadarache, as backed by the European Union.

In a separate bilateral meeting Tuesday, French President Jacques Chirac told
Koizumi that Cadarache represents the wishes of the entire European Union, the
officials said.

In response, Koizumi voiced hope that there would be progress in making a decision
among the countries concerned.

In a December meeting in Washington, the United States and South Korea supported
the Japanese plan, while Russia and China endorsed the European Union's
proposal.

High-level talks among the six members will be held as early as mid-June before
final arrangements are made to choose the site.