

NHK Interview August 11, 2008

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Topic: Postponement of DPRK Delisting from US Terrorism list.

1. How will North Korea respond to the postponement of its removal from the US terrorism list?

Answer: I would expect North Korea will respond with loud, assertive verbal protests but avoid steps that could further complicate the situation. Being removed from the list remains a top priority for Pyongyang. It knows that angering members of the US Congress could further delay removal from the list. Also, Pyongyang wishes to maintain China's support in the Six Party talks. But North Korea is not in a rush to get off the list. Already it has achieved half its goal when President Bush ended Trading with the Enemy Act sanctions. Also Pyongyang knows that President Bush is anxious to achieve a foreign policy success. Therefore negotiations about verification could continue until the end of September or even October. Eventually a compromise seems the most likely outcome of the current impasse.

2. On the same day, North Korea met with Japan. Is this a tactic to persuade the US of the North's willingness to cooperate on the abduction issue so it will reconsider its delisting postponement?

Answer: Yes, I think this is a North Korean tactic. But I think Pyongyang's goal is to blame lack of progress with Japan on the US postponement of delisting from the Terrorism List. Again, Pyongyang is not in a hurry. It could now argue that it cooperate with Japan only after it is removed from the terrorism list and Japan has lifted sanctions.