

Beat: Politics

Detained U.S. man ;confesses; in plot against N. Korea

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USPA News - A Korean American man who was arrested in North Korea late last year has admitted plotting to overthrow the North Korean government, state-run media reported on Saturday. A verdict is expected soon that could see him receive the death penalty.

Pae Jun Ho, who is better known by his American name Kenneth Bae, was arrested in November 2012 after he traveled from China to the North Korean special economic zone of Rason. He was initially accused of `committing a crime against` North Korea, but the charge has since been escalated. On Saturday, a brief dispatch from the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said a preliminary inquiry into Pae Jun Ho`s alleged crimes had been concluded. "In the process of the investigation he admitted that he committed crimes aimed to topple the DPRK with hostility toward it," the report said, referring to the country by its official name, the Democratic People`s Republic of Korea. The news agency said the unspecified crimes have been proven with evidence, but gave no other details. A bulletin later on Saturday said Pae Jun Ho will soon be taken to North Korea`s Supreme Court where a verdict will be handed down, which could include a death sentence if he is found guilty. Pae Jun Ho, who was born in South Korea but lives in the U.S. state of Washington, is believed to have traveled to Rason with a group of businessmen. The exact purpose of his visit is not known, but KCNA said the man had entered Rason City on November 3 with the purpose of a tour. U.S. officials have been reluctant to discuss the case due to `privacy considerations`, but North Korea`s state-run news agency previously said that consular officials from the Swedish embassy in Pyongyang had visited Pae Jun Ho. North Korea and the United States have no diplomatic relations, but Sweden acts as a protecting power.

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