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Terrorism Review (U)

14 January 1988

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South Korea

North Korean Agent Confesses To Bombing Airliner

On 15 January at a press conference in Seoul, the surviving female terrorist arrested in Bahrain claimed to be a North Korean agent and admitted placing the bomb that destroyed KAL Flight 858 on 29 November 1987. According to her confession, Kim Hyon-hui (who had traveled as Japanese tourist "Mayumi Hachiya" along with another agent posing as her father) said she and her companion were born in North Korea and had trained since 1984 to conduct attacks that would jeopardize Seoul's hosting of the Olympic Games in September 1988. Last October, she said, she and her companion received written orders from Kim Chong-il to destroy the aircraft. They flew to Vienna by way of Moscow and Budapest to carry out the scheme in mid-November. (U)

Two North Korean agent handlers gave them the bomb in a Belgrade hotel the night before they flew to Baghdad to board the KAL airliner. According to the terrorist, the bomb was built into a clock radio that contained 340 grams of a plastic explosive. This device was placed next to a wine bottle filled with an unidentified liquid explosive that intensified the blast. The duo armed the device before leaving Baghdad and got off the plane in Abu Dhabi. At the press conference, Kim claimed to have repented and to have cooperated with her interrogators voluntarily. (U)

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