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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

JTTF ARRESTS MAN IN LOWER MANHATTAN AFTER HE ATTEMPTED TO BOMB NEW YORK FEDERAL RESERVE BANK

Defendant Attempted to Strike New York's Financial District on Behalf of Al-Qaeda

BROOKLYN, NY – Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis (Nafis), 21, was arrested this morning in downtown Manhattan after he allegedly attempted to detonate what he believed to be a 1,000-pound bomb at the New York Federal Reserve Bank on Liberty Street in lower Manhattan's financial district. The defendant faces charges of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and attempting to provide material support to al-Qaeda.

The arrest of Nafis was the culmination of an undercover operation during which he was closely monitored by the FBI New York Field Office's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The explosives that he allegedly sought and attempted to use had been rendered inoperable by law enforcement and posed no threat to the public.

The charges were announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; Mary E. Galligan, Acting Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI); and Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD).

According to the criminal complaint filed today in the Eastern District of New York, defendant Nafis, a Bangladeshi national, traveled to the United States in January 2012 for the purpose of conducting a terrorist attack on U.S. soil. Nafis, who reported having overseas connections to al-Qaeda, attempted to recruit individuals to form a terrorist cell inside the United States. Nafis also actively sought out al-Qaeda contacts within the United States to assist him in carrying out an attack. Unbeknownst to Nafis, one of the individuals he attempted to recruit was actually a source for the FBI. Through the investigation, FBI agents and NYPD detectives working with the JTTF were able to closely monitor Nafis as he attempted to implement his plan.

The complaint alleges that Nafis proposed several targets for his attack, including a high-ranking U.S. official and the New York Stock Exchange. Ultimately, Nafis decided to conduct a bombing operation against the New York Federal Reserve Bank. In a written statement intended to claim responsibility for the terrorist bombing of the Federal Reserve Bank on behalf of al-Qaeda, Nafis wrote that he wanted to “destroy America” and that he believed the most efficient way to accomplish this goal was to target America’s economy. In this statement, Nafis also included quotations from “our beloved Sheikh Osama bin Laden” to justify the fact that Nafis expected that the attack would involve the killing of women and children.

During the investigation, Nafis came into contact with an FBI undercover agent who posed as an al-Qaeda facilitator. At Nafis’s request, the undercover agent supplied Nafis with 20 50-pound bags of purported explosives. Nafis then allegedly worked to store the material and assemble the explosive device for his attack. Nafis purchased components for the bomb’s detonator and conducted surveillance for his attack on multiple occasions in New York City’s financial district in lower Manhattan. Throughout his interactions with the undercover agent, Nafis repeatedly asserted that the plan was his own and was the reason he had come to the United States.

Earlier this morning, Nafis met the undercover agent and traveled in a van to a warehouse located in the Eastern District of New York. While en route, Nafis explained to the undercover agent that he had a “Plan B” that involved conducting a suicide bombing operation in the event that the attack was about to be thwarted by the police. Upon arriving at the warehouse, Nafis assembled what he believed to be a 1,000-pound bomb inside the van. Nafis and the undercover agent then drove to the New York Federal Reserve Bank. During this drive, Nafis armed the purported bomb by assembling the detonator and attaching it to the explosives. Nafis and the undercover agent parked the van next to the New York Federal Reserve Bank, exited the van, and walked to a nearby hotel. There, Nafis recorded a video statement to the American public which he intended to release in connection with the attack. During this video statement, Nafis stated: “We will not stop until we attain victory or martyrdom.” Nafis then repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, attempted to detonate the bomb, which had been assembled using the inert

explosives provided by the undercover agent. JTTF agents arrested Nafis immediately after he attempted to detonate the bomb. Throughout the morning, federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, working with the JTTF, closely monitored the movements of Nafis as he attempted to implement the attack, including assuring that the van was not stopped by NYPD counterterrorism units active in lower Manhattan.

“As alleged in the complaint, the defendant came to this country intent on conducting a terrorist attack on U.S. soil and worked with single-minded determination to carry out his plan. The defendant thought he was striking a blow to the American economy. He thought he was directing confederates and fellow believers. At every turn, he was wrong, and his extensive efforts to strike at the heart of the nation’s financial system were foiled by effective law enforcement. We will use all of the tools at our disposal to stop any such attack before it can occur. We are committed to protecting the safety of all Americans, including the hundreds of thousands who work in New York’s financial district,” stated United States Attorney Lynch. “I would like to thank our partners at the FBI, NYPD, the other agencies who participate in the JTTF, and the Department of Justice’s National Security Division, for their hard work on this important investigation. I would also like to thank the security teams at the New York Federal Reserve Bank and the New York Stock Exchange for their assistance.”

“As alleged in the criminal complaint, Rezwanul Nafis devised this attack plan himself and came to the United States for the purpose of carrying out such an attack. I thank all those responsible for ensuring that his alleged plans never came to fruition,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security Monaco.

FBI Acting Assistant Director-in-Charge Galligan stated, “Attempting to destroy a landmark building and kill or maim untold numbers of innocent bystanders is about as serious as the imagination can conjure. The defendant faces appropriately severe consequences. It is important to emphasize that the public was never at risk in this case, because two of the defendant’s ‘accomplices’ were actually an FBI source and an FBI undercover agent. The FBI continues to place the highest priority on preventing acts of terrorism.”

NYPD Commissioner Kelly stated, “Al Qaeda operatives and those they have inspired have tried time and again to make New York City their killing field. We are up to 15 plots and counting since 9/11 with the Federal Reserve now added to a list of iconic targets that previously included the Brooklyn Bridge, the New York Stock Exchange, and Citicorp Center. After 11 years without a successful attack, it’s understandable if the public becomes complacent. But that’s a luxury law enforcement can’t afford. Vigilance is our watchword now and into the foreseeable future. That’s why we have over 1,000 NYPD officers assigned to counterterrorism duties every day, and why we built the domain awareness system. I want to commend the NYPD detectives and FBI agents of the Joint Terrorism Task Force for the work they did in the case, and U.S. Attorney Lynch and her dedicated team in prosecuting it.”

The defendant has been charged with attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2332a, and attempting to provide material support to al-Qaeda, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B. His initial appearance is scheduled this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Roanne L. Mann,

at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn. If convicted, the defendant faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys James P. Loonam and Richard M. Tucker, with assistance from Trial Attorney Bridget Behling of the Justice Department's Counterterrorism Section.

The charges contained in the complaint are mere allegations. As in any criminal case, the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

The Defendant:

Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis

Age: 21

Jamaica, New York