

FBI Arrests Bangladeshi Man in Bombing Plot

By - Carolyn Weaver - 10/19/2012

A Bangladeshi man has been arraigned Wednesday on charges of attempting to blow up the Federal Reserve Bank building in New York City earlier in the day.

Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, who entered the United States in January on a student visa, was arrested after allegedly attempting to detonate what he thought was a 450-km bomb outside the Federal Reserve Bank building.

Authorities said the 21-year-old man had told an undercover federal source earlier this year that he had come to the United States to "wage jihad." In recorded meetings with an undercover FBI agent that Nafis thought was an al-Qaeda contact, Nafis allegedly proposed an attack on New York's financial district, saying he also wanted to assassinate a high-level federal official.

According to the federal criminal complaint, Nafis said he wanted to "shake" the whole country and possibly disrupt the U.S. presidential election.

New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelley says the plot was not amateurish, even though it was quickly thwarted.

"I don't know how you characterize unsophisticated. He was arrested. But he clearly had the intent of creating mayhem here," said Kelley.

Terrorism expert John Mueller with the Cato Institute in Washington says the case is similar to about 50 other failed terrorist attempts during the past 10 years -- efforts by individuals or small groups, most of them acting without al-Qaeda connections.

"There haven't been any large attacks in the West since 2005 -- the London bombing. So the trajectory is not very impressive from the terrorists' standpoint. So it is an issue; it is a problem," said Mueller. "I certainly wouldn't call it a threat of any sort."

After a brief court appearance, Nafis was ordered held without bail pending

charges of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and attempting to provide material support to al-Qaeda.