



Department of Justice

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Attorney General Edwin Meese III today issued the following statement:

"At this hour, a Lebanese man named Fawaz Younis is being brought before a U.S. Magistrate here in the District of Columbia and is being charged with taking hostage the passengers and crew of Royal Jordanian Airlines flight 402 during an incident that began at Beirut International Airport on June 11, 1985. This represents the first overseas arrest by U.S. law enforcement officials of a suspected terrorist being sought under U.S. laws. This unilateral action by the United States is an important step in our policy of bringing terrorists to justice.

"Younis is charged with hostage-taking (18 USC 1203), conspiracy (18 USC 371) and destruction of an aircraft (18 USC 32 (a)). The hostage-taking statute provides "long-arm" jurisdiction over offenses committed outside the United States where U.S. nationals are among those taken hostage. At least four U.S. nationals were aboard the aircraft when it was hijacked.

"The arrest was made on Sunday, September 13, 1987 by special agents of the FBI in international waters in the

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Mediterranean Sea. He was subsequently flown to the United States in U.S. military aircraft, and arrived at Andrews Air Force Base earlier today. He was immediately transported to the U.S. District Courthouse in the District of Columbia for arraignment.

"The arrest was the culmination of an operation carried out by the Department of Justice and the FBI.

"It is a major policy goal of the United States government that we bring to justice those who are accused of being responsible for terrorist crimes. As President Reagan has said, terrorists throughout the world must know that 'they can run, but they can't hide.' Any terrorist attack on American nationals or American property will be investigated and prosecuted whenever there is a basis to do so under U.S. law, provided that they are not effectively prosecuted and punished elsewhere.

"Under laws enacted by Congress in 1984 and 1986, the United States has the authority to investigate and prosecute individuals suspected of committing specific types of offenses under U.S. law in foreign jurisdictions. We intend to use that authority wherever and whenever circumstances permit.

"I want to emphasize that this was a law enforcement operation. As we have said many times, acts of terrorism are criminal acts, pure and simple. The world must deal with them as criminal acts, and utilize the rule of law in order to combat

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this very serious threat to the lives and well-being of citizens of every country where terrorism has reared its ugly head. This operation illustrates the intention and ability of the United States to invoke the rule of law in fighting terrorist lawlessness. It is the first such operation, but it will most certainly not be the last."

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