

## **FORT HOOD RAMPAGE: 'THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE TERRORIST ACT COMMITTED ON THE AMERICAN SOIL SINCE 09.11" ?**

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Looking beyond the tragedy, the massacre at Fort Hood appears extremely interesting for any expert in terrorism because it sheds light on **the mechanism of individual radicalisation which can affect persons who have no proven ties with a terrorist structure**, transforming them into 'self-recruited Jihadists.'

Unfortunately, the same tragedy also tells us a lot about the **systemic dysfunctions within the chain of command of the American Armed Forces, the intelligence agencies and the agencies of law enforcement. The slaughter was not fated to be and could very probably have been averted. It would have sufficed if each party had done its job without allowing itself to be led astray by political correctness and a purely 'utilitarian' logic.**

Political correctness has prompted the investigators and the press to deal with this case as an horrible but simple crime news story and not as a terrorist act. President **Barack Obama**, for example, said in a serious tone that one **'must not jump to conclusions too quickly.'** He otherwise is symbolically playing down the scope of this carnage: **how else can one explain that he did not find time to go to Fort Hood until five days after the drama took place?**

As for the press, in its great majority it strikes us that for days now there are few proofs given linking this affair to a terrorist plot and one can thus merely wonder about the motivations of the killer...

It is obvious that in this affair there remain areas in the shadows, and that is quite normal since the investigation began just a few days ago and the main 'suspect,' Major Nidal Malik Hasan was being treated in an artificial respirator until Saturday and has still not testified to the investigators. On Monday morning, his status was categorised as "critical but stable".

This does not change the fact that, as the American columnist Mark Steyn noted: **'Thirteen dead and 31 wounded would be a bad day for the American Army in**

***Afghanistan and a great victory for the Taliban.***<sup>1</sup> As Mark Steyn emphasizes, the incident unfolded in the centre of the largest military base in the world, in the very heartland of the United States, yet politicians and the media have agreed to treat it as a mere ‘tragedy,’ meaning ‘one more of those random and unforeseeable carnages where a man has gone mad and fires on anything that moves at his place of work, in a shopping centre or in the street.’ And everyone agrees not to mention any possible ideological motivation of the killer except in a whisper. However, to discern exactly the contours of the debate, we need first to set down the facts themselves, then the personality of Major Hasan.

## **A) The facts**

On Thursday, 5 November, around 1:30 PM, a single shooter who was soon afterwards identified as Major Nidal Malik Hasan, a military psychiatrist, burst into a room of the ***Soldiers Readiness Center of Fort Hood*** where around 300 soldiers were undergoing eye examinations, receiving their vaccinations and filling out forms relating to their coming deployment in Iraq or in Afghanistan. Armed with two automatic pistols, he leapt onto a table and, according to numerous witnesses, after having shouted ‘***Allah Ô Akhbar !***’<sup>2</sup> (God is great), he opened fire on the crowd, killing a dozen persons (the thirteenth died of his wounds the next day) and wounding thirty more, some of whom, unfortunately, may not survive. The number of shots fired and the number of victims suggest that Major Hasan reloaded his weapons repeatedly, since in total a hundred cartridges were fired. Moreover, from the moment he arrived in the premises, he acted ‘***methodically and in cold blood,***’<sup>3</sup> conducting matters ‘***in a measured and calm manner***’<sup>4</sup> and working furiously at his victims. One soldier testified: ‘*I was hit once, then hit again after having made the mistake of moving.*’<sup>5</sup>

Major Hasan then was hit by at least four bullets fired by two young policemen, Sergeants Mark Todd and Kimberly Munley, a young woman who, while saving lives was herself wounded during her action.

## **B) What we know about Major Hasan**

Major Hasan is a **39 year old military psychiatrist**. He was born in the United States and is thus an **American citizen of Palestinian-Jordanian origin**. Part of his family still lives in a small village near Jerusalem. He belongs to a middle class family: his parents managed stores and a restaurant. He began his studies in biochemistry at Virginia Tech University before **joining the Army in 1997** on the basis of a contract (very classic in the United States) which committed the Defense Department to pay for his studies in medicine in exchange for a certain number of years of service.

Commissioned as lieutenant in 1997, he received his degree in medicine and was promoted to captain in 2003. He was assigned to the ***Walter Reed Army Medical Center***, where he did his internship and, among others, cared for soldiers returning from service in Afghanistan and Iraq who showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. **In the spring of 2009, he was transferred to Fort Hood in preparation for his anticipated**

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Steyn : ‘*The hole at the Heart of Our Strategy: We are scrupulously non-judgemental about the ideology that drives terrorism,*’ *National Review on Line*, November 7, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> This fact is cited, among others, by many American media outlets and is partially confirmed on the basis of ‘first hand testimony; by General Robert Cone, the commander of Fort Hood.

<sup>3</sup> Statement by General Robert Cone to the press on Thursday, November 5, picked up particularly by *Fox News*.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>5</sup> Cited by General Cone, *idem*.

**deployment in Afghanistan or in Iraq. He was assigned to the Darnall Army Medical Center.**

It seems manifestly clear that at the moment when he made the choice to enlist **Nidal Malik Hasan was proud of being an American and pleased to serve his country.** According to one of his cousins, Nader Hasan, he decided upon this career against the advice of his parents, saying *'that he was born in the United States and this was his duty to the country.'*<sup>6</sup>

After several years, however, things changed. **After 2001, Hasan complained of being a victim of harassment and of hurtful remarks made about his Muslim faith.** He went so far as to seek the advice of a lawyer regarding possibilities of his breaking the contract binding him to the Army,<sup>7</sup> but he was told there was no possibility of doing that. Hasan seemed resigned to this fact, but **those around him noted that he withdrew more and more into himself and into his practice of religion.** His parents died respectively in 1998 and 2001. According to his cousin, this loss led him *'to become more of a practicing believer.'*<sup>8</sup> The same cousin says that he **never heard Nidal Malik Hasan make radical or anti-American remarks.**

**However, this is not what comes out of his career in the course of the last two years and the recollections of his colleagues and comrades.**

Lieutenant Colonel Terry Lee, who was his superior at Fort Hood, recalls his 'bizarre' comments, such as: *'Perhaps the Muslims should all rise up and fight against the aggressor.'*<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, it is certain that **his deployment to the theatre of operations in Iraq or in Afghanistan was what Major Nidal feared the most:** according to his cousin, he began to oppose these wars when he listened to the horrors related by the soldiers he was caring for and he was **'ashamed'**<sup>10</sup> **of this deployment.**<sup>11</sup>

Colonel Lee emphasises that *'Major Hasan appeared optimistic over the fact that President Obama would begin to withdraw troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. But when this did not happen as quickly as he had hoped, he became angry.'*<sup>12</sup>

Many unidentified officials<sup>13</sup> *'suggest that he may have suffered for a long time from emotional problems which were exacerbated by the tensions [caused] by his work with veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who returned home with serious psychiatric problems...'*

One more interesting element: **Nidal Malik Hasan was unmarried and this seemed to pose an enormous problem for him.** Adnan Haider, a retired professor of statistics from Georgetown University, who knew him from an Islamic centre in Maryland, tells us that just after he was presented to him at the end of prayers one day in 2008 Hasan asked him: *'Do you know some pretty Muslim girl whom I could marry?'* **This was an odd**

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<sup>6</sup> *The New York Times* : 'Hasan was mortified about deployment to war,' November 6, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Idem.

<sup>8</sup> Idem.

<sup>9</sup> Cited by *Fox News*, November 5, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> We note that the cousin uses precisely the English word 'mortified' and not some other qualifier such as 'afraid', 'angry,' etc.

<sup>11</sup> *The New York Times*, article previously cited.

<sup>12</sup> Cited by *Fox News*, November 5, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Cited, inter alia, in the *New York Times* of Sunday, November 8, 2009 : 'Little Evidence of Terror Plot in Base Killings'

**thing to ask someone whom you have just met a couple of seconds earlier. It was clear to me that he was under pressure,...**»<sup>14</sup> Adnan Haider stresses.

He is otherwise described by his family and his colleagues as **a loner** who was unable or unwilling to make friends and *'did not socialize with fellow officers.'*<sup>15</sup>

To be sure, his psychological aspect – possibly pathological – very likely played a role in the behavioural change of Major Hasan. Secondary traumatic stress – also called 'compassion fatigue' – can affect social workers and doctors who have contact with misery and suffering. This is well known and has been studied ever since the first cases were diagnosed in the 1950s among nurses.<sup>16</sup> But the case of Major Hassan cannot be reduced to a 'simple' crisis of *burnout* which led him to the fatal act.

Both medical literature and the interviews we have had with certain specialists tend to prove that while the range of consequences of secondary traumatic stress is very broad – it can go from loss of self-worth to generalized doubts about the usefulness of the work being done, to total disinterest in this work or a form of depression (which can lead to abuse of mood enhancing substances or to suicide) – this ailment as a general rule does not prompt the sufferer to take aggressive action vis-à-vis his entourage.

There can be no question of presenting a medical diagnosis here. This would go well beyond our competences. But **we may be allowed to conclude that one cannot treat the case of Major Hasan as a drama caused by stress. To be sure, his mental state helped him to break the taboo of taking life and facilitated the ease of moving from thought to deed, but on the evidence, the deed appears to have been motivated by a clear-cut ideological position.** If this were just a psychiatric case, Nidal Malik Hasan would have committed suicide or opened fire on passers-by in an indiscriminate manner. However, **the fact is that his own choice was to kill fellow soldiers who were preparing to leave for Iraq or Afghanistan and he did so after having repeatedly demonstrated that his own position on these wars had become radicalized.**

### C) Multiple signs of radicalisation

Aside from the statements reported by Colonel Lee and already cited above, and aside from Major Hasan's loss of interest in the Army (as attested by his son cousin Nader), we note in fact that:

- When he cared for those traumatized by war at *Walter Reed*, Hasan received a **negative evaluation**,<sup>17</sup> apparently justified by the fact that he had **verbally assaulted military personnel who defended the American policy in Iraq and in Afghanistan.**

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<sup>14</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*: "Fort Hood shooting: Texas army killer linked to September 11 terrorists", November 7, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> *Fox News*: "Cousin says suspected Fort hood Gunman Feared impending war deployment", November 5, 2009; *Fox News*: "Troubling portrait Emerges of Fort Hood Shooting Rampage Suspect", November 6, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> See, inter alia, Charles R. Figley: "Compassion fatigue: coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized", Brunner/Mazel, New York, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> *Associated Press*, "Troubling portrait emerges of Fort Hood suspect", November 6, 2009.

- Also in Walter Reed, during a conference on the Quran, Hasan said that **'the infidels should have their throats cut'** and that they were condemned **'to burn in hell.'** He added that he felt himself **'first of all a Muslim and then an American.'**<sup>18</sup>
- This 'distancing himself' with respect to his American citizenship also came out when he filled in a form in a mosque to participate in a program of search for a Muslim bride. To the great surprise of the Imam present, he put in the box 'nationality' the word *'Palestinian.'*<sup>19</sup>
- In Walter Reed, once again, he gave another conference, in 2007, in which he said that **the military should allow Muslim soldiers to be released as conscientious objectors instead of fighting in wars to avoid "adverse events."**<sup>20</sup>
- More recently, when he was attending a specialised seminar at the **Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences** (Bethesda Hospital, Maryland), in 2008-2009, Hasan had, during the courses, spoken out repeatedly, often in a political diatribe, accusing the United States of conducting a **'war against Islam.'** At least one time, he made a **presentation defending suicide attacks.** Doctor Val Finnell and other physicians attending this seminar filed complaints with the director of the University, mentioning a veritable *'time bomb'*<sup>21</sup> but no investigation was opened and no measures were taken.<sup>22</sup>
- A fellow officer who had converted to Islam and prayed regularly in the same mosque as Hasan visited says he heard him **'express anti-Semitic feelings and defend suicide attacks.'**<sup>23</sup>
- A preliminary examination of his computer by the investigators revealed that he **was regularly connected to sites preaching radical Islam** and that he exchanged emails with persons sharing this ideology, 'some of them residing abroad.'<sup>24</sup>
- We also know that, **six months ago, the FBI had detected on certain extremist sites and forums one 'Nidal Hasan' who regularly 'posted' messages defending the 'heroism' of those responsible for suicide attacks and other extremist positions.** However, the federal agency could not at the time establish that 'Nidal Hasan' was Major Nidal Malik Hasan and no official inquest was opened.<sup>25</sup>
- It would seem that **he showed a certain satisfaction**<sup>26</sup> **after a military recruiter was killed in Little Rock** in June 2009<sup>27</sup>. During approximately the

<sup>18</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, November 8, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Testimony of Faizul Khan, former Imam of a mosque in Silver Spring (Maryland), cited by the *Associated Press* : 'Troubling portrait emerges of Fort Hood suspect,' November 6, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> *The Washington Post* and *Fox News*, November 10, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Fort Hood Shooting: Texas army killer linked to September 11 terrorists", November 7, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> *Fox News*: "Some Saw Trouble With Fort Hood Suspect", November 8, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Fort Hood shooting: Texas army killer linked to September 11 terrorists", November 7, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> *The New York Times* : 'Little Evidence of Terror Plot in Base Killings,' November 8, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> This fact is cited by many American and British media outlets, notably *Fox News* : 'Sources identify Major as Gunman in Deadly Shooting Rampage at Fort Hood, November 5, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*: "Introspection, Not Rationalization, Needed in Wake of Fort Hood Slaughter", November 6, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> On 1 June 2009, Carlos Leon Bledsoe, an American citizen who converted to Islam and took the name Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad killed the soldier William Long (23 years old) and seriously

same period witnesses say they heard him say: '**perhaps some people should attach bombs to their bodies and go to Times Square.**'<sup>28</sup>

- Osman Danquah, a retired sergeant, veteran of the First Gulf War and co-founder of the *Islamic Community of Greater Killeen* (the city where Fort Hood is located) confirmed having had many conversations with him during which Hasan asked him: '**what do you say to soldiers who have doubts about fighting against their Muslim brethren.**' Danquah reminded him that all these soldiers '*were volunteers and that otherwise there were Muslims fighting Muslims in Afghanistan, in Pakistan and in the Palestinian territories...*' »

But the most important of all these indicators was revealed in the British daily *The Daily Telegraph*: **Major Hasan could have been linked to two of the terrorists of 11 September 2001.** Indeed, in the spring of that year Nidal Malik Hasan, while still a medical student, visited the **Dar-al-Hijrah mosque** in Great Falls (Virginia). **This is also the mosque where the funeral prayers were said for Hasan's mother, in May 2001.** Dar-al-Hijrah is considered to have been an especially sensitive place due to the personality of the Imam who was preaching there then. **Anwar al-Awlaki** is an American citizen of Yemeni origin. Within the American intelligence community, he was seen as an unshakeable support to Al Qaeda specially charged with propaganda directed at young English-speaking Muslims and, particularly Americans and English. Charles E. Allen, the former Under Secretary for Intelligence of the **Department of Homeland Security** described him in October 2008 as a '**supporter of Al Qaeda and spiritual guide of three of the air pirates of 11 September...**'<sup>29</sup>

**At the time when Hasan prayed fervently at Dar-al-Hijrah, in fact Nawaf al Hamzi and Hani Hanjour, two of the September 11th terrorists regularly participated in the same prayers. A third, Khalid al-Midhar, met many times with the Imam al-Awlaki in San Diego (California).**

The investigation should obviously determine whether Hasan and the two accomplices of Mohamed Atta had something more than chance contacts. This could prove to be a determining factor.

Unidentified officials told U.S. media, by the beginning of this week **that the U.S. intelligence intercepted between 10 and 20 emails sent by Major Hasan to al-Awlaki in 2008. At last December, the members of two Joint Terrorism Task Forces (an interagency operational body) were investigating Hasan. It was decided not to go further with this investigation.**<sup>30</sup>

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wounded the soldier Quinton Ezeagwula (18 years old), in an Army recruitment centre in Little Rock (Arkansas). In a telephone interview given to the *Associated Press* from his prison cell, he said: '*I do not feel guilty. It was not a murder, because a murder is when one person kills another person without a valid reason.... This was an act of reprisal.*'

<sup>28</sup> *The investigative Project on Terrorism*, article already cited, November 6, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*: '*Muslim groups linked to September 11 hijackers spark fury over conference,*' December 27, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> The Los Angeles Times: '*Fort Hood suspect was on U.S. radar*', November 10, 2009; The Washington Times: '*Hood Suspect earlier came under FBI scrutiny*', November 10, 2009.

## **D) The behaviour of Major Hasan in the several days preceding the carnage**

In the days and hours which preceded his deed, **Major Nidal Malik Hasan did not show any sign of feverishness, anxiety or nervousness.** On the contrary, he very calmly wound up his affairs like a man who was getting ready for a long departure.

Thus, he mostly emptied his apartment, offering his furniture to his neighbours, often accompanied by a copy of the Quran. He gave one female neighbour some frozen food and several tee-shirts and also offered her 60 dollars to '*clean up his apartment after his departure.*'<sup>31</sup> Those who were in touch with him had the impression that he was about to ship out to Afghanistan and that his why he was putting his affairs in order.<sup>32</sup>

In the days preceding 5 November, **he repeatedly used the computer and internet connection of one of his neighbours, Willie Bell** (whom he paid for this use), as he had become accustomed to do for several months. The question is obviously to learn why he did not use his own computer and internet connection.

Less than 48 hours before the massacre, Alice Thompson, who together with her husband manages the two-storey apartment building where Hasan lived, saw him accompany a visitor who remained at his place for 'around 5 minutes' and was dressed in traditional Arab attire. She was astonished because the Major never received anyone at home and forbade anyone to enter his place in his absence, 'even for repairs.'<sup>33</sup>

On the day of the massacre, at 2.37, he telephoned his neighbour, Willie Bell, and asked him to turn on his wireless internet connection which he apparently wanted to use.<sup>34</sup> Later he left a telephone message on his answering machine: '***It was wonderful to know you, my friend ; I am going to miss you.***'<sup>35</sup> **Then, as was his habit, he went to the mosque for pre-sunrise prayers (*al-Fajr*)** where he met a fellow officer from Fort Hood who recently converted to Islam. The latter describes him as being at this precise moment a man '***who was very relaxed and not at all disturbed or nervous.***'<sup>36</sup> This is around 7 hours before the attack...

A surveillance video at the 7-eleven shop where Major Hasan went as usual slightly later recorded him when he bought a coffee and some *hashbrowns*. **The images show, once again, a relaxed man, smiling, calm and sure of himself,** dressed in traditional white and immaculate Arab garb. This would seem to indicate that he was then on the way home from the mosque.

The last known trace of the killer before he committed his deed was towards 9 o'clock in the morning on 5 November. He gave his Quran to his neighbour and told her: '***I am going to do a good piece of work for God.***'<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*: "Fort Hood shootings: FBI given gunman's name six months ago", November 6, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>33</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*: 'Fort Hood shooting: inside story of how massacre on military base happened,' November 7, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>35</sup> *Fox News*: "Suspect could face Death Penalty in Fort Hood Shooting", November 7, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> *The Daily Telegraph* : 'Fort Hood shooting : Texas army killer linked to September 11 terrorists,' November 7, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> *The Daily Telegraph* : 'Fort Hood gunman had told US military colleagues that infidels should have their throats cut,' November 8, 2009.

When confronting all the biographical data of the subject and the available elements of his personality such as we have just reviewed quickly, we arrive at the following summary: **a 39 year old man who is intelligent and has attained a high level of education is disappointed in his country and in the Army in which he serves. He was victim of, or believed he was victim of discrimination. He withdrew to his religious identity and became very radicalized over the course of many years. He did not conceal his extremist ideas and sought comfort on the internet and in email contact with other fundamentalists, refusing in the end to participate in a war in which he would have to fight against ‘Muslims.’ The fact that he was a loner could only compel him to think over his situation all the more.** We add to this that he may have been the author of highly suspect messages on the internet and that he had perhaps been in contact with the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorists.

**Even without taking into account the two last elements, which remain to be proven, we have a personal profile which corresponds so closely to that of a classical Jihadist that it is nearly a textbook case.**

The question of whether Major Hasan was or was not linked to a terrorist cell, however important it may be, is secondary, because **it seems clear that radical Islamist ideology prompted him to conduct his own individual Jihad. It goes without saying that if this hypothesis is confirmed, it can only strengthen our perception of the threat which the ‘terrorists from within’ present,** those men and women who were born and raised in the United States or in Europe, who have no known link with a terrorist movement, who became radicalized through their own encounters and by assiduously visiting the internet, and who decide on their own to move from ideas to acts against targets which they choose themselves.

### **E) The failure of the authorities to react**

The most astonishing and most worrying element in this whole affair is probably the fact that **certain of the disturbing personality features and the suspect actions and statements of the author of the crime were known to many of his colleagues, his superiors and thus to the military authorities. They never deemed it worthwhile to open an investigation and confront Dr. Nidal with these elements to get explanations.** Even when his comrades in courses filed formal complaints against him to their superior, nothing happened.

Two explanations are generally put forward by observers to justify this astonishing passivity. On the one hand, the authorities would have feared being accused of ‘discrimination’ by being too interested in the personality of Major Hasan and, on the other hand, the Army has a serious shortage of psychiatrists and is not disposed to fire those it has trained.

**One other question: why didn’t the FBI open an investigation into the messages from ‘Nidal Hasan’ and how is it that the agency could ignore the fact that the psychiatrist had visited the same mosque as two of the terrorists of 11 September in the months preceding the attacks of 2001?**

In an interview given on Sunday, 8 November on *CNN*, General Georges Casey, Army chief of Staff, said that *‘one must not rush to conclusions’* and that the revelations about disturbing signals were just ***speculations based on anecdotes...***

We understand that one of the highest ranking military authorities of the country would not like to see the investigation shine a spotlight on the manifest dysfunctions which have characterized the treatment of the ‘Hasan case,’ but that cannot prevent our thinking that if



the ‘speculations’ had been examined in good time, as they should have been, the massacre at Fort Hood could have been avoided.

**Senator Joe Lieberman (ex-Democrat, now ‘independent’)** was not mistaken when he said on Sunday that he planned to direct a commission of enquiry over the carnage and emphasised that there were ‘*strong alarming signals*’ indicating that Major Hasan was ‘*an Islamist extremist*’: ***If that is true, then the murder of these 13 persons was a terrorist act, indeed the most destructive terrorist act committed on American soil since 09.11.***<sup>38</sup>...

**Rep. Peter Hoekstra, of Michigan, the ranking republican on the House Intelligence Committee** told the **Los Angeles Times** his office “**had been contacted by U.S. officials involved in the case who believed that “the system just broke down”**”<sup>39</sup>.

The inquest of Senator Lieberman and his peers should answer several essential questions, if the court investigation does not do so first, and dispel the following areas of uncertainty:

- 1) Did Major Hasan act alone in preparing the attack?**
- 2) Was he linked to a terrorist group or cell? Was he influenced or prompted to commit this act or was he convinced on his own that this was the only solution available to him?**
- 3) What was the exact nature of his relations with the September 11th terrorists if there were any such relations? What were his relations with the extremist cleric Anwar al-Awlaki ?**
- 4) In proceeding to act, what was the real weight of his psychological state?**
- 5) Finally, how is it that no security mechanism within either the Army or the FBI had detected the many flashing red lights which went off since at least 2001 or 2002 and which accumulated these past two years?**

The very least that the United States can do for the victims of Fort Hood and all military and civilian personnel who work for the national security is to conduct an independent inquest open to all hypotheses. To be sure, this inquest will come too late to prevent things and it will not return to life those who died or give back serenity and physical wellbeing to the wounded.

But it will perhaps help avoid a repetition of dramas like this in future.

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<sup>38</sup> The case of Major Hasan had a precedent but outside of American territory. On 23 March 2003, in *Camp Pennsylvania* (Kuwait), where units of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division were based, Sergeant Hasan Akbar lobbed a grenade into a tent, killing two officers – Captain Christopher Seifert and Major Gregory Stone – and wounding fourteen soldiers. His lawyer entered a plea of insanity but slightly prior to the attack Akbar had written: ‘*Perhaps I will not kill any Muslims, but being in the Army is the same thing. I will have to choose very quickly whom to kill.*’ This statement was incorporated in the charges against him to prove premeditation. Akbar was condemned to death and entered an appeal.

<sup>39</sup> The Los Angeles Times : “*Fort Hood suspect was on U.S. radar*”, November 10, 2009.