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The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
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Dear President Trump,

At 1:34 PM on Thursday, 5 November 2009, Army psychiatrist, Major Nidal Hassan, entered the Soldier Readiness Processing Center at Fort Hood, Texas. This was a gun free zone. Military personnel, other than Military Police, are not authorized to carry firearms on base in the continental United States. Hassan took a seat at an empty table, bowed his head for a few seconds, then abruptly stood up, shouting, "Allahu Akbar," while surfacing his concealed semi-automatic FN Five-seven pistol. He then immediately began to slaughter Soldiers, both readying for and returning from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. He sprayed the room with a hail of lethal fire in rapid succession, followed by targeted shootings to assure that those he had felled with gunshots and intended to kill were, in fact, assassinated. Witnesses say that he avoided civilians who were hiding, though one civilian lost his life regardless. Amidst the mass chaos, confusion, and a room murky with smoke from the gunfire of 214 rounds, the floor was so slippery from the massive amounts of blood spilled, that many victims could not be reached as they lay dying. Valiant attempts to block the shooter with chairs and tables thrown in his path resulted in heroic but certain death.

This ruthless and sadistic massacre ended when Hassan was finally apprehended by the heroic actions of civilian police officers, SGT Kimberly Munley and SGT Mark Todd - SGT Munley becoming disabled after her weapon jammed. The shooter then fired upon her three times. She sustained 3 gunshot wounds. The blood bath ended with 13 of Hasan's fellow Soldiers and one civilian killed in action and 33 Soldiers wounded in action. Most were shot multiple times, one begging for the life of her unborn child as she was slain. This was the worst mass attack on any military installation within the United States in US history.

**Without apparent logic, President Obama labeled the Fort Hood Massacre as *workplace violence* and not an unmistakable act of *domestic terrorism*.** Such a failure in accurate classification has resulted in withholding benefits for victims and families, including desperately needed medical care, and the awarding of Combat Action Badges and Combat Medical Badges to the many heroes who rushed to save the wounded and the dying under fire (Purple Hearts were finally awarded amidst much pressure 5 ½ years later in 2015 under a special NDAA classification). Hasan's systematic assassinations and pre-meditated acts of capital murder were admittedly inspired by radical Islamic motives. In Hasan's own words during his grand rounds

presentations for the duration of his psychiatric residency training and during his subsequent fellowship, *he openly advocated for the burnings and beheadings of American Soldiers*. His plan was to shut down the missions of troops deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan by killing as many American Soldiers as humanly possible. During the shooting, Hasan carried 177 additional rounds in both 20 and 30 round magazines in the cargo pockets of his uniform, with 3000 more rounds in the trunk of his vehicle; this to ensure the job would be perfectly executed. Unmistakably, **the shooter turned the Soldier Readiness Processing Center into a blood-drenched battlefield.**

Hasan had exhibited strong and obvious warning signs prior to this merciless attack. He had frequently and publicly expressed increasingly stronger radical Islamic and anti-American viewpoints, particularly focused on U.S. military actions against Muslims in Afghanistan. At the time of the massacre, he was scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan within 30 days. One of the authors of this letter, COL Kathy Platoni, was to have been assigned as his direct supervisor.

Throughout his well-documented pre-attack radicalization, Hassan aligned himself with Muslim cleric, Anwar Awlaki, who was vehemently anti-American and a key part of the infamous al-Qaeda terrorist organization. Hassan had been in frequent communication with Awlaki, who applauded the Hasan's Fort Hood attack after the fact and assisted in the planning of other terrorist attacks against the United States. This association alone, even with Hasan's frequent anti-U.S. military sentiments and statements notwithstanding, is **more than sufficient reason to classify the massacre as an act of terrorism.**

President Obama labeled and maintained his view of Hassan's mentor, Awlaki, as a terrorist. Five months after the Fort Hood Massacre, President Obama ordered the killing of Awlaki for his terrorist ties. This order was controversial because Awlaki was a U.S. citizen. Awlaki was, in fact, killed by a U.S. drone on September 30, 2011. The following are President Obama's remarks as reported by *Front Lines* on September 30, 2011: "*Earlier this morning, Anwar Awlaki, the leader of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, was killed in Yemen. The death of Awlaki is a major blow to al Qaeda's most active operational affiliate. Awlaki was the leader of external operations for al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.*"

The communication between Hassan and Awlaki and their common and publicly espoused radical Islamic anti-American views helped to solidify the more accurate label of Hassan's vicious 2009 attack as **domestic terrorism**. In his attack, beginning with the typical radical Islamic terrorist attack cry, "Allahu Akbar" and focusing on killing U.S. soldiers just prior to their deployment to Afghanistan, would make any expert very hard pressed to label the massacre as workplace violence. *Allahu Akbar* is a signature call that has accompanied many radical Islamist-inspired terrorist attacks and **never has been associated with attacks defined as workplace violence.**

In comparison to the Fort Hood attack, there have been similar domestic terrorist mass attacks labeled correctly by President Obama – even those occurring within a workplace. As an example, on 6 December 2015, President Obama addressed the nation, focusing on the then recent San Bernardino Inland Regional Center mass attack. The deadly assault was committed by a radicalized U.S. citizen

employee and his wife. President Obama did not label this as workplace violence. Fourteen people were killed and 20 were injured. In the national address, President Obama stated the following:

*“Our military and counterterrorism professionals have relentlessly pursued terrorist networks overseas -- disrupting safe havens in several different countries, killing Osama bin Laden, and decimating al Qaeda's leadership. Over the last few years, however, the terrorist threat has evolved into a new phase. As we've become better at preventing complex, multifaceted attacks like 9/11, terrorists turned to less complicated acts of violence like the mass shootings that are all too common in our society. It is this type of attack that we saw at **Fort Hood in 2009**; in Chattanooga earlier this year; and now in San Bernardino”. (Transcript released by the White House as reported by Reason, December 6, 2015).*

**It is important to note President Obama’s labeling of the Fort Hood and San Bernardino attacks as terrorism and not workplace violence, although both occurred in a workplace. Still, the Fort Hood Massacre, to date, has never been formally classified as domestic terrorism. This has enormous ramifications for the wounded, the survivors, and the families of the fallen.** The similarities between the Fort Hood mass attack and the San Bernardino attack, labeled by President Obama himself as terrorism, are striking. Both occurred in a workplace and both massacres were committed by radical Islamic anti-American attackers using semi-automatic weapons. Although there are different definitions of terrorism, all include the need to leave a political message by the act itself, including selection of targets (U.S. government, military, etc.) (Gary M. Jackson, Surviving Mass Victim Attacks, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). This is exactly what Hassan did.

This is particularly relevant because at the time of the 2009 Fort Hood Massacre and even at the time of the quoted national address in which he included the Fort Hood Massacre as terrorism and not workplace violence, President Obama and his administration officially persisted in labeling the Fort Hood attack as workplace violence in the years following. The labeling of the Fort Hood attack as workplace violence has, to this day, resulted in the denial of benefits to the victims and families of that horrific attack. One has to ask why benefits are still withheld, especially within the context of the following key facts:

- “Though the 5 November 2009 shooting was not on the scale of a 9/11-style attack, it served the same purpose: to terrify "the Crusader West" and shake America off kilter, according to an al Qaeda spokesman” (Patrik Jonsson, Christian Science Monitor, October 19, 2010). Quoting Jarret Brachman, an expert on international terrorist groups and author of Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice, Jonsson continues, "Hasan has become almost everything they've [Al-Qaeda] been hoping ... he's legendary now within their movement."
- On 14 December 2011, **the 112th Congress, 1st Session Issue: Vol. 157, No. 192 — Daily Edition of the Congressional Record captured the transcript labeled, “FORT HOOD SHOOTINGS: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE OR TERRORISM?”** Since the 2009 Fort Hood Massacre, there has been an outcry over the insistence of the Obama administration to label the attack workplace violence as opposed to the unequivocally more accurate label of terrorism. Representatives John Carter (R-TX) and Louie Gohmert (R-TX) presented an impassioned plea

to the House of Representatives to properly label the Nidal Hassan Fort Hood attack in 2009 as terrorism and not as workplace violence. As they explained, the Obama administration's insistence on the workplace violence designation had resulted in lack of rightful benefits to victims and families. Mr. Carter described a resolution he presented to the House the day before. Because of its relevance and importance, it is presented here verbatim, as captured in the Congressional Record referenced:

*“Whereas the United States Army Major Nidal Hasan is reported to have communicated on multiple occasions with radical Islamic terrorist, Anwar al-Awlaki, on the topic of justifying jihad on the United States and its Armed Forces; Whereas Major Hasan delivered addresses to the Department of Defense personnel concerning the justification of jihad against the United States Armed Forces; Whereas Major Hasan is reported to have planned and trained for an attack on unarmed members of the United States Armed Forces at Fort Hood, Texas, with the specific intent to kill and injure those troops before the deployment to overseas theaters of war; Whereas Major Hasan is reported to have declared his attack to be an act of jihad in defense of Islam, shouting “God is great” in Arabic, while gunning down unarmed military personnel and civilians; Whereas Major Hasan is currently charged with murder of 13 and attempted murder of 32 (the correct number is 33) United States citizens during that attack; And whereas the Department of Defense submitted correspondence to the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security which referred to the violent Islamic extremist attack on Fort Hood, Texas, in the context of a broader threat of workplace violence: Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the House of Representatives recognizes the attack on Fort Hood, Texas, as an act of radical Islamic terrorism and jihad against the United States Armed Forces.*

- Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) and Representative John Carter (R-TX), began pushing against the workplace violence label that resulted in denial of benefits for Fort Hood Victims very quickly after the shooting. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) joined their effort in 2013. To correct the injustice, Senator Cruz added an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that specifically required a review to (... *assess whether the members of the Armed Forces killed or wounded at Fort Hood and Little Rock qualify for award of the Purple Heart under the criteria as members of the Armed Forces who were killed or wounded as a result of an act of an enemy of the United States.* (National Defense Act for Year 2014).
- In an interview, Senator Ted Cruz said, "The Obama Pentagon fought tooth and nail against that." He went on to say, "They insisted the attack was workplace violence. And they refused for nearly five years to award those Purple Hearts."
- It is important to note that attacks committed by terrorists resulting in wounds have qualified for the Purple Heart since 1984. On February 14, 1984, Ronald Reagan signed an executive order allowing the Purple Heart to be issued for injuries suffered as a result of terrorism.” (T. Christian Miller, *A History of the Purple Heart*, NPR, September 8, 2010).

- In 2014, Senator Ted Cruz released a video urging President Obama to sign the legislation that would recognize the 2009 Fort Hood shooting as an act of terrorism - not workplace violence. Senator Cruz stated: "It wasn't workplace violence," It was an act of terror against American heroes, and we need to speak the truth." "It is abundantly clear that this was an act of radical Islamic terrorism," Senator Cruz stated. "The only explanation for the administration's persistent denial of that is politics." Labeled correctly as a terrorist attack, the Fort Hood massacre victims and families would receive such benefits as life insurance, combat pay, tax breaks, and the Purple Heart. (Washington Free Beacon Staff, December 14, 2014).
- On April 10, 2015, to correct the injustice of improper labeling and after the National Defense Act amendment addressing the issue, 44 medals were finally awarded to the victims of the 2009 Fort Hood attack (Purple Hearts for Soldiers and Defense of Freedom Medals for civilians). This took 5.5 years from the date of the shooting. However, deserved benefits continued to be withheld.

Six days after the meritorious awards on 16 April 2015, John McHugh, then Secretary of the Army, reported that he directed the Army to **“provide all possible benefits to victims of a 2009 attack at Fort Hood who were recently awarded the Purple Heart medal.”** He went on to say, **“After making the determination that the victims of the Fort Hood attack are now eligible for the Purple Heart, it seems only right and fair that these soldiers also receive the benefits it traditionally entails.”** Secretary Hugh continued, **“That’s why I directed an expedited process to make certain that happens.”** (Molly Hennessy-Fiske, The Washington Post, October 19, 2015). This order did not result in benefits being awarded. In fact, to this day, the wounded live in fear of even revealing what benefits they have yet received, if any.

On 5 November 2012, a wrongful death suit was filed by Fort Hood Massacre victims against the senior U.S. government officials and civilian employees, exactly 3 years after the Ft. Hood Massacre (Manning, et al. v Esper, Secretary of the Army). The court delayed the case until Hassan's court martial hearings were completed. Taking almost another year, Hasan was convicted on 3 August 2013. However, the court granted the defendant's request to continue to stay the case for many additional years (until March of 2017), held up by post-conviction court martial proceedings. Based on technicalities, the case was dismissed in January of 2019, nearly ten years after the Fort Hood Massacre, allowing full benefits to be denied the victims of the massacre and their families to this day. Technicalities aside, nor focusing on the appropriateness of the lawsuit, **it is tragic that survivors were driven by almost a decade of unjust denials of benefits to even be placed in the position of filing such a suit.**

- It is very significant to note that COL Platoni has contacted the following elected officials over the course of the last nine years, not a single one providing any assistance whatsoever and in most cases, refusing to respond. In two cases, military and Veteran liaison staff went to extraordinary lengths to provide assistance, but were limited by the inaction of the congressmen

- for whom they worked. In two cases, COL Platoni received threats to cease and desist, one in person at her place of business. These elected officials, several contacted by their civilian constituents and supporters of the Fort Hood victims, are as follows:

Congressman Mike Turner  
Congressman David Joyce  
Congressman Warren Davidson  
Senator Kristin Gillibrand  
Senator Charles Schumer  
Senator Johnny Isakson  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Senator John Boozman  
Senator Dean Heller  
Senator Bill Cassidy  
Senator Mike Rounds  
Senator Bernie Sanders  
Senator Sherrod Brown  
Senator Jon Tester  
Senator Mazie Hirono  
Senator Joe Manchin  
Senator Thom Tillis  
Senator Dan Sullivan  
Senator Richard Blumenthal  
Senator Patty Murray  
Senator John Cornyn  
Senator Kelly Ayotte  
Senator Ron Wyden

Other survivors have worked relentlessly to right this wrong. Colonel (Dr.) Kathy Platoni is one such survivor, who later found she was to be Hasan's supervisor, placed at the top of Hasan's hit list. A dear friend died at her knees, having sustained mortal wounds while trying to "rush" the shooter with a chair. As a clinical psychologist who specializes in treating PTSD, she knows both the horror of such an attack, as well as the longstanding and lifelong psychological aftereffects. She has written and spoken often about the tragedy, including numerous articles in such publications as *TIME* (April 19, 2016) and the *Wall Street Journal* (March 19, 2015). Shawn Manning of the referenced Manning, et al. v Esper lawsuit is another example. SSG Manning was shot six times, including in one lung and in his liver by Hasan and lives with two rounds left in his body. SSG Alonzo Lunsford was shot 7 times, losing his vision in one eye.

Survivors, as well as a myriad of supporters, find it inconceivable that Soldiers preparing for impending deployment or returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, those charged to fight for their country, and who were killed or wounded, continue to be denied benefits, even after receiving Purple Heart Medals. The incomprehensibility of this fact, along with the pain stemming from colossal deceit and betrayal by their own government, remains a series of egregious acts against all those victimized by the Obama administration. These assaults last a lifetime for the victims and their families. Most have given up and

lead shattered lives. PTSD is rampant among the wounded and the survivors. Six have taken their own lives, in addition to one incomplete suicide. There will be more. This is one of the greatest injustices ever perpetrated by the United States Government against its own Soldiers and their families in the history of this country.

It is abundantly clear that the strong and persistent calls from a myriad of experts, the survivors, the Secretary of the Army, and congressional representatives to properly label the Fort Hood Massacre for what it is: an act of domestic terrorism committed by an enemy of the state, remains ignored. This includes an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act to specifically label the attack as terrorism, which resulted in the awarding of the Purple Heart and Defense of Freedom Medals for victims. Yet, benefits have not been forthcoming. **This year will mark 10 years since the 2009 Fort Hood Massacre. Hasan, the self-admitted assassin and radical Islamist, was court martialed in 2013 and is on death row. The 12 soldiers, one civilian, and the unborn child massacred, as well as those injured at the hands of a radical Islamic terrorist shouting the signature “Allahu Akbar” in his merciless and savage attack on a military base, deserve victim relief.**

While the Purple Heart and Defense of Freedom Medals are appreciated, the refusal to provide associated benefits to these victims as ordered by the Secretary of the Army, undermines the very medals that were very reluctantly awarded, made even more offensive by the denial of Combat Action Badges and Combat Medical Badges to those who placed their lives on the line under fire to save their wounded and dying comrades. There are several survivors and wounded who are alive today because of the heroic deeds of these unintended first responders. **The Army is supposed to take care of its own. They have failed to do so. That the Fort Hood Massacre is not classified as an act of domestic terrorism and Hasan, not classified as an enemy of the state, resulting in the denial of full benefits for almost ten years, is unconscionable. The time is long past due to stop penalizing the families of the fallen, the wounded and the survivors, as well as to repay those who would have gladly died to spare the lives of their dying brothers and sisters in uniform at the hands of a madman.**

This egregious travesty of justice begs your direct attention, Mr. President. We ask for an audience with you personally to assure that the facts are presented and the hidden truths brought to light after ten long years, directly from those who witnessed the slaughter that is the Fort Hood Massacre.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your consideration.

Yours most sincerely,

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