

SENATE RESOLUTION 16

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to strongly urge the President and United States Congress to reclassify the mass shooting at Fort Hood and the beheading in Oklahoma as "acts of terrorism."

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2009, Nidal Hasan, a United States Army Major and licensed psychiatrist at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, entered the Soldier Readiness Center at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, with two (2) pistols, jumped on a desk, shouted "Allahu Akbar!" (Arabic for "God is great!"), and opened fire, killing twelve (12) United States soldiers and one (1) United States Department of Defense employee, and injuring thirty (30) other soldiers and two (2) civilian police officers; and

WHEREAS, twelve (12) soldiers, whose mission was to protect United States citizens from violent terrorist attacks, lost their lives at the hands of Hasan, the very type of radical person they were courageously seeking to protect this country against; and

WHEREAS, after admitting he was the shooter and that the shooting was an effort to stop the soldiers from going to Afghanistan and killing his fellow Muslims, Hasan was convicted by a military jury for premeditated murder and attempted premeditated murder; and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 2014, Alton Nolen barged into the Vaughan Foods distribution center in Moore, Oklahoma, and while shouting Islamic phrases and wielding a ten-inch fillet knife, gruesomely beheaded his former coworker, Colleen Hufford, and brutally stabbed another former coworker, Traci Johnson; and

WHEREAS, the beheading came amid a spree of videotaped beheadings by the terrorist organization known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ("ISIS"), and Homeland Security officials warned of "lone wolf" terrorist attacks on United States soil while American forces conducted airstrikes against ISIS forces in Syria; and

WHEREAS, after admitting he beheaded his first victim and attempted to behead his second victim, Nolen was charged with first-degree murder and assault and battery with a deadly weapon; and

WHEREAS, the jury unanimously recommended that Hasan be sentenced to death; and

WHEREAS, the death penalty is being sought against Nolen as a result of the murder being "especially heinous, atrocious, or cruel"; and

WHEREAS, prior to the shooting at Fort Hood, the Army notified Hasan that he would be deployed to Afghanistan, and Hasan had eighteen (18) communications with a regional commander within al-Qaeda named Anwar al-Awlaki, who was a radical Islamic cleric known for his terrorist activities; and

WHEREAS, after the shooting at Fort Hood, Anwar al-Awlaki publicly hailed Hasan as a role model for his attack on fellow soldiers, and Hasan wrote a letter to the head of ISIS requesting to become a "citizen" of the terrorist organization; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has failed to declare the Fort Hood shooting as an "act of terrorism" despite Hasan's public support of jihad and his connection to an international terrorist organization, despite both the National Counterterrorism Center and the State Department counting the Fort Hood mass shooting among terror attacks in 2009, and despite President Obama stating in his May 2013 counterterrorism speech that Hasan was "inspired by larger notions of violent jihad"; and

WHEREAS, the failure to classify the Fort Hood shooting as an "act of terrorism" has caused the military personnel who were killed or injured, and their next of kin, to be ineligible for the Purple Heart, and thus, ineligible to receive combat-related benefits under 10 U.S.C. § 1413a; and

WHEREAS, prior to the beheading in Oklahoma, Nolen converted to Islam and attempted to convert his fellow coworkers to Islam, and on his Facebook page under the name Jah'Keem Yisrael, Nolen featured photographs of Osama bin Laden and ISIS fighter Omar al-Shishani, quotes such as "AMERICA AND ISRAEL ARE WICKED. WAKE UP MUSLIMS," a

banner that reads "Islam will dominate the world. Freedom can go to hell," and a photograph of him standing inside the front entrance of a mosque and holding up his index finger in a gesture that has become associated with ISIS militants; and

WHEREAS, during his bond hearing, Nolen requested that he be appointed a public defender who is of the Muslim faith; and

WHEREAS, after investigating the Oklahoma beheading and Nolen's Islamic ties, the Federal Bureau of Investigation determined that there was no indication that Nolen was copying the beheadings of journalists in Syria by ISIS and treated the case as workplace violence, despite Nolen featuring multiple quotes and photographs on social media in support of radical Islamic figures, despite Nolen having a tattoo on his abdomen that says, "As-Salaamu Alaikum," an Arabic greeting often used by Muslims translating to "Peace be upon you," and despite Nolen inflicting an ISIS-style punishment on his former colleagues, resulting in the tragic and violent death of a beloved mother, wife, and grandmother; and

WHEREAS, this body strongly urges that the President and United States Congress declare both the Fort Hood shooting and Oklahoma beheading as acts of terrorism; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby condemn the violent acts of terrorism committed at Fort Hood and at the Oklahoma food distribution center, and strongly urge the President and the United States Congress to reclassify the Fort Hood shooting and Oklahoma beheading as "acts of terrorism" and declare Hasan and Nolen terrorists.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this General Assembly endorses awarding the Purple Heart to the Fort Hood shooting victims to ensure that the surviving victims and surviving family members of those killed receive the medical compensation and benefits to which they are entitled.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States of America; the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate; the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives; and each member of Tennessee's Congressional delegation.