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THE FALLACY OF DIVERSITY

THE RECENT tragic attack at Fort Hood on heroes of our nation by an officer in our military — a physician in the Army Medical Corps, a psychiatrist — has caused shock, immense sadness and grief for all of us. As the investigations continue and we learn more, it is unavoidable to ponder that the likely trigger to such a horrific act must have involved Major Nidal Malik Hasan's Islamic background.

I, particularly, am heartbroken. I once served in the U.S. Air Force, as a major in the Medical Corps, a psychiatrist. I have Middle Eastern roots — I am originally from Iran and born a Muslim, although I don't abide by or practice any aspect of that faith.

So as I followed the news of this dreadful massacre, I was fascinated by the rhetoric that ensued. These were discussions about how Muslims are regarded in the U.S., with implications that Hasan's experiences may have led to social isolation and then violence. Then many others, including the president, talked about the strength in our diversity. Many military leaders took to microphones to show pride in how diverse our nation is and how our military strives to reflect that diversity.

This alarmed me! It's so typical of our society to thoughtlessly follow a feel-good rhetoric that sounds pleasant but is really empty in content.

Now, no one would dispute that the diversity of our nation is something to be proud of and cherish. Indeed we have come a long way where race, color or creed is not a factor in how one's merits are judged.

But such a once-promising notion of diversity has little application to the current tragedy, or more broadly to our struggles in fighting terrorism. We cannot afford to be diverse in our beliefs when it comes to protecting our nation and its values. The fallacy of diversity is hurting our nation and security.

By no means am I suggesting that we should turn back to a time when one would be judged by one's race, color, religion, or nation of origin — many of us, or our generations past, have been judged by such involitional attributes. Nevertheless, as citizens, we should be judged by how devoted we are to our nation and its values of justice and freedom, and in this regard, there should be NO diversity.

What is really needed is uniformity in how we look upon our nation and its values, regardless of our assorted backgrounds. This should hold true especially in our military, where if you cannot commit to holding the American values of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness in your heart and defend these rights as your job description entails, then you don't belong in the Armed Forces. This uniformity in protecting the American values cannot be waived, it is not a relative matter, and it's not based on race, color, religion or nation of origin.

I am appalled that a military officer would disregard his allegiance to his nation and allow his Islamic faith to persuade him to undertake such a horrific act and kill fellow soldiers who protect us. I am disgusted that a physician would forget his Hippocratic oath and follow a hateful path to harm innocent lives.

I continue to grieve and mourn the death of my fellow countrymen, and more significantly, my fellow veterans.

Veterans' Day was our day, and I kept you in my heart and mind, just as I do every day.

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