

Nation

FBI: Fort Hood suspect had ties to radical imam

Task force concludes e-mails were part of research project

By Kevin Johnson
USA TODAY

The Army psychiatrist accused of killing 12 soldiers and a civilian at the Fort Hood Army post exchanged between 10 and 20 e-mails with a radical cleric in Yemen who calls for jihadism against the United States, senior government officials said Monday.

Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, 39, came to the attention of the FBI in December as part of an investigation with other agencies into a terrorism suspect overseas, the FBI stated on its website.

The suspect was Anwar al-Awlaki, a Muslim cleric who preached at a mosque in Falls Church, Va., before leaving for Yemen in 2002, according to a federal law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly on the investigation.

Hasan attended services at the Dar Al-Hijrah mosque at the time Awlaki preached there, according to the mosque. Investigators have concluded that Hasan acted alone and the shooting did not involve co-conspirators, according to senior government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.



By John Smerciak, AP

Vigil for the fallen: Family members gather Monday in front of the Chicago home of Pvt. Francheska Velez, who was killed during Thursday's rampage at Fort Hood in Texas. Velez, 21, was pregnant and preparing to return home to Chicago.

Despite the contact between the two men, the FBI did not investigate Hasan further in the Awlaki case because "the content of those communications was consistent with research being conducted by Maj. Hasan in his position as a psychiatrist at the Walter Reed Medical Center," in Washington, D.C., where he

counseled soldiers returning home from combat or heading overseas, the FBI website said.

Rep. Pete Hoekstra, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, said he read the FBI statement Monday "with some level of disbelief." The Michigan congressman found it "inter-

esting" that the FBI had managed to review several investigations into Hasan's contacts and statements, yet already declared that they did nothing wrong.

Hoekstra sent a letter to U.S. intelligence officials demanding they preserve all records of their investigations.

"Remember, this is them evaluating

their own work," Hoekstra said. "That is what we do oversight for."

The officials said that the tenor of the e-mails was benign and was consistent with a research project on post-traumatic stress disorders that was sanctioned by the medical center. Because the e-mails contained nothing derogatory, the task force concluded that Hasan was not involved in terrorist activities or terrorist planning, the FBI said.

The officials said FBI Director Robert Mueller ordered an internal investigation into how the information on Hasan was handled by the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, an FBI-led multiagency team that includes investigators from the Defense Department and other agencies. The investigation began Friday.

The officials also said that Hasan's contact with an open sympathizer of al-Qaeda did not prevent him passing an FBI background check when he bought one of his handguns in August that was used in the shooting. Anyone who is part of an ongoing FBI probe is not eligible to purchase a handgun. Because Hasan was not a target of an investigation, he passed the FBI check, the officials said.

The officials also said Hasan will be prosecuted in a military court because he is a member of the armed services and the crime was committed on a military base. Hasan, who is now conscious, met with his lawyer Monday, according to the Associated Press.

Contributing: Alan Gomez

At big colleges, football salaries soar for head coaches, assistants

Continued from 1A

multiyear and rollover deals, supplemental income from TV and radio, performance bonuses, retention bonuses, cars, complimentary tickets and country club memberships.

Tennessee's nine assistants earn an average of more than \$369,000, Texas' nine better than \$327,000.

By comparison, the American Association of University Professors put last year's average salary

Cover story

for full professors at public doctoral universities at \$115,509. Two years ago, the most recent period covered by *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* annual survey of presidents' compensation, median pay and benefits for CEOs at public research institutions was \$427,400. Nearly one in 10 pulled down less than \$300,000.

As the coaches' numbers soar, so do concerns among the presidents. USA TODAY's findings come a little more than two weeks after the release of a survey of bowl-subdivision university presidents by the watchdog Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in which 85% of the respondents said they felt football and basketball coaches' compensation "was excessive."

With schools making greater use of privately raised money to pay coaches, the presidents were pessimistic in the survey about their ability to slow the spiral. They saw coaches' salaries as "a key contributor to the (fiscal) 'arms race' in intercollegiate athletics" and "the greatest impediment to sustainability," the Knight Commission noted.

Big-ticket capital projects aren't drying up, either. Auburn is in the middle of building an \$85 million basketball arena, and UCLA, another UC system flagship, is putting \$185 million into the renovation of 44-year-old Pauley Pavilion. Arizona recently unveiled a plan to spend \$378 million on facilities upgrades in every major sport in the next 20 years or so, starting with a new complex in the north end zone of Arizona Stadium that would house offices and locker rooms and incorporate 5,000 premium seats.

The spending "doesn't surprise me. It shocks me," says Hodding Carter, a former assistant Secretary of State for public affairs under Jimmy Carter who's now on the faculty at North Carolina and a member of the Knight Commission.

He points to the economy's ravages on education. "Here was a God-given opportunity in the forum of a true disaster," he says, "to step up to the issue and finally say, 'Look, I don't care where the money is coming from. It is unseemly for one institution on (a) campus to be acting as though these were happy days forever while everybody else is getting it in the chops.'"

"It's just too bad. It calls into question the commitment of much of the institutional leadership in higher education."

Arizona's board of regents has launched a review of all of the system's intercollegiate athletics programs and whether the students, schools and the state see enough benefit to justify current



By Marvin Gentry, US Presswire

Reward: The SEC has six of the nation's 15 best-paid head coaches, including Alabama's Nick Saban, who is making \$3.9 million this year.

levels of spending. Former U.S. senator Dennis DeConcini, who is on the board's capital committee, will lead the effort.

"I don't have an agenda," DeConcini says. He cast the lone dissenting vote on a raise that boosted football coach Mike Stoops' guaranteed pay to almost \$1.3 million this season, though he says he has fewer problems with the flagship university's ambitious building plans.

"Reading it, much of it is justified," he says of the proposal. "On the other hand, it's a terrible time to be announcing \$400 million in expenditures ... in the middle of a recession and raising tuition and furloughs and everything else."

At least 34 states, including Arizona, have cut assistance to public colleges and universities since the recession began, according to the non-profit, Washington, D.C.-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The center also tracks the schools' cost-cutting responses. Arizona State has eliminated 550 staff positions through attrition and layoffs and more than 200 faculty associate positions, imposed employee furloughs ranging from 10 to 15 days, closed about four dozen academic programs, merged others and limited enrollment in its nursing school. Florida will lay off more than 50 staff and faculty and eliminate 150 positions. The California State University system, whose 23 campuses include Fresno State and San Diego State, is cutting enrollment by 10,000 students.

Some athletics trimmed

Despite the higher salaries, athletics overall has not escaped the paring knife.

The Texas-based Division I-A Athletic Directors Association says a third of the schools responding to a survey this year had cut athletics staff in the last five years and about one in six had chopped at least one sport. This year, at least 15 schools have said they would eliminate a total of 32 teams.

In football and other sports, teams are being told to take fewer players on the road. Leagues are rethinking schedules and travel, downsizing postseason tournament fields and questioning the number of videographers and other once-unheard-of specialists who populate schools'

Coaches at top

Pay for top college football coaches keeps growing:

2006	
At least \$1 million	42
At least \$2 million	9
At least \$3 million	1
At least \$4 million	0
2007	
At least \$1 million	50
At least \$2 million	12
At least \$3 million	4
At least \$4 million	0
2009	
At least \$1 million	56
At least \$2 million	25
At least \$3 million	9
At least \$4 million	3

Source: USA TODAY research

athletic programs. Staff overgrowth is increasingly cited as a fiscal issue.

Salaries, however, take the single biggest bite out of athletics operating budgets in the top-tier Bowl Subdivision — a median 33.3%, according to the NCAA's most recent analysis (spending on new or improved facilities and other capital projects is accounted for separately). Coaches' compensation accounts for more than half that, and little whittling is going on there.

The argument is the same from Florida to Ohio State to Texas: that money paid to good coaches is a good investment, and that their success equates to higher ticket sales and more marketing and sponsorship opportunities and that football's profits keep smaller sports afloat.

At California, athletics director Sandy Barbour points to a football renaissance in Tedford's eight seasons with the Golden Bears. A program that won a single game the season before he arrived is positioned for its seventh consecutive trip to a bowl. Crowds at Memorial Stadium have doubled to an average of almost 61,000. Players are graduating.

"If we let him go because we're not willing to pay market, we'll pay a huge price," Barbour says, "because I don't know that we can go out and find another coach with that combination of skills and (academic) emphasis."

The ceiling goes much higher. Southern California's Pete Carroll and Florida's Urban Meyer,

About this series

Today through Thursday, USA TODAY looks again at the compensation of football coaches at the nation's 120 largest college football programs, including the first comprehensive, coach-by-coach survey of assistant coaches' pay.

The report looks at how, amid budgets cuts throughout higher education, salaries for many head coaches have risen since USA TODAY salary surveys in 2006 and 2007. In addition, assistant coaching and administrative payrolls keep increasing.

The series also provides new, school-by-school data about the subsidization of intercollegiate athletics programs at major public universities, as well as a look at life for coaches in the big time's lower financial reaches.

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whose teams have won or shared four of football's last six national championships, are among a trio earning \$4 million or more, USA TODAY's study shows.

Carroll was at close to \$4.4 million in 2007, the most recent year for which the private school's tax reportings are available. Meyer, whose No. 1-ranked Gators are chasing their third national title in four years, is making \$4 million after agreeing to a new six-year, \$24 million deal in August. His average annual raise: 23%.

Meyer tops the pay scale in the heavyweight SEC, which is saying something. Flush with revenue from new 15-year TV deals worth \$3.1 billion with ESPN and CBS, the league boasts six of the nation's 15 best-paid head coaches and nine of the top 25. On average, its schools are paying their head coaches \$2.64 million this season (counting all but Vanderbilt's Bobby Johnson, whose numbers aren't made public by the private institution).

Big 12 coaches average almost \$2.1 million, led by Oklahoma's Bob Stoops at \$4.3 million.

Those conferences also are setting the bar for assistants' salaries, which are spiking nationwide as head coaches seek stability in their staffs and lean on schools to beef up pay and perks. Cal's Barbour calls it the next frontier in college athletics' spending arms race.

Of the 60-plus assistants USA TODAY found making \$300,000 or more this season, 29 are in the SEC and 15 in the Big 12. Tennessee became a pacesetter, handing its head coaching job to Lane Kiffin, who in turn recruited a who's who staff of assistants and paid them accordingly.

"I really think you have to spend money to make money," the younger Kiffin says. "When you go out, get those coaches, that's going to translate into

recruiting, winning, ticket sales, your team doing better, (and) I don't think you ever ask those questions again."

He cites Alabama's rise under Nick Saban, who is making \$3.9 million this year. "When he was hired ... every article was, 'I can't believe how much we paid Nick Saban at Alabama,'" says Kiffin, earning \$2 million this year. "Well, guess what? Nobody writes about it anymore because they win. So when we start winning, nobody is going to write about how much we pay our assistant coaches because, in turn, we're going to make a lot more money by them being there. I don't think it's a big deal."

He smiles. "And I took a lot less so we'd have money for them." Meanwhile, the cash-strapped UT system warily eyes the expiration of federal stimulus money and the prospect of trimming 500 jobs in two years, two-thirds of them on its Knoxville campus. Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen, chairman of the system's board of trustees, expressed discomfort earlier this year, telling the Associated Press, "When your neighbor's enduring hard times is not the time to flash your Cadillac in the driveway."

The UT athletics department is one of the few able to give its university a financial lift, contributing \$10.35 million to the school and university system in September and pledging \$1 million a year for the next 15 years.

Still, budget figures show that while athletics salaries and benefits are expected to rise 12% this year, the money Tennessee will spend on academic salaries is projected to fall (from \$127.68 million in 2008-09 to \$127.18 million).

Sports budget backlash

At some schools outside the football-worshipping South, tolerance is wearing thinner as education budgets grow tighter.

California's faculty has taken aim at the university's subsidization of athletics — \$7.7 million a year ago, a projected \$6 million in 2009-10 — and loans atop that to cover budget deficits. Last year's shortfall was \$5.8 million. The school lent the money. Another athletics deficit of \$6.4 million is projected for this year.

Fueling emotions on the campus is the discovery that the university forgave \$31.4 million in athletics debts in 2007.

Cal's Academic Senate approved a resolution last week that, among other things, called on the chancellor to end the subsidies and draw up a plan for athletics to pay off its existing debt. The action "is not about whether or not we like athletics, nor is it about the football coach," says computer science professor Brian Barsky, who has taught at the school for 28 years. "It is about athletics living within it means."

Few do. Only 25 of 120 programs in the NCAA's Bowl Subdivision made more than they spent in 2007-08, the most recent year covered in studies by USA TODAY and the NCAA. Those analyses might undercount some expenses, particularly capital spending, critics say.

Where they were provided, USA TODAY found that the average public school subsidy for athletics was \$8.8 million.

Those are indefensible outlays

in these tight times, one analyst says. "To say it's a market (issue) is a copout," says Jane Wellman, who heads The Delta Project, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit agency that focuses on higher education spending. "There are choices at every institution about where to put subsidies, and ... institutions are allowing more of their subsidies to go to revenue-pursuing activities and away from core academic purposes."

Pointing to Cal, she says, "They approved a student tuition increase of, what, 32%? They're cutting classes. ... I think they're sacrificing quality in the university. And when they're doing that, they shouldn't be subsidizing athletics."

Even before the faculty stirred, Cal's AD says she felt pressure to phase out its annual athletics subsidy. Barbour says she also has leaned on all of Cal's 40-some head and assistant coaches to participate in the systemwide furlough program even though contract employees are exempt. And by late last month, 29 coaches and senior administrators had said they would — including Tedford, who will accept a 10% reduction in his \$225,000 base salary.

"I don't think we're exempt from shouldering some of the burden," he says.

Addressing her budget woes, Barbour has left eight athletics staff positions unfilled and eliminated four others and looked hard at travel. And she said she doesn't rule out trimming some of the school's 27 varsity sports.

Nonetheless, she defends her spending decisions.

"We compete for a living," Barbour says. "If we're going to compete on the field on Saturday, we want to have every advantage they have."

Contributing: Kelly Whiteside

Corrections & Clarifications

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The day of the Fort Hood attack was misstated in Monday's 1A cover story. It occurred Thursday.

USA TODAY
7950 Jones Branch
Dr., McLean, Va.
22108
703-854-3400
Published by
Gannett, Volume 28,
No. 41
ISSN 0734-7456

Subscriptions
1-800-USA-0001
Monday - Friday
6:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. ET

Regular U.S. subscription rates: 13 wks. \$65; 26 wks. \$130; 52 wks. \$260.
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