**Accused Taliban Says US Helicopters Killed Insurgents 'Like Insects'**

**Richmond, Virginia:** US helicopters gunned down Taliban fighters "like insects" during a failed 2009 attack in Afghanistan, an accused Taliban fighter said in a videotaped interview with the FBI shown during his trial on Wednesday.  
  
Irek Hamidullin, a former Soviet tank officer who has converted to Islam, is charged with coordinating the November 2009 attack on an Afghan Border Police base. He is the first Afghan War military combatant to be tried in US federal court.  
  
Hamidullin called off the assault after insurgents' weapons malfunctioned, and his roughly 30 men fell back, he told the FBI in a videotaped 2010 interview. Shortly afterward, US reconnaissance and Apache attack helicopters swept in.  
  
"Helicopters shoot us like insects," Hamidullin said in the interview played for jurors in US District Court. He was the sole Taliban survivor of the attack.

Hamidullin, who was born in 1959, was charged last year with 15 criminal counts ranging from supporting terrorists to firearms offences stemming from the assault in eastern Afghanistan's Khost province.  
  
Hamidullin repeatedly said he had never fired his AK-47 rifle. Two US soldiers who shot him testified that they had seen muzzle flashes from his rifle before they fired.  
  
"I got injured before I was able to shoot," Hamidullin told interviewers in English, one of several languages in which he was proficient.  
  
Hamidullin was held by the Pentagon in an Afghan prison for five years before being brought to the United States for trial. If convicted, he could face life in prison.  
  
Ronald Comers, an FBI special agent who helped interview Hamidullin, testified that the defendant, a Soviet tank commander in the early 1980s, found Islam in 1996 and became involved in what Hamidullin described as jihad, an Islamic holy war.  
  
Comers was the 18th witness called by the prosecution in the trial, which began on Thursday. The case is expected to go to jurors on Friday.

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