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U.S. review panel hears from detainee

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- A suspected member of Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime appeared Friday before a military review tribunal in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to determine whether he was being properly held as an enemy combatant, an official said.

The military released few details of the allegations against the 25-year-old detainee, saying only that he "stood patrol for the Taliban." He was captured by the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, said Navy Lt. Gary Ross, a spokesman for the Combatant Status Review Tribunals.

It was not clear whether the prisoner fought against U.S. coalition forces. The government, however, defines an enemy combatant as anyone who supported the Taliban or the al-Qaida terror network. The classification affords fewer legal protections than the Geneva Conventions accord to prisoners of war.

It was unclear what the prisoner said at his hearing. More than a month after a Freedom of Information Act request by The Associated Press, the military has not provided the transcripts of testimony given by prisoners at the tribunals.

The hearings began shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the 550 prisoners at the U.S. naval base had the right to challenge their detentions in American courts.

At hearings the media has attended, many prisoners have denied the government's allegations. The men are allowed to hear only the unclassified portions of the accusations against them and are not permitted attorneys.

Although the government views the hearings as administrative, statements made during the tribunals can be used against the men in military trials.

In the 484 cases heard by the panels so far, 193 prisoners have been ordered to remain detained and one Pakistani prisoner has been freed. Rulings on the rest are pending.