

Defense takes turn in Padilla trial

by UPI

MIAMI -- The defense for terror suspects on trial in Miami Monday challenged assertions that their wiretapped conversations contained code words for waging jihad. A witness for the defense said, instead, the expressions considered code by prosecutors were commonly used Arabic euphemisms for activities such as collecting donations for Muslim orphans overseas. During the first day of defense testimony in a U.S. District Court, Arabic translator Kamal Yunis told defense attorney Jeanne Baker the remarks made by her client, Adham Hassoun, were not about purchasing arms or supporting jihad, as government witnesses testified, but referred to raising money for children whose parents were killed during conflicts in places such as Kosovo, Somalia and Lebanon. Yunis said Hassoun's conversation in 1997 with a Lebanese religious leader in which he expressed a desire "to send you two eggplants" was an expression understood by both men to mean \$2,000 in donations. Arabic translators for the prosecution testified the "eggplants" referenced by Hassoun were rocket-propelled grenades. Hassoun, along with lead terror suspect Jose Padilla and Kifah Jayyousi, is accused of providing money, equipment and material support to terrorist organizations abroad.

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