

IRON STRONG DAILY



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Bastogne Signal Company exudes warrior ethos, accepts combat role outside technical expertise

**Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny
1st BCT, 101st Airborne Div. (Air Assault)**

I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade.

These principles have instilled a warrior's mentality for a generation of Soldiers, which was the vision of former Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker when he had the Army adopt them. As the Army's top officer, he often stated that regardless of gender, rank or military occupational skill (MOS), Soldiers will live by the Soldier's Creed and do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission.

"We need to encourage innovation and increase resiliency," he said, "and most importantly, we need to reinforce the Warrior Ethos in every Soldier."

In the Salah ad Din Province, the Spartans of the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, follow this ideology and have expanded on their 'traditional' role of supporting the brigade in a variety of support missions.

The Spartans still provide the support to the Bastogne Brigade, but have also taken on the additional security responsibility for a vast area of operations.

Taking on this role with limited combat forces, the Spartans have adapted and employed their support Soldiers to conduct combat operations.

The commander of the battalion, Lt. Col. Rick Rhyne, a Special Forces officer with experience in accomplishing missions with outside-the-box thinking, displayed his confidence in a group



A Soldier from Charlie Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, watches a UH-60 Black Hawk land during extraction for Operation Chalcis. The air assault operation was aimed at removing al Qaeda fighters seeking refuge in the desert areas near Samarra, Iraq.

of support Soldiers during a recent air assault operation.

Operation Chalcis, an air assault operation targeting possible al Qaeda in Iraq hideouts, wasn't performed by the battalion's attached infantry

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Dragoon Rugby Football Club trains for redeployment

Story and photos by Spc. Opal Vaughn 14th Public Affairs Detachment

William Webb Ellis was a boy who didn't like the rules of football. Ellis is credited as the founder of rugby and now, a statue of Ellis stands at the intersection of Lawrence Sheriff Street and Dunchurch Road, at Rugby School in Rugby, Warwickshire England.

In 1823 during a football game, Ellis picked up the ball and took off running towards his opponent's goal. And so, the game of rugby was born. At least that is how the popular story is told.

Over time, though the rules have changed since the early 1800's, rugby has become a very popular sport and is played all around the world. It has become a pastime for many enthusiasts including some Soldiers with 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. These Soldiers form the Dragoon Rugby Football Club, which began out of Vilseck, Germany, and was brought to Iraq.

With redeployment nearing, the DRFC players got together and held a practice game at the soccer field at Forward Operating Base Warhorse located in the Diyala Province, Iraq.

"We have about 30 guys and two females

that compose our team," said Dragoon Rugby Football Club member, Spc. Chris Erikson, a Seattle, Wash. native with Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

"Obviously we can't all get together and play as a team because we're all spread across Iraq," Erikson explained, referring to the Dragoon Rugby Football Club, the official team for 2SCR. "Chief Triola, he's the coach, he has helped to get some of us together for practices. We're starting to build the team back up so that as soon as we hit Germany we can start competing again," Erikson smiled.

"I helped to start the Dragoon Rugby Football Club back in 2007 in appreciation for the game," said Dragoon Rugby Football Club coach, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Triola, a senior intelligence technician with RHHT, SCR.

"I've been playing for 20 years and I've been coaching for about five years now," Triola stated.

"We played our first season last year but it was halted because of deployment. So when we initially started talking about getting the team back together, all the guys got real excited. The excitement is understandable. It means we're about to redeploy."

According to Erikson, the DRFC is part of a Bavarian league made up of all the club and league teams in the area. So the DRFC not only plays other U.S. teams but plays many German rugby teams as well.

"It's really fun to play some of the German teams because they always have these playing fields set up in the middle of nowhere," Erikson grinned. "Besides, we all go out for drinks and stuff afterwards."



Dragoon Rugby Football Club coach, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Triola, a senior intelligence technician with Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, weaves through a hoard of players during a practice game of rugby at the soccer field at Forward Operating Base Warhorse located in the Diyala Province, Iraq.

Getting in shape and building the team back up before redeployment takes a lot of hard work, but it is something the team members are willing to work toward.

"Conditioning is the hardest part of rugby," Triola stated. "Here in Iraq, a lot of us are tied to a desk so getting outside and running gets us out of that mind set. But the dust that hangs in the air isn't any help either."

Triola continued, "They say that rugby is a hooligan sport played by gentlemen. I try to emphasize to these guys about the importance of letting out aggression on the field but do not get into any altercations. There's no physical contact while here in Iraq because we need everyone to be able to do their jobs. But back in the rear, it's full on contact," Triola stated.

Getting back on the field in game mode takes a lot of effort too. "The idea right now is to just do a little bit while still in country so that when we get to Germany we can hit the ground running," Erikson stated. "We're not as skilled or as crisp like some of the other teams we've played, but we work hard and play aggressively."

The return home still remains to be the next milestone for the DRFC. But they are ready and willing to return to Germany and get in the game. "Hopefully, when we get back we can start playing right away," Erikson stated. "I look forward to the competition."



Dragoon Rugby Football Club member, Spc. Chris Erikson, a Seattle native with Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, catches a rugby ball during a practice game of rugby at the soccer field at Forward Operating Base Warhorse located in the Diyala Province, Iraq. The Dragoon Rugby Football Club, based out of Vilseck, Germany, is warming up for redeployment and for the new season to begin to play against other foreign national teams.

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company or the commander's security team; it was conducted by its signal company.

"The opportunity that the battalion commander bestowed upon my company to execute this operation shows his great trust and confidence of my Soldiers," said Capt. Alex Peake, commander of Charlie Company, 1BSTB.

The company's traditional role is centered on operating and managing the Bastogne Brigade's signal network operations. They are responsible for nearly all the communication across the province's vast area, which is roughly the size of Vermont.

According to 1st Sgt. Juan Vasquez, his company's ability

to balance both technical and tactical skills is a valuable asset to the battalion. He attributes this balance to the warrior mentality exhibited by his troops.

"As the conditions on the battlefield change, so must the mentality of our Soldiers," said Vasquez. "A never quit attitude puts them in a mindset to train on tactics that are not an inherit part of their jobs, however they are an inherit part of being a Soldier."

Signal Soldiers often find themselves in maneuver units, thus being part of combat operations is nothing new to the mission. Signal Soldiers are often called upon to adhere to the high standards of their combat-arms brethren, while at the same time expertly providing their technical capabilities.

However, command and control of an air assault is not "business as usual" for the Signal Corps Soldiers.

Operation Chalcis was coordinated, planned and executed under the command and control of Peake and his platoon leaders. Ground breaking in itself, the air assault may have been the first of its kind, and the leaders of the company understand the legacy that they will leave behind.

"I am proud to be in Charlie Co., 1st STB, and I'm proud to be a Screaming Eagle," said 2nd Lt. Jerome Jose, platoon leader. "I'm grateful that we have been given the opportunity and responsibility to carry on the tradition of the 101st Airborne



1st Lt. Joshua Stremiau, Charlie Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion executive officer, goes over specifics with one of his pilots in preparation for Operation Chalcis, an air assault operation targeting al Qaeda fighters in the deserts areas near Samarra, Iraq.

Division (Air Assault)."

"Being a part of the 101st, it is expected for our Soldiers to adapt to new challenges and perform tasks they may not be familiar with," said 1st Lt. Scott Widener, platoon leader. "The Soldiers in our company are a testament to the Warrior Ethos."

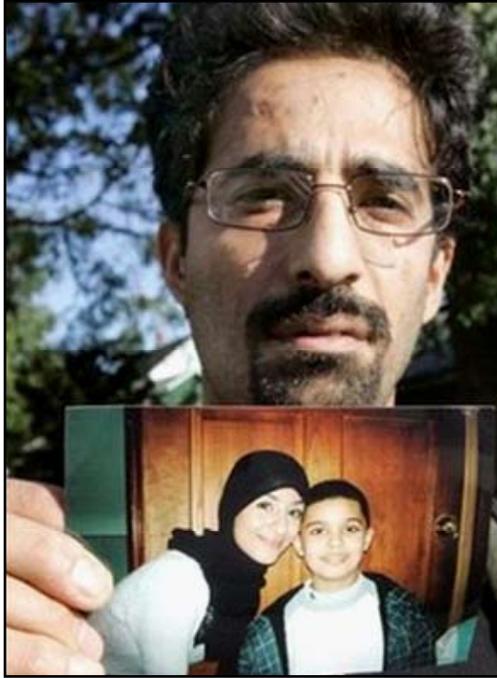
As the Army evolves as the battlefields change, Soldiers such as the Cannibals of Charlie Company understand that they must retain the Soldier-first mentality. This resonates throughout the ranks within the Spartan family.

"I don't think your average Signal Company would have the opportunity to have command and control of an air assault mission, but then again, this is not a normal STB," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Wurm, platoon sergeant. "We are all Soldiers. We have a specific MOS, but any of us can be called upon to be a Soldier, not just a Signal Soldier."



A medic from 426th Brigade Support Battalion, supporting the 1st Special Troops Battalion's Operation Chalcis, watches a UH-60 Black Hawk fly overhead during an air assault operation targeting al Qaeda fighters seeking refuge in the desert areas near Samarra, Iraq.

NEW YORK



(AP) Yemeni-Americans in this upstate New York city have seen terrorism from two sides.

On Wednesday, one of their own was a victim of global violence, killed with her new husband when terrorists attacked the U.S. Embassy in Yemen. Six years ago, six young men from this former steel town on the shore of Lake Erie were charged with supporting Osama bin Laden's terror network.

That Wednesday's victim, 18-year-old Susan Elbaneh, was related to a seventh man accused of training with al-Qaida stirred at once feelings of grief and frustration.

Grief over the loss of a well-liked young woman just as a new chapter of her life was beginning. Susan Elbaneh had traveled to Yemen to be married and planned to return to western New York with her husband, finish high school and go to college to become a nurse.

And frustration at the inevitable connection in the public eye to her cousin, Jaber Elbaneh, 42, who is wanted as the seventh member of the conspiracy to support a terrorist organization and is reportedly in Yemeni custody.

"There are other images conjured up which really have nothing to do with this innocent young woman," said Peter Hazzan, principal of Lackawanna High School, where Susan was an outgoing and popular student. "People are sensitive to that, as you can well expect."

Susan Elbaneh was the only American among 17 people killed in the embassy attack.

"Like the people killed in 9/11, people killed in terrorist acts all over the place, we're the same victims," said a cousin, Shokey Elbaneh.

Grieving relatives who spoke about Susan soon after learning of her death chafed at questions about Jaber, saying Susan, who was 11 when he left Lackawanna, had nothing to do with him.

Jaber Elbaneh did not return to Lackawanna after allegedly training with al-Qaida and was later convicted of planning attacks on oil installations in Yemen.

Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu-Bakr al-Qirbi said the country's constitution bars it from handing

over Jaber Elbaneh. The issue has strained relations between the U.S. and Yemen.

The 2002 arrests of the group that became known as the "Lackawanna Six" cast a light on the small city and its strong Yemeni community. Along with law enforcement came throngs of reporters, all looking for insight into how a blue-collar city had given rise to a potential terror cell.

The case, which ended with all six men in federal prison, put the city's Muslim-Americans on the defensive. For some, hard feelings linger.

"I'm fed up with reporters," a clerk behind the counter of a Lackawanna deli said Thursday when asked about Susan Elbaneh. It seems news about Muslims is always bad, said the clerk, who would not give his name. "It kills morale."

Months after the Lackawanna Six arrests, three more Lackawanna men — Susan Elbaneh's father, Ali Elbaneh, her uncle, Mohamed Albanna and Albanna's nephew, Ali Albanna — were charged with operating an unlicensed money transfer business that sent \$5.5 million from Buffalo to Yemen between 1999 and 2002.

The three were convicted and sentenced in 2006. Ali Elbaneh, who prosecutors said had little to do with the business, was given six months of home confinement. The others received prison terms.

Such money-transmitting businesses, which have operated in the Middle East for generations, were widely targeted after the Sept. 11 attacks to thwart potential terror funding, though authorities never said the business run by Mohamed Albanna was involved in that.

None of that mattered Thursday as Hazzan, the school principal, planned a Friday memorial service for Susan Elbaneh.

"It's unfortunate that we have to tie the family background in," he said. "This girl had nothing to do with terrorism or any of the politics of the Middle East."

SCIENCE

(AP) Mayor Richard M. Daley has announced a plan to dramatically slash emissions of heat-trapping gases, part of an effort to fight global warming and become one of the greenest cities in the nation.

The plan calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to three-fourths of 1990 levels by 2020 through more energy-efficient buildings, using clean and renewable energy sources, improving transportation and reducing industrial pollution.

"We can't solve the world's climate change problem in Chicago, but we can do our part," said Daley on Thursday. "We have a shared responsibility to protect our planet."

It's the first step toward cutting emissions to one-fifth of 1990 levels by 2050, as called for in the 1997 Kyoto global warming protocols, officials said.

Daley is one of about 800 mayors who have agreed to adopt that goal, and Chicago is the first to identify specific pollution sources and outline how it would achieve the reductions in a measurable way, said Suzanne Malec-McKenna, Chicago's environmental commissioner.

Malec-McKenna said the city would use a combination of incentives and mandates.

Next month, the City Council is expected to consider an ordinance that would update the city's energy code to require such things as better insulation, heating and cooling systems and windows in all commercial, industrial and residential buildings.

The city also has an agreement with two coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions or shut

down by 2015 and 2017, respectively, Malec-McKenna said.

The plan also calls for expanding the number of green rooftops, increasing recycling and car-pooling and promoting alternative fuels.

Malec-McKenna said the city would not rule out imposing mandates on residents — though she said there are no immediate plans to charge motorists a fee to drive in congested areas, as New York had considered before the plan died last spring.

"We have 12 years to go on the plan, so we're trying now to have enough incentives," Malec-McKenna said.

Officials say Chicago emits 34.6 million metric tons of greenhouse gases each year; including the six surrounding counties, that climbs to 103 million metric tons per year.

If climate change is not addressed, summer heat indexes in Chicago could climb as high as 105 degrees — similar to Mobile, Ala. — by the end of the century and there would be more frequent heavy rains and floods, according to researchers from Texas Tech University in Lubbock and the University of Illinois who were commissioned by the city to study climate change.

Since 1980, Chicago's average temperature has risen approximately 2.6 degrees, 4 degrees in the winter.

"If you look at the records in Chicago, we have had the tendency to be moving toward milder weather conditions, the harsh winter seems to have decreased over time," said Jim Angel, climatologist with the Illinois State Water Survey at Champaign.

The city concedes that it won't be able to avoid future climate change entirely. The plan lists ways Chicago will deal with that, including implementing a heat warning system, reducing summer energy use, improving air quality, preparing for increases in rainfall and flooding, reducing erosion along Lake Michigan's shoreline and planting vegetation that can adapt to climate change.

Rebecca Stanfield, a senior energy advocate at the National Resources Defense Council in Chicago, said the report sets out a lot of work for the city.

"It's not like you can just walk away from this and say, 'We've got a plan to do this,'" Stanfield said. "It's a callback to everyone to the business sector, to the government sector to the advocacy community, that we've got a lot of work to do but at least we've got a road map."



BASEBALL

(AP) Evan Longoria hit three home runs for Tampa Bay but Alexi Casilla went deep in Minnesota's five-run ninth inning, helping the Twins rally for an 11-8 victory over the Rays on Thursday night.

Minnesota ended a four-game skid and pulled within 1 1/2 games of the AL Central-leading Chicago White Sox, who lost 9-2 at New York.

Casilla's two-run drive off Dan Wheeler (4-4) tied it at 8. Adam Everett's pinch-hit RBI double put Minnesota ahead before Delmon Young added a run-scoring single and Matt Tolbert followed with a sacrifice fly.

Tampa Bay's AL East lead over idle Boston was trimmed to 1 1/2 games.

Longoria, who returned to the lineup last Saturday after being sidelined with a broken wrist, hit a two-run homer in Tampa Bay's five run first against Glen Perkins. The All-Star third baseman added solo shots off Philip Humber in the fourth for his third multihomer game and Bobby Korecky in the seventh for an 8-6 lead.

Longoria joined Jonny Gomes as

the only Rays to hit three home runs in a game in the club's 11-season history. Gomes also did it as a rookie, hitting three against the Kansas City Royals on July 30, 2005.

The first-inning drive was Longoria's first homer since Aug. 5, two days before he fractured his wrist in Seattle. He has 25 on the year.

Dioner Navarro and Carlos Pena also went deep as Minnesota pitchers allowed five home runs in a game for the second time in five days. The Twins have given up a major league-high 33 home runs in September, 18 over the past five games.

It also was the second straight poor outing for Perkins, who allowed six runs over three innings in the Twins' 12-6 win in Baltimore on Saturday. He's given up seven homers in four starts this month, and Minnesota lost three of those games.

James Shields allowed six runs, five earned, and eight hits in 6 1-3 innings for Tampa

Bay.

Jason Kubel hit a three-run homer and Joe Mauer went 3-for-4 with three RBIs for the Twins. Mauer drove in the last two runs charged to Shields with a seventh-inning single off David Price that trimmed Tampa Bay's lead to 7-6 before Longoria went deep in the bottom half.

Eddie Guardado (4-4) pitched a scoreless eighth for the victory, and Joe Nathan worked the ninth for his 37th save in 43 opportunities.



HOCKEY

(AP) The Carolina Hurricanes signed Eric Staal to a seven-year contract extension Thursday. The deal worth \$57.75 million will pay the center an average of \$8.25 million starting in 2009-10 and will last through the 2015-16 season.

When you get a player this young that's this good, you have to make sure you keep him long term,"



general manager Jim Rutherford said. "And if you don't, your team, your franchise will go backwards."

Rutherford said the parties "fine-tuned" the deal's basic terms Wednesday, a day before Staal publicly signed the contract during an elaborate ceremony at the RBC Center that included a 2-minute video tribute.

The 23-year-old two-time All-Star, MVP of last year's All-Star game and key component of the Carolina team that won the 2006 Stanley Cup had been discussing the new deal with team officials all summer, with Rutherford making a long-term deal one of his top priorities heading into training camp, which starts next week.

"I wasn't stressing and wanting to make sure it was done before camp," Staal said. "But it is a nice feeling now to have it out of the way and not get the questions the whole season about an extension ... and focus on the hockey."

"Obviously, for me at a young age, to be able to lift the Stanley Cup over my head was something that I dreamed out my whole life," he added. "I want to do it again."

Staal will get a \$1 million raise next year and will make \$6 million during the first year of the deal, with his salary escalating to \$9.5 million in 2015-16, Rutherford said. The Hurricanes'

first-round draft pick in 2003 is entering the final year of the three-year deal he signed in 2006 that will pay him \$5 million this season.

Staal, the center of coach Peter Laviolette's No. 1 line, had 100 points three seasons ago in leading Carolina to its first Cup. The Hurricanes haven't made the playoffs since, though he bounced back from a subpar 2006-07 season with 38 goals and 44 assists last season.

"Over the last couple seasons, it's been a ton of fun. Obviously, the last two not as much fun as the year before that," Staal said. "We've got to get back to the playoffs, back to where we should be, and I'm very grateful for this and for being here a long time."

The lucrative deal likely means Staal — the team's highest-paid player — will remain in the leadership role in which he blossomed last season, earning a permanent "A" on his sweater.

Rutherford insisted the rich contract won't hurt the team's bottom line in the future, stressing the Hurricanes would be significantly worse off had they allowed Staal to test free agency.

"We think over time, the way the market has responded to this team and to hockey, that we'll be in a stronger position financially to do this," Rutherford said.

NIGERIA

(AFP) Three of five Nigerian journalists arrested in connection with a hoax story alleging that the country's president was contemplating stepping down on health grounds, were freed Thursday, one of them said.

"We were released this evening and have been asked to report back on Monday," Bashir Adigun told AFP, adding "but our station is still shut down".

Adigun, who is a regional editor with Channels television, said he was released along with the manager for the Abuja station and a deputy editor with the state-run News Agency of Nigerian (NAN).

Two other Channels senior journalists arrested in the Nigerian commercial capital Lagos were still being held, according to Adigun.

The five journalists were picked up on Tuesday by the country's intelligence agency, the State Security Services (SSS), after Channels aired the newflash which said Yar'Adua could stand down "for medical reasons."

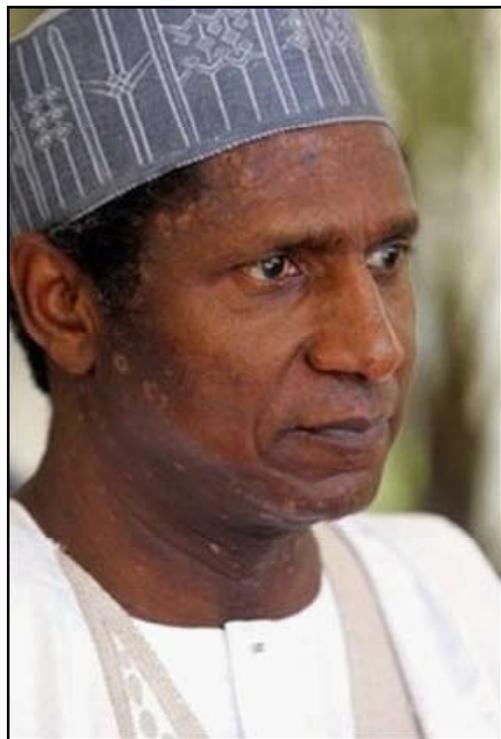
Security forces personnel forcibly took the station off air on Tuesday evening, a day before the country's regulatory National Broadcasting Commission suspended Channels's operating licence.

The closure sparked a storm of criticism as media watchdogs urged the authorities to probe the story's source instead of closing down media houses or arresting journalists.

The false story apparently originated from NAN.

The agency has denied being the source of the article while President Umaru Yar'Adua's aides have said he has no plans whatsoever to resign.

Yar'Adua has been dogged by health problems ever since the campaign ahead of the April 2007 election that brought him to power.



NORTH KOREA

(AP) North Korea said Friday it was preparing to restart its nuclear reactor, accusing the United States of failing to fulfill its obligations under an international disarmament-for-aid agreement.

It was the first time the North has confirmed it has begun reversing what it has done so far to roll back its nuclear program, though it has warned it would do so in anger over Washington's failure to remove it from the U.S. terrorism blacklist.

"We are making thorough preparations for restoration" of the Yongbyon nuclear complex, the deputy director-general of North Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hyun Hak Bong, told reporters. He did not say when Yongbyon might begin operating again.

Hyun spoke to reporters in the border village of Panmunjom before sitting down for talks Friday with South Korean officials on sending energy aid to the North as part of the six-nation disarmament deal.

Under the landmark 2007 pact — involving the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan — North Korea pledged to disable its nuclear program in a step toward its eventual dismantlement in exchange for diplomatic concessions and energy aid equivalent to 1 million tons of oil.

North Korea began disabling the Yongbyon complex last year, and the process was 90 percent complete, with eight of 11 key steps carried out "perfectly and flawlessly," Hyun said.

Major progress was made in the agreement in late June when North Korea submitted a long-delayed declaration of its nuclear activities and destroyed the cooling tower at Yongbyon in a show of its commitment to denuclearization.

But the accord ran aground in mid-August when Washington refused to take North Korea off its list of states that sponsor terrorism until the North accepts a plan to verify its nuclear declaration.

North Korea responded by halting the disabling process and is now "proceeding with work

to restore (Yongbyon) to its original status," Hyun told reporters.

South Korean and U.S. officials have said it would take at least a year for North Korea to restart the reactor if it is completely disabled.

Hyun warned Washington not to press the verification issue, saying verification was never part of the deal.

"The U.S. is insisting that we accept unilateral demands that had not been agreed upon," he said. Hyun said forcing North Korea to comply with such an inspection would exacerbate tensions.

The White House had no immediate reaction early Friday.

The six-nation talks last convened in July, and a new round has not been scheduled because of the current standoff between the U.S. and North Korea.

However, the talks Friday between the two Koreas — which were proposed by the North — indicate it does not want to completely scuttle the six-party negotiations, analysts said.

"The North is sending a message that it wants to maintain the six-party talks," said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University. "The North also wants to get the remaining energy aid with winter drawing closer."

Seoul's delegate, Hwang Joon-kook, assured North Korea that it would receive the remaining energy aid it was promised.

South Korea's foreign minister said North Korea's intentions remained unclear.

"It's still uncertain whether the North's measures are aimed at reversing the whole situation to the pre-disablement level" or are a negotiating tactic, Yu Myung-hwan told reporters.

The tensions come amid reports that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has suffered a stroke. Kim, 66, has not been seen in public for more than a month and has missed two major public events: a military parade marking North Korea's 60th birthday and the Korean Thanksgiving holiday.