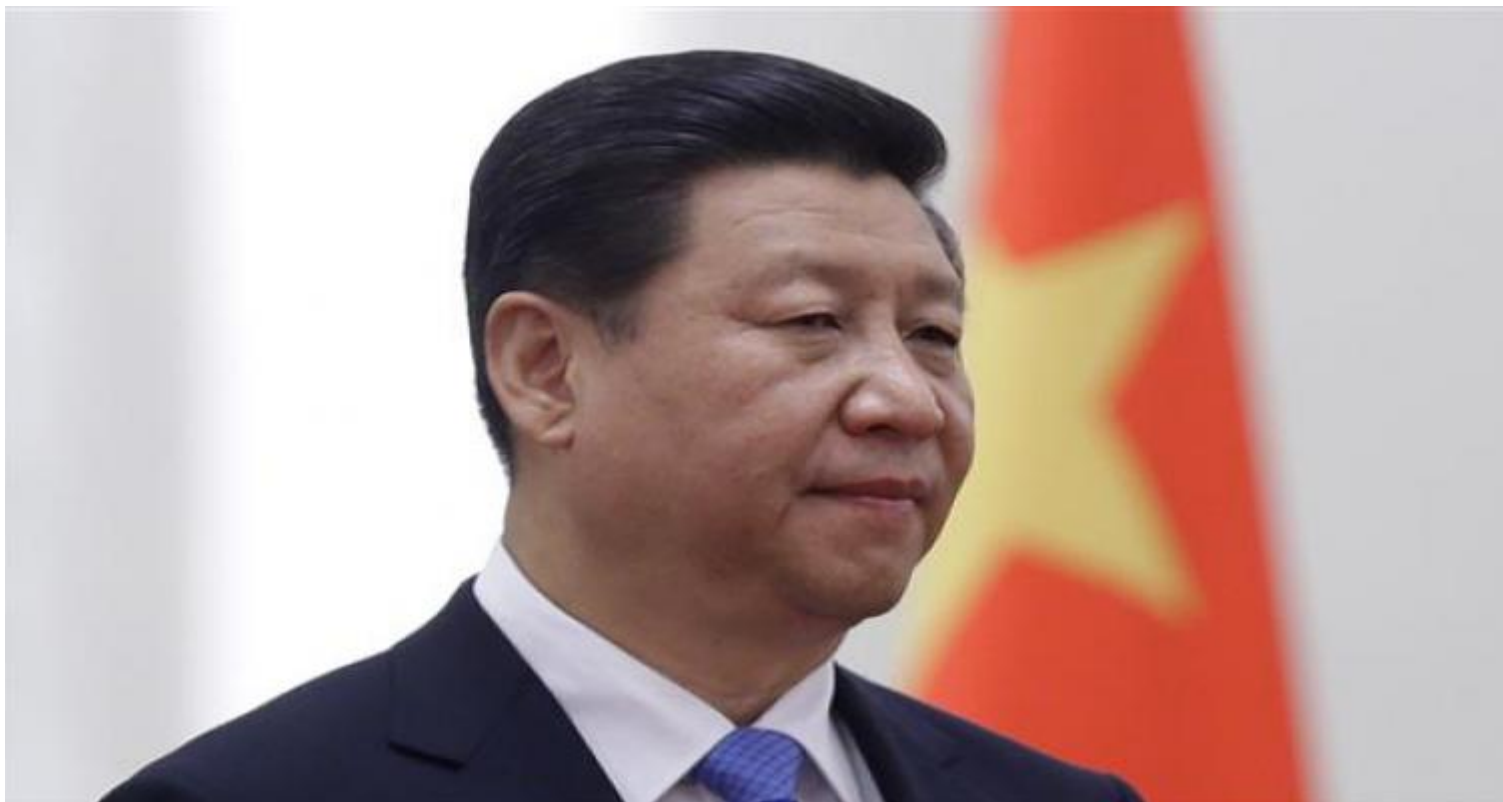


Report Says U.S. Sanctions Could Prompt China to Call Off Xi Visit



Washington, September 14 (RHC)-- U.S. sanctions against Chinese companies could prompt Beijing to cancel President Xi Jinping's visit to the United States later this month, a report says. The Financial Times reported earlier this month that the United States was preparing to impose sanctions against Chinese companies linked to the alleged cyber theft of American intellectual property.

Three U.S. officials told the British newspaper on September 3rd the sanctions possibly would be announced this week, just days ahead of the Chinese president's visit.

Former U.S. administration officials and experts told the Washington-based The Hill newspaper on Sunday that sanctions against China could cause the cancellation of the scheduled visit, because Beijing is very upset about the potential of economic sanctions ahead of the trip.

"The Chinese right now are getting very concerned because they understand this will create embarrassing optics around the visit for them," said Samm Sacks, China analyst at the Eurasia Group. According to experts and former White House cyber security officials, the Obama administration will anger Beijing just days before the Chinese leader is scheduled to land in Washington.

Washington has for years accused the Chinese government and military of conducting computer-based attacks against the US, including efforts to steal information from federal agencies.

It claims that the Chinese military has made cyber warfare capabilities a priority over a decade ago and often blames people linked to it for hacking into US companies' computers to steal secrets.

Beijing says Washington's cyber attack accusations are hypocritical, since intelligence leaks have revealed that the U.S. itself is most active perpetrator of cyber espionage against foreign countries, especially against China.

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