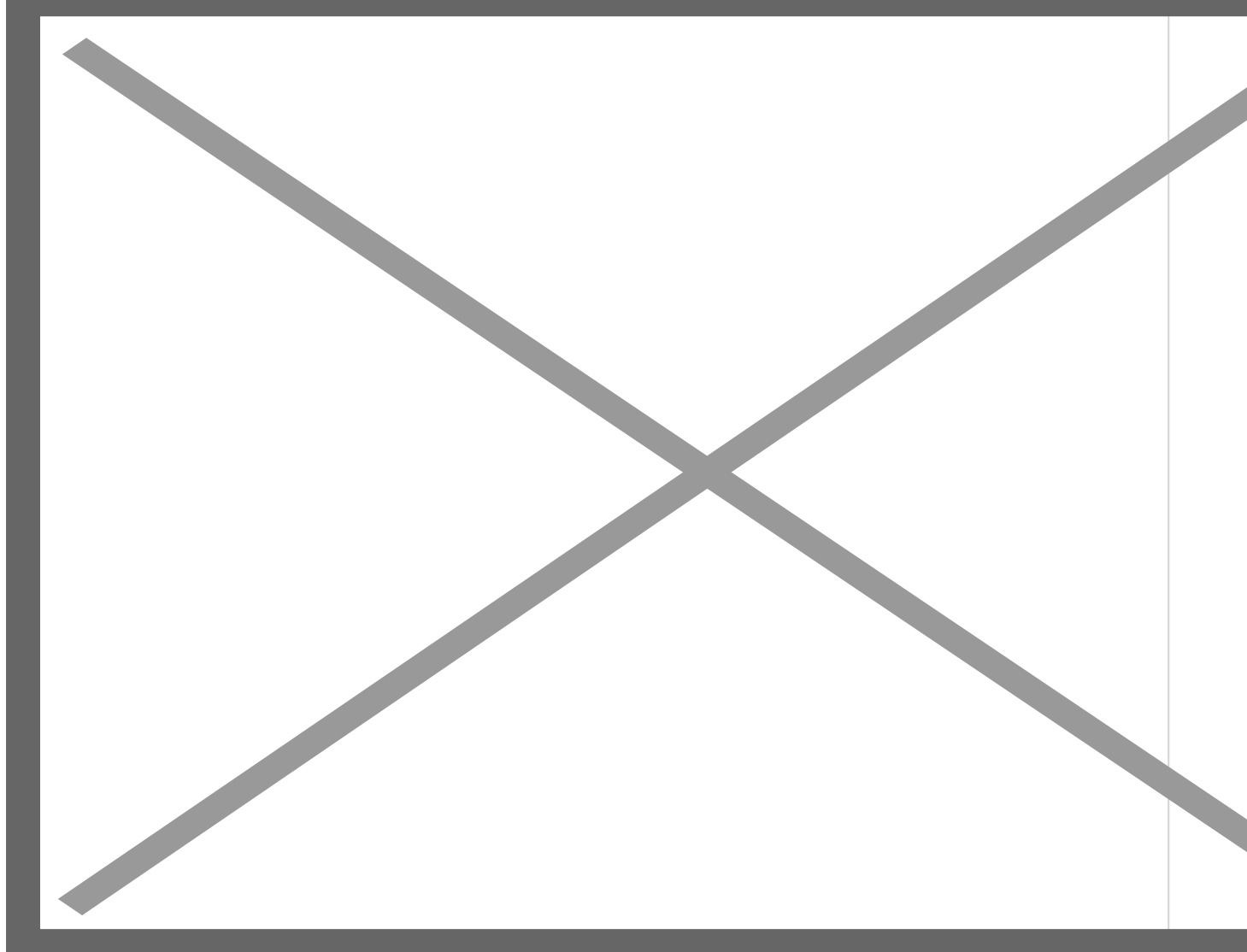


Biden calls on countries to cut Iran oil imports ahead of Vienna talks

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Biden calls on countries to cut Iran oil imports ahead of Vienna talks

Washington, November 13 (RHC)-- U.S. President Joe Biden has said there are sufficient supplies of petroleum worldwide so other countries can reduce what they buy from Iran. Biden's remarks are potentially construed as an impediment to the progress of the forthcoming round of negotiations on the removal of anti-Tehran sanctions at the Austrian capital of Vienna.

Biden made the comments in a memo to the State Department on Friday as the US government needs to give assurance every six months that there is enough oil supply globally to maintain sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

"Consistent with prior determinations, there is a sufficient supply of petroleum and petroleum products from countries other than Iran to permit a significant reduction in the volume of petroleum and petroleum products purchased from Iran by or through foreign financial institutions," the US president said in the memo.

The sanctions were put in place during the former US President Barack Obama's administration in 2012. Obama's successor, Donald Trump, later reimposed other sanctions on Iran's oil and petrochemical products, which were aimed at cutting off its oil supply to other countries. The Trump administration also urged other oil-producing countries to raise their oil output to compensate for drop in Iran's oil supply.

Biden's statement comes ahead of a virtual meeting with China's President Xi Jinping on Monday, in what is expected to be the two presidents' most extensive meeting since Biden took office.

China is the largest purchaser of Iranian oil, averaging purchases of more than 500,000 barrels a day over the last three months. A report shows Iran's indirect oil exports to China have increased over the past three months.

Chinese purchases of Iranian crude have continued this year despite sanctions that, if enforced, would allow Washington to cut off those who violate them from the U.S. economy. The United States has recently resorted to pirating Iranian oil cargoes as it has failed in its various attempts to cut the country's oil exports to zero through its regime of sanctions.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday that it had prevented a piracy attempt on an Iranian oil cargo traveling in the sea of Oman last month.

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