

Washington threatens to sanction tankers carrying fuel to Venezuela



Washington, May 29 (RHC)-- The U.S. has threatened to impose sanctions against two tankers carrying Iranian gasoline to fuel-starved Venezuela, a Wall Street Journal report says.

Four Iranian-flagged tankers have already arrived in Venezuela, and a fifth one is on its way to deliver much-needed gasoline to the sanctions-hit Latin American country.

The Thursday report, citing unnamed U.S. officials, claims that two other tankers -- owned by Greece, registered in Liberia, and loaded with Iranian oil products -- were heading to Venezuela before halting their deliveries over Washington's sanctions threat.

According to the WSJ report, the two Liberian-flagged tankers — the Bering and the Bella — were expected to arrive in Venezuela after the Iranian-flagged vessels docked in the country.

However, the two Greek-owned tankers would have been unable to get insurance and access to international banking if they had carried on, the report quoted the US officials as saying. The daily, quoting one U.S. official, said: "Currently, the ships are not headed to Venezuela," and are near Cape

Verde off the coast of Senegal, heading southward.

The U.S. officials admitted that Washington did not see any political gain in spoiling a temporary reprieve for Venezuela's gasoline-starved population. However, the U.S. wants to ensure the trade does not become permanent, the report further said.

The WSJ report comes as the U.S. has failed to carry out its previous threat to take "measures" against the Iranian fuel that has already been delivered to Venezuela.

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