



## Obama's 'home run' angers China

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BEIJING, Feb. 19 (UPI) -- In the Chinese government's most direct warning ever over a Dalai Lama meeting, it has told the United States to "stop interfering in China's internal affairs."

Beijing summoned U.S. Ambassador Jon Huntsman and "lodged solemn representations" over meetings the Buddhist leader had Thursday with U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

In a separate statement, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu was more direct in his dressing down of Huntsman and condemnation of the meetings. "The U.S. act grossly interfered in China's internal affairs, gravely hurt the Chinese people's national sentiments and seriously damaged the Sino-U.S. ties," said Ma.

His comments kick off a series of five articles in the China Daily newspaper condemning the meeting, claiming that it was Obama's "home run" in his game against China.

But Ma insisted that "Tibet is an inalienable part of the inviolable territory of China and the issues concerning Tibet are purely internal affairs of China." China firmly opposes leaders or government officials of any country meeting the Dalai Lama in any way, he added.

The lead article notes that the Dalai Lama, "after launching and having failed an armed rebellion in March 1959, he fled to India and formed a so-called Tibet government-in-exile. In the guise of religion, the Dalai Lama has since been involved in activities aimed to split China and to undermine Tibet's social stability."

Ma also claimed that even allowing the Dalai Lama to visit the United States was contrary to previous understandings between the White House and China.

"It grossly violated the basic norms governing international relations and ran counter to the principles set forth in the three China-U.S. joint communiques and the China-U.S. joint statement," Ma said.

In a separate commentary, the China Daily writer claimed Obama "hit a home run to complete his months-long game called antagonizing China."

Thanks to his vow to "get much tougher" with China, "Obama has struck nearly every note to create the cacophony against a country that he once pledged not to contain. From the \$6.4 billion arms sale to Taiwan to issues related to currency rates and Internet freedom, Obama has taken a poke at China in every possible opportunity."

The ball is now in the U.S. court as to whether China-U.S. relations are "resilient enough to survive all the damages done."

Another article relates how many Western writers have thrown doubt on the Dalai Lama's statements that he is not looking for Tibetan independence. Obama's motives for "playing the Tibet card" are questioned by the Japanese monthly magazine Choice, the article says.

The article also noted that Ted Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, said he believed Obama was trying to win over both Democrat and Republican camps that support the

Dalai Lama and who are not fond of China.

As well, the China Daily article claimed that Pierre Picquart, "an expert on China from the University of Paris, said Obama's meeting with political figures such as the Dalai Lama was intended to set up a barrier to China's development while securing the U.S. dominance in the world."

China's war of words concerning the Dalai Lama visit might continue for several days. After the dust has settled, the United States may find that relations with China are the coolest for many years, Jin Canrong, from the School of International Studies at the Chinese institute Renmin University, told the BBC.

"For the short term, I think the political atmosphere will deteriorate to some extent, some kind of dialogue will be suspended and Chinese willingness to cooperate on international issues will be weakened," he said.

The Dalai Lama has met every sitting U.S. president since 1991 and each meeting has been condemned by China. George W. Bush's meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2007 was the only time a sitting president appeared in public with the exiled Tibetan leader.

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