

Beijing warns Obama on Dalai Lama meeting

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Beijing yesterday warned US President Barack Obama against meeting the Dalai Lama, saying it would “seriously undermine” Sino-US ties — the latest salvo in an escalating row between the two powers.

Beijing also said no progress was made in the latest round of talks between Chinese officials and envoys of the spiritual leader, saying the two sides remain “sharply divided” on the future of the Himalayan region.

The comments came after the first negotiations between the two sides in more than a year, which wrapped up at the weekend. The envoys of the Dalai Lama returned to their exile base in India on Monday.

The Dalai Lama, whom China accuses of seeking independence for his homeland, is scheduled in the US this month for a visit that includes a stop in Washington, but a meeting with Obama has not been announced.

Such a meeting would “seriously undermine the political foundation of Sino-US relations,” Zhu Weiqun (朱衛群), executive vice minister of the Chinese Communist Party body that handles contact with the Dalai Lama, told a news conference.

“If the US leader chooses to meet with the Dalai Lama at this time, it will certainly threaten trust and cooperation between China and the US,” Zhu said.

“We oppose any attempt by foreign forces to interfere in China’s internal affairs using the Dalai Lama as an excuse,” he said.

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