

Barack Obama-Dalai Lama White House meeting violated US' promises: China

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Beijing: China today said President Barack Obama's meeting with the Dalai Lama has "violated" US' promises on not supporting Tibetan independence and warned that it will hurt bilateral cooperation.

Dalai Lama and Barack Obama

Reacting to President Obama's "private meeting" with the Dalai Lama at the White House, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a media briefing that, "Tibet affairs are China's domestic affairs and no foreign country has the right to interfere".

"No matter in what way the US leader met with the Dalai Lama, the meeting violated the US promises of acknowledging Tibet as a part of China, not supporting Tibet independence and not supporting separatist activities," Lu said.

"Such a meeting will hurt China-US mutual trust and cooperation," he said.

Yesterday, China lodged a strong diplomatic protest with the US over the meeting.

Lu said the 14th Dalai Lama was not a purely religious figure but a political exile who has long engaged in "anti- China separatist activities under the guise of religion" and the essence of his "middle way" approach is "Tibet independence".

President Obama has hosted the 80-year-old spiritual leader four times since coming to office.

In yesterday's meeting, he met the Dalai Lama in the historic Map Room of the White House. The meeting was closed for the press.

The Tibetan spiritual leader also did not speak to the battery of reporters waiting for him.

"The President has spoken publicly in the past about his warm, personal feelings for the Dalai Lama. The president has articulated his appreciation for the Dalai Lama's teachings, and believes in preserving Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic traditions," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest told reporters after the meeting yesterday.

Earnest said the personal nature of their meeting would explain why the President received the Dalai Lama in the White House residence, as opposed to the Oval Office, for example.

"And I would just reiterate once again that the US's position, as it relates to Tibet has not changed. Tibet, per US policy, is considered part of the People's Republic of China. And the United States has not articulated our support for Tibetan independence," he said.

- PTI