

Bush to attend ceremony for Dalai Lama

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. President George Bush planned to be at the U.S. Capitol to honor the Dalai Lama when he receives a Congressional Gold Medal, a move that has annoyed China. The Dalai Lama is a familiar figure in Washington and has had 12 meetings with U.S. presidents. But Bush's previous encounters with the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists have been in the residential quarters of the White House, signaling a private rather than official meeting. This time, the president and first lady Laura Bush invited the Dalai Lama to their living quarters on Tuesday, The Los Angeles Times reports. On Wednesday, the Dalai Lama is to be at the Capitol. China, which claims Tibet, has objected to the decision to give the Dalai Lama the medal. Liu Jianchao, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, said Thursday that China had warned the United States that it was seen as an unfriendly gesture, the China Daily reported. "We are firmly against any country or people using this issue to interfere in China's internal affairs," Liu said at a briefing Thursday.

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