

Bill passed giving Congressional Medal to Dalai Lama

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(AFP; ABC) The US House of Representatives has passed a bill to award the Dalai Lama the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest US civilian honor. In the past, the medal has also been given to Sir Winston Churchill, Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela. The award is in recognition of the Dalai Lama's advocacy of religious harmony, non-violence, and human rights and his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Tibet issue through dialogue with the Chinese leadership. The Senate passed the same bill in May. Beijing has responded angrily saying the award had damaged Sino-US relations. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said it sent wrong and very serious signals to the Tibetan independence forces.

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Website: www.tibetinfonet.net
Phone: +44 (0) 20 300 206 33
Fax: +49 (0) 2238 9494466
Email: tin@tibetinfonet.net