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Former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi met with the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala, India, on Wednesday. The visit by Pelosi, 84, and a bipartisan delegation of seven lawmakers has provoked strong reactions from China.

Pelosi greeted the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader by touching her head to his, a gesture reminiscent of President Joe Biden's recent greeting to Pope Francis. During the meeting, Pelosi critiqued Chinese President Xi Jinping, despite knowing the Dalai Lama would disapprove of her comments, emphasizing her support for Tibet's quest for autonomy.

The delegation, which included Republican Representative Michael McCaul, also met with officials from the Tibetan government-in-exile, underscoring their support for Tibetan self-determination. This visit comes shortly after the U.S. Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act, aimed at fostering dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Chinese officials to seek a peaceful resolution regarding Tibet's status.

Beijing views the Dalai Lama as a separatist and refused to engage with his representatives since 2010. In response to the U.S. delegation's visit, the Chinese Foreign Ministry warned Washington not to support Tibetan independence, threatening unspecified "resolute measures."

The Dalai Lama, who denies being a separatist, will travel to the U.S. on Thursday for medical treatment, but it remains uncertain whether he will meet U.S. officials.