

Ambassador quits over Tibet remark

(PA) The Chinese Ambassador to Ireland walked out of the Irish Green Party conference after leader John Gormley condemned human rights abuses in Tibet. Liu Biwei stood up in protest while the Environment Minister delivered his keynote address live on TV. Mr Gormley said respect for human rights must extend to all cultures and countries. *"One country which has been exploited and suppressed and suffered for far too long is Tibet"*, he said. *"We have always enjoyed good relations with the Chinese people, but condemn this abuse of human rights and we call on the Chinese government to enter dialogue with the Dalai Lama"*. Gormley told the Irish Independent later that he would not be apologising for the remarks. Ireland's Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern described the incident as *"overblown"*. Ahern also said the problem may have been that Gormley referred to Tibet as a *"country"*, in what the foreign minister said was a *"slip of the tongue"*. He said Gormley's call for dialogue reflects Irish government policy.

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