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Hugo Chavez says Ahmadinejad won election legally Venezuela accuses "imperial hand" of Iran unrest



President Hugo Chavez blames the CIA and European forces for Iran unrest

DUBAI (Al Arabiya, Agencies)

Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez threw his support behind Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and said he believed America's spy agency, the CIA, was behind clashes that have rocked the Islamic Republic for almost two weeks.

Although ties between Venezuela and the United States seemed to be warming as they planned to reinstate their ambassadors almost nine months after Chavez expelled the U.S. envoy Patrick Duddy, Chavez, however, still blamed the U.S. and the "imperial hand" for the worst unrest in Iran since the 1979 revolution that ousted the U.S.-backed Shah.

"People are in the streets, some are dead, they have snipers, and behind this is the CIA, the imperial hand of European countries and the United States," he said at a gathering of Latin American leftist leaders.

He said he suspected the U.S. and European central agencies for having a role in the post-elections clashes as he said their "imperial hand" was behind the protests that have left at least 17 people dead.

The Venezuelan president also announced his support for Ahmadinejad and said the Iranian premier "won the elections legally, we are absolutely sure we know quite a lot about Iranian politics."

Iran has also accused Western powers, including the CIA, of having a hand in the protests and the nation's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has refused to calls for a vote recount.