

Statement of Jean-Christophe Cambadélis,
Secretary national for Europe and International, Socialist Party, France

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About democracy

Mister Chairman, my dear comrades and friends,

As you know, from its very beginning, our organisation, the Socialist International has been linking freedom and democracy. The end of dictatorships in Europe or Latin America, the falling of the Berlin wall, the shrinking of authoritarian regimes in Africa or the end of apartheid show that our ideal finds, uneasily its way. Even if in modern democracy, too much polls, capitalistic concentration of media, dependence of the owners of governmental bargains is another kind of problems.

There is still contrast in the outcome. Progress may have been made in Iraq, for example, where our comrade, President Jalal Talabani played an important part by promoting democracy, but there is still a war going on in Afghanistan where the social, cultural and economic situation goes is going down badly enough to threaten Pakistan. A just and sustainable solution to the conflict between Israeli and Palestinians gets consensus but seems farther everyday on the field.

Dear comrades and friends,

We have fought these last years, separately or collectively within the Socialist International with determination against those who ruled by threat and force in international affairs or those who praised confrontation instead of dialogue, tolerance and respect for human rights. The defeat of the American neo-conservatives and Barack Obama's election has opened a new round in international affairs. We socialists cannot help putting the emphasis on the President's statement about the CIA supported coup against democracy in Chile. It is as if international relationships were 'cooler', unlike the Bush administration's choices of armed conflicts, increased tensions. In this environment, we have – as long as we want to remain true to our values – a part to play.

Since we talk about democracy, let's talk about Iran and the brave commitment of these citizens who wanted to change their country, its image and its political views through the ballot and the vote. Abroad, specially in Europe, today's Iran has been stereotyped, reduced to turbans or tshador and associated to the controversial statements of a populist president who is also an extremist. As a result, we have ignored the fact that the Iranian society is the most dynamic on a

cultural and political plan of the region.

Those who believe in democratisation from abroad, even by force have not seen Iran's evolution since 1997. Hence, the rise of a political class and civil society made of men and women who were born under the Islamic republic or sometime born after the Revolution of 1979, fighting in tough conditions for a democratic change is real. Friends of former president Khatami, leaders of reformist parties, journalists and intellectuals involved in the movement for democracy – you name it, those who are today in the jails of the Islamic regime. What is at stake in Iran is the follow up of this 'cooling' in international relations of a new period. Z. Brzezinski used to call it, 'the ark of crisis'. It goes from Middle East to Central Asia, through Afghanistan and Pakistan is the core of the future of worldwide peace.

The crisis of the Iranian regime is a critical moment for the future of peace and democracy.

The Supreme Guide, came out of his referee position to endorse the controversial election of Ahmadinejad. In doing so, he has weakened his position. Both have lost the support of an important part of the Shiite clergy and they can only count on the Pasdaran, Keeper of the Revolution and the Islamic militia to strike the opposition. The Mullah regime became merely a military regime. On the opposite side, the opposition is seeking other ways for the contestation, but whatever happens, Iran of tomorrow won't look like Iran of yesterday. In case someone wonders why Iran should not have the right to get nuclear weapons, the Iranian regime has just given the answer.

In this historical time the Iranian people has entered, the duty of socialists and democrats is not to let the movement of people's contestation alone. The duty is to support those who are in struggle, sometime with their life on the line for a democratic and peaceful change. The Socialist International cannot just comment the events going on in front of our eyes.

The Socialist International must be an actor by expressing its solidarity with the Iranian people. That is why the French Socialist Party presents its contribution for the adoption of a resolution on Iran.