

Chavez, Qaddafi Call for African-South American NATO at Summit

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Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi called for the creation of a southern hemisphere alliance mirroring the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to counteract the influence of the U.S. and Europe.

They spoke yesterday at the second South America-Africa Summit in Venezuela, where Chavez brought together 30 heads of state including Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Algeria's long-time leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

"For African countries it's closer to visit our brothers in South America and we share the same interests of liberation and revolutionary ideals," Qaddafi said. "Colonialism humiliated us, insulted us and robbed us of our riches."

Hosting the summit plays into Chavez's goal of diminishing what he calls "imperial" influences and boosting ties with allies including members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries Angola and Nigeria.

The more than 60 delegations planned to sign accords on trade, energy, mining and agriculture, Venezuela's foreign ministry said in a statement.

"A new world has already emerged, and it's a new world that's marching toward multipolarity," Chavez told reporters at the United Nations on Sept. 23. "We have great expectations."

Qaddafi, who travels with an extensive delegation, pitched his trademark tent next to the pool at the Hilton Hotel on the Caribbean tourist island of Margarita, where the summit is taking place.

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