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## Iran's president calls for alliance against West

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**At the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Kazakhstan, Ahmadinejad calls on members including China and Russia to form anti-West alliance**

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called Wednesday for a security alliance of several former Soviet nations and China to form a united front against the West.

Ahmadinejad's address to fellow heads of state at the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Kazakhstan will likely deepen suspicions that the bloc is intended as a counterweight to the United States across the region.

In a summit declaration signed by all the member states, the organization also attacked missile defense programs in another apparent dig at the United States.

"The one-sided and unlimited development of missile defense systems by one government or a narrow group of governments could cause damage to strategic stability and international security," the document said.

Much of Ahmadinejad's fiery speech was devoted to leveling an exhaustive series of thinly veiled accusations against unnamed Western countries, which he described as "enslavers, colonialists, (and) invaders." "Which one of our countries (has played a role) in the black era of slavery, or in the destruction of hundreds of millions of human beings?" Ahmadinejad said, opening his address.

The SCO was formed in Shanghai in 2001 by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to address religious extremism and border security in Central Asia, but it has in recent years attracted interest in full membership from countries like Iran, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its scope has since broadened to economic issues, but the organization has struggled nonetheless to forge a clear purpose.

Iran's entry to the SCO has been resisted by the existing members, who worry that Iran's membership would lend the group a more explicitly anti-American quality, a concern that Ahmadinejad was seemingly unwilling to allay.

Russia has been an active opponent of U.S.-backed plans to create a missile shield in Europe and was likely behind the inclusion of harsh words against the proposal in the summit declaration.

Moscow sees the U.S.-led missile defense plans as a potential threat to its security. It has agreed to consider NATO's proposal to cooperate on the missile shield, but insists the system be run jointly.

Reprising the criticism addressed at Washington, Afghan President Hamid Karzai renewed calls for the United States to respect his country's sovereignty.

Karzai has in recent months become increasingly strident in his attacks against NATO's accidental bombings of Afghan civilians, describing the Western-led alliance as being at risk of becoming an "occupying force."