**Ahmadinejad, Chavez, Mugabe to have U.N. platform**

General Assembly to get under way in just weeks

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UNITED NATIONS – New York soon will be buzzing again with a collection of anti-American world leaders scheduled to arrive for the 2010 United Nations General Assembly.

The meetings will begin Sept. 23 and run for two weeks.

Among those present from the United States will be President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who will dedicate the new 30-story United States U.N. mission headquarters.

According to the U.N.'s office of protocol, the expected anti-U.S. VIP's will include Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who seems to take delight in coming to New York to thumb his nose at the protests that greet his arrival.

The September visit will mark Ahmadinejad's second U.N. appearance this year and the fifth since he took office in 2005. In May, he attended a nuclear disarmament conference.

Though he is perhaps the most anti-American leader since the Islamic Revolution, he also is the Iranian president who has paid the most visits to the U.S. since the reign of the late Shah in the 1970s.

The Iranian will be accompanied by Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and Bolivia's Evo Morales, who have sought to counterbalance Washington's influence in Latin America.

Another long-time U.S. antagonist, Nicaragua's Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega, who was noted for his repeated clashes with the Reagan administration, also will make an appearance at the U.N. this year.

In 1986, Ortega taunted Reagan when he told the General Assembly, "President Reagan should remember, Rambo exists only in the movies!" The Ortega slap prompted the U.S. delegation to walk out of the U.N. complex.

Zimbabwe's embattled president, Robert Mugabe, who has survived in office despite crippling U.N./Commonwealth sanctions, is expected to address the world body Sept. 24.

Georgia, still reeling from the 2008 Russian invasion, will send its president, Mikheil Saakashvili, to speak Sept. 23, just before Russian President Dimitri Medvedev is scheduledto take to the podium.

As the U.S. surge in Afghanistan gains momentum, the General Assembly is providing a venue for Obama to confer with the major players in the region.

Hamid Karzai, Kabul's controversial leader, is expected in New York, along with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zadari and India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Some newcomers to this year's U.N. forum include British Prime Minister David Cameron, Japanese Prime Minister Nato Kan, South African President Jacob Zuma and Filipino President Benigno Aquino III.

Libya's mercurial Muammar Gadhafi, who "stole" last year's show with his visit to mid-town, has not made a decision on this year's meetings, says the U.N.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will take the occasion to unofficially circulate his candidacy for a second five-year term as chief of the world body despite the fact that his current term does not expire until December 2011.