

Pope condemns Cold War attitudes of nationalism, suspicion

VATICAN CITY – Exaggerated nationalism that unleashes bloodshed and Cold War attitudes of suspicion must be a thing of the past, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Saying he was “deeply worried” about international tensions, without mentioning any specific situation, the pope said it was obvious there was “the risk of a deterioration of that climate of trust and collaboration that should characterize relations.”

Pope Benedict spoke about the world political scene after praying the Angelus Aug. 24 at the papal summer villa in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome.

The week before he spoke, the Vatican newspaper gave regular front-page coverage to ongoing tensions between Georgia and Russia over control of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions in Georgia.

The early August fighting in Georgia led to new tensions between Russia and the European Union and between Russia and the United States. In addition, agreements to allow the United States to set up a missile shield in Eastern Europe led to further tensions with Russia.

Pope Benedict said a serious commitment is needed to “reject the temptation of facing new situations with old systems.”

“Violence must be repudiated,” he said.

Respect for international law, fair and transparent negotiations, maintaining commitments, respecting the territorial integrity of nations and the self-determination of peoples must guide efforts to defuse the tensions, the pope said.

Pope Benedict offered prayers that international leaders would work generously to re-establish peace and justice in regions marked by conflict.