

Vatican newspaper praises new U.S.-Russian disarmament treaty

VATICAN CITY – The Vatican newspaper has hailed the new U.S.-Russia disarmament treaty as a “significant and courageous step toward international security.”

An article in L'Osservatore Romano April 7 praised President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev for opening a new era of relations and being willing to “turn the page definitively on the logic of the Cold War.”

At a ceremony April 8 in Prague, Obama and Medvedev signed the Start II treaty, which will cut nuclear arsenals in both countries by about 30 percent. Prague is where Obama last year outlined his vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. The treaty needs approval by the U.S. Senate and the Russian parliament before taking effect.

The Vatican has consistently lauded Obama's pledges to reduce nuclear weapons, and the Osservatore article praised the new treaty as an important development.

“With this agreement on disarmament, the (U.S. and Russian) presidents not only wanted to send a theoretical message of hope, but indicate the concrete road of cooperation that is needed in the fight against the common enemy, terrorism,” it said.

Echoing recent arguments made by Obama, the newspaper said the world's major security threats today come not from single countries but from a terrorist network. The response must be a global one based on international cooperation between the major powers, it said.

Obama's nuclear strategy, unveiled April 6, renounces the use of atomic weapons against non-nuclear countries that are in compliance with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; countries like Iran and North Korea, which are not in compliance with the treaty, would not be covered by that commitment.