

# Vatican official: Nations must disarm to stop spread of nukes

VATICAN CITY - If the world is to help stop the spread of nuclear weapons, nations must take positive steps toward nuclear disarmament, a Vatican official said.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation "are interdependent and mutually reinforcing," said Monsignor Michael W. Banach, the Vatican's representative to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

"Responsible implementation" of international agreements concerning nuclear weapons represents a crucial step "in the fight against nuclear terrorism" and promoting "a culture of life," peace and human development, he said in a May 1 address.

The U.S. monsignor spoke in Vienna, Austria, at the April 30-May 11 proceedings of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. The Vatican released a copy of Monsignor Banach's text May 11.

The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty became effective in 1970 in an effort to curb the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology as well as ensure nuclear energy would be used for peaceful purposes.

Monsignor Banach urged countries to help create "a climate of confidence and real cooperation" in international efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

He said it was necessary to set aside individual interests and work for international or "collective security" which, in the end, helps guarantee the security of individual nations.

If the treaty is to be effective, he said, provisions must help the international community verify compliance as well as track and control fissile and radioactive materials.

Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, the monsignor lamented the “baneful” and “completely fallacious” view that nuclear weaponry would make a nation safe.

“In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims,” the pope said in his 2006 World Day of Peace message. True peace demands nuclear powers “agree to change their course” and work together toward disarmament, said the pope.

Countries stockpiling nuclear weapons include the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France. India, Pakistan and North Korea have carried out nuclear tests. Israel is suspected of having a nuclear arms arsenal, while Iran has been accused of pursuing uranium enrichment for weapons use.