

Polish Defector Blames Andropov In the Attempt on John Paul's Life

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 (UPI) — A Polish defector said today that he believed Yuri V. Andropov, while head of the K.G.B., might have been behind the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981.

"The assassination attempt in Rome last year may well have been the result of a secret death sentence pronounced against him by the Soviet K.G.B., the defector, Zdzislaw Rurarz, said at a news conference.

Mr. Rurarz, who is a former diplomat, defected a year ago and was sentenced to death in absentia by a military court in Poland last week.

Flanked by two guards, he said:

"I do not take this sentence lightly. There have been many examples over the years of death sentences being carried out in other countries against exiles from Communism."

Mr. Andropov, now the Soviet leader, headed the K.G.B., the intelligence and internal security service, when the

Pope was wounded in St. Peter's Square by Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turk.

"I have never had the slightest doubt" of Soviet complicity, he said. "I immediately was led to believe that the Soviets were behind it," he added.

The Soviet Union has called the charges "absurd."

Mr. Rurarz said he was convinced the plot had been ordered by Moscow as an alternative to Soviet military intervention in Poland to crush Solidarity. The former diplomat said the Pope had become a unifying symbol for freedom-seeking Poles.

He said the Russians had considered intervening in Poland, but had found the cost too high.

"It would have required a million soldiers," Mr. Rurarz said.

He said he had learned that Mr. Andropov, while head of the K.G.B., had been the first to urge intervention at a Warsaw Pact meeting a year ago.



Associated Press

Zdzislaw Rurarz, former Polish Ambassador to Japan, at news conference yesterday in Washington.