

Ex-Polish diplomat considers his death sentence 'no joke'

WASHINGTON (AP)—Zdzislaw Rurarz, the former Polish ambassador to Japan sentenced to death in absentia by Poland's military regime, said Wednesday that he expects "efforts to make good the verdict."

"There is no doubt about it," Rurarz said at a press conference in which he was flanked by U.S. security agents. "There are no jokes in that system. . . . We will see how it will work out."

However, Rurarz said the death sentence ordered in Warsaw Friday "will not deter me in my efforts to unmask the true image of the Soviet Union and the traitorous junta it has imposed upon Poland."

"The death sentence passed on me proves that I made the right decision when I asked for political asylum in the United States a year ago."

A FRIEND said the meeting with reporters at the National Press Club here was arranged

in an attempt "to at least write a little insurance policy on the ambassador's life."

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

He speculated that the assassination attempt last year in Rome on Pope John Paul II may have been the result of "a secret death sentence pronounced against the Pope by the Soviet KGB" and authorized by Yuri Andropov, then head of the Soviet secret police and now the Soviet Union's principal leader.

Rurarz offered no evidence to support that possibility.

Rurarz left his diplomatic post in Tokyo shortly after Poland's military regime declared martial law.

"I could not participate in the war against my own nation," he said.



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Zdzislaw Rurarz: "The death sentence passed on me proves that I made the right decision" to defect.