

# Former Polish insider warns US to take Soviet threat seriously

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A former high-ranking Polish official says Soviet critique of Polish leader Wojciech Jaruzelski is a "quite ominous" sign for his country's future.

"Jaruzelski is not doing as well as the Soviets wish him to do. They are admonishing him that more could be done" to gain control over the Polish people, says Zdzislaw Rurarz, Warsaw's ambassador to Japan until he defected to the United States in December 1981.

Mr. Rurarz says Yuri Andropov's rise to power in the Soviet Union last fall may have spelled an even harder Kremlin line toward Poland. "[Former Soviet President Leonid] Brezhnev was not as bad as Andropov. His mother was Polish. He had some sentiment toward Poland." When Soviet intervention in Poland was discussed at a meeting on Dec. 5, 1980, "The first to mention it was Andropov," Rurarz says.

Solidarity, the independent Polish labor movement, has been effectively driven underground, says Rurarz, who now lives in suburban Washington, D.C. "[Former Solidarity leader] Lech Walesa is done. The Soviets are now taking on the [Polish] regime." Mr. Walesa's only protection "was that he was an ordinary worker," says Rurarz, who once received the labor leader at the Polish Embassy in Japan despite instructions not to do so. "If he would have had some intellectual background, if he had known any foreign languages, if he would have had some contacts with anybody from the West, then he would automatically be [considered] a CIA agent or something like that. But he was an ordinary worker, so they couldn't say he was the agent of somebody."

Rurarz, who was raised as a Roman Catholic before joining the Communist Party at the age of 15 in 1945, says he has mixed feelings about the scheduled visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland next month.



Rurarz

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The visit, he says, "may create a false impression that the church is cooperating with the regime," says Rurarz, who was officially sentenced to death by the Polish government last year. "People may get confused as to why the Catholic church is giving its support. . . . On the other hand, he says, if the visit shows that millions of Poles are unhappy with the present government, it could be "a long-term investment."

Rurarz defected shortly after the military crackdown in Poland, when he says it became clear that reform from inside the government was impossible. "I believe in certain principles. Jaruzelski declared war against his own nation. This was very much un-Polish - a man with honor could not do that. So I decided to defect."

Recently Rurarz has begun to speak not only on the situation in Poland, but more broadly on East-West relations. An economist who is fluent in Russian, he made "perhaps 50 trips" into the Soviet Union, some from 1977 to 1979 as a member of two East-bloc "think tanks" on Warsaw Pact policy. He previously served in the US in the 1960s as a commercial attaché and "on the side, in military intelligence."

The purpose of the think tanks, he says, was how to win the war with capitalism. "I can tell you from my personal experience that the Soviets are taking into account a war as a possible way of obtaining their political objectives," Rurarz says. "I don't mean that they will necessarily launch a war. But they believe that by having superiority, by having first-strike capabilities, by being offensive-minded, they can virtually terrorize the Western nations and Japan. They believe that in this way they can obtain their objectives."

Soviet military leaders "all the time were boasting in my presence, 'We are stronger than the whole world,'" he says. "I heard very high-ranking Soviets say nuclear war is winnable, and [also saying] perhaps it may not have to come to nuclear war because the West may be vacillating and afraid. . . . We have to be very, very serious about the Soviet intentions."

Rurarz is also concerned that the Soviets may have underestimated Western resolve and may be ready to push to the limit what they see as their advantage. "I myself spoke to very knowledgeable Soviets who said, 'We now are investing billions and billions of rubles in our defense capability. Those investments must now start bringing their returns.'"