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NATO battalion to be welcomed to Poland's Orzysz April 13

President Andrzej Duda and Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti will officially welcome a multinational NATO battalion to Orzysz (north-eastern Poland) on April 13.

The troops will arrive in late March, head of Poland's National Security Bureau (BBN) Pawel Soloch told PAP on Friday.

The decision to send four multinational battalion battle groups to Poland and the Baltic States was made at the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw. The move is part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence on its eastern flank.

"The official welcoming ceremony is planned for April 13", Soloch said after visiting the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, and the Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) in Brunssum, the Netherlands.

"The focus of my visit was the full and prompt implementation of the (Warsaw) summit decisions. It was the topic of my talks with Gen. Scaparrotti", Soloch told PAP.

Other topics that Soloch discussed in Mons and Brunssum included the functioning of NATO battalions on the eastern flank, also in the context of plans to set up a multinational division command in Elblag (north Poland), and the debate launched within NATO on the command system and crisis situation response plans.

Soloch also presented SHAPE Chief of Staff Gen. Werner Freers with a Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

The Polish president has invited Gen. Scaparrotti to a meeting during his stay in Poland, according to Soloch. Such a meeting would likely take place in Warsaw ahead of the ceremony in Orzysz, but details have yet to be arranged.

US troops will form the core of the battalion in Poland, and will be supported by subunits from Britain, Romania and Croatia. "The US units are to arrive in Poland in late March. They will all be present and ready on April 13", Soloch said.

On their way to the garrisons in Orzysz and nearby Bemowo Piskie, the NATO troops will stop for meetings with local residents, Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz has told PAP.

"We want this element of mutual relations between NATO forces and the Polish people to be as visible and as



deep as possible", he said.

"Compared to the decisions we made at the Warsaw NATO summit in July 2016, the presence of troops, especially US soldiers, will be much greater. A decision was made recently on an extra US Air Force presence in Powidz (central-western Poland), involving at least 1,000 soldiers and aviation equipment to support the US military presence in Poland and on the eastern flank", Macierewicz also said.

Source: PAP

Photos: NATO Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stefan Hass (DEU A)

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