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President to meet NATO chief ahead of Russian manoeuvres in Belarus

Poland's President Andrzej Duda will meet with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on Thursday, three weeks before Russia's big manoeuvres in Belarus, called Zapad 2017.

Duda's top aide Krzysztof Szczerski on Monday told PAP the meeting was scheduled for Thursday evening in Belvedere Palace.

As part of the event, the two politicians are expected hold a one-to-one, behind-closed-doors discussion.

A plenary meeting is also planned, with the president to be accompanied by Szczerski, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski and National Security Bureau (BBN) head Pawel Soloch.

The NATO chief's visit comes the weeks before the start of Russia's periodical Zapad manoeuvres, this time organised in Belarus, between September 14 and 20.

According to official information, 12,700 soldiers, including 3,000 from Russia, are to take part in the project, as well as 700 equipment units.

Moreover, last Monday, the Belarusian Defence Ministry announced that, in preparation for Zapad 2017, the Belarusian and Russian forces will hold a joint training exercise between August 21 and 25.

This will involve both armies' command structures, regular units, rear guards, as well as technical and material support units.

The soldiers will be training how to guard the rear part of the force and provide technical support. Specific tasks will include evacuation, repairs of vehicles and equipment, as well as assembly of a field pipeline and fuelling infrastructure.

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