



President visits airmen

(28 July) As part of her visit to the Banská Bystrica Region, President and Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová inspected, for the first time, the SVK Air Force HQ in Zvolen. The President was greeted by Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko and Maj Gen Lubomír Svoboda. She familiarised herself with the SVK Air Force's mission, organisational structure, and modernisation programmes during the SVK Air Force Commander's briefing. "My steps led to Zvolen partly because it is home to our Air Force Headquarters. As Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces, I discussed the state of Surface Based Air Defence (SBAD) and modernisation programmes with the military leaders. I am pleased that the SVK Air Force is prepared to protect the security of our airspace and assist civilian authorities in handling crisis situations," stated the President.

Hejce incident declassified

(29 July) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has signed a decision to declassify the Service Inquiry Report into Slovakia's greatest air disaster involving an AN-24 military transport aircraft on Borsó Hill near the Hungarian village of Hejce, where 42 SVK servicemen and women returning from Kosovo's KFOR died on 19 Jan 2006. 14 years on, Minister Naď is the first Defence Minister to have responded to the call of civic associations and entities that have strived to see the report declassified for years.

Defence Minister Naď said: "The Service Inquiry Report into the Antonov AN-24 Accident will be made available to the families and close ones of the departed soldiers as well as to the public. As a result, 42 families will be able to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the accident in which they lost their loved ones. We owe this not only to them, but also to our soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the service to their country." He continued: "Our society has been waiting for answers to the questions left unanswered due to the classified report for long years. This has given rise to different speculations about the entire accident. That is why I have never understood the efforts of former MOD leaders to keep the report classified."

The Service Inquiry Report into the Antonov AN-24 Incident is available at: <https://www.mosr.sk/sprava-o-vysetreni-leteckej-nehody-vojenskeho-lietadla-an-24/>.

MOD works on Defence Strategy

(28 July) Led by Defence State Secretary Marian Majer, the first meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG) on the SVK Defence Strategy was held at the MOD. Work on the new Defence and Security Strategies was endorsed by the SVK Government in July.

Mr Majer said: "We are going to prepare and submit the SVK Defence Strategy to the Government for approval by the end of this year, whereas it will build closely on the SVK Security Strategy under development. We want to complete work on the documents as soon as possible and focus on their implementation."

Work on the document will continue through intense electronic communications and follow-up meetings of the IWG.

For the openness of the preparation process on the SVK Defence Strategy, there will be a public debate with members of the public, representatives of the NGO sector and members of the SVK Parliament.

Minister visits Military Police dog handlers and training instructors

(31 July) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Defence State Secretary Marian Majer visited Military Police (MP) personnel at the Crisis Management, Training and Military Working Dog Branch, MP Department Vlkanová – Hronek, to familiarise themselves with the Department's capabilities and the needs of military policemen. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Members of the Crisis Management Section participate in enforcing discipline and order across military establishments, facilities and areas where military operations and actions are underway. MWD handlers with their military working dogs are part of the teams. The main mission of the Branch is to provide qualified training for members of the SVK Military Police in order to execute tasks in the Slovak Republic and on missions and operations abroad, as well as delivering canine services in Defence. Today, I had an opportunity to find out what we can do to make their work easier, while at the same time taking it to a higher level." He continued: "The engagement of our MP MWD handlers in ISAF operations in Afghanistan was highly praised. I am very proud of our MP personnel and I thank them for representing our country in this field in an exemplary manner." The Minister added that the SVK Military Police has a total of 23 MWDs.



- Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has completed the "TOP SECRET" security check out of his own initiative, despite the fact that as a member of the SVK Government he is a person with "special status" authorised to have access to classified information and the "TOP SECRET" security clearance comes automatically with his post.

- The Defence Minister was visited by **Member of European Parliament Miriam M. Lexmann** on 28 July. The Minister updated her on the MOD's goals and visions.

- Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď received **representatives of NGOs** on 27 July. They discussed current cooperation and how the MOD can better support future beneficial NGO projects.

- Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko welcomed Brig Gen Christopher J. Ireland, Chief of Staff, **USAFE-AFACRICA**, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, along with his delegation on his first official visit to Slovakia on 27 July. The following day the guests were received by Deputy Commander of the SVK Air Force Brig Gen Róbert Kleštinec at the SVK Air Force Headquarters Zvolen.

- 15 new medical professionals swore the **Oath of Allegiance** on 31 July. Pte Soldier Zoltán Ondrej received a Letter of Thank You for best achievements.

- The **SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office** conducted a selection procedure for Preparatory State Service (PSS) for PSS candidates and cadets of the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy for the August 2020 intake. Of 1,318 applicants, 402 PSS candidates met the entry PSS criteria. A selection procedure for Preparatory State Service of college graduates for PSS candidates and cadets of the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy is now underway for the September 2020 intake, with 1,266 candidates.

- The Central Military Hospital Ružomberok is the first hospital in the Orava and Liptov regions with a **Type 2 In-Patient Reception for Urgent Cases**, which is operational on a 24/7 basis and which provides fast and complex health care at one place. The Central Military Hospital has requested its founder – the Ministry of Defence and the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General to provide additional rooms for this purpose. Until they are built, the MOD has made available its military field hospital for this purpose. The new In-Patient Reception for Urgent Cases is equipped with new medical devices worth 230,000 euros.

- Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be an **Allied road movement** involving US troops, escorted by MP and approved in line with the SVK Public Health Authority, across Slovakia from 3 to 9 August 2020. Over the same period, there will be several SVK Army trip convoys on the following routes: Nitra – CV Lešť and back, Prešov – Trenčín, Trenčín – Trebišov, Trebišov – Martin, Michalovce – Kamenica nad Cirochou, Topoľčany – CV Lešť, Zemianske Kostofľany – Prešov and back, as well as SVK Army rail movements from Sereď to Dobrá Niva, from Prešov to Zemianske Kostofľany, and from Martin to Dobrá Niva.

Tree seedlings for future

(1 August) SVK Military Forests and Estates (VLM) will grow approx. 1 million seedlings of beech and coniferous trees in 2020 to form the basis for the future generations of military forests. The SOE plans to increase its production of seedlings up to 1.6 million a year. To yield better results in replanting trees, it mostly uses its own seedlings from the Jovsa Forest Nursery.

Minister Naď said: "This, too, is a way how in Defence we want to contribute to supporting and preserving Slovakia's natural riches. The growing of our own seedlings and subsequent afforestation are the way ahead for permanently sustainable care of military forests to facilitate their preservation for future generations."

VLM Director General Ján Jurica said: "Sustainable woodland management is a long-term process associated with investment into replanting, growing and protecting woodlands. Unlike other natural resources the offer of which is finite and their use is estimated for hundreds or dozens of years, forestry and woodlands have the potential to yield products and services continually, provided that reasonable and permanently sustainable woodland management is in place. Therefore, timber represents a unique and renewable raw material source."



New Polianka as if new again

(1 August) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď launched the trial operation of the Nová Polianka Hotel, which falls under the remit of Horezza, the joint stock company managing MOD hotels. After its extensive refurbishment, it offers upgraded rooms, wellness experiences, breath-taking views, and the fresh clean air of the High Tatras. The Minister thanked the new hotel managers for the work they have done over the past months to open the newly refurbished facility for regular soldiers and civilians in Defence.

Regina Radio's next Full Field Kit, live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat, will focus on the training of Levice-based soldiers for Ex Slovak Shield. Please, send your suggestions and opinions to plnapolna@mod.gov.sk.

Policemen, SOF personnel and firefighters exercise together at Liptovská Mara

(27 July) The Liptovská Mara Reservoir hosted a joint training for stand-by units of the Police Corps Regional Directorates in Žilina and Trenčín, the Žilina-based 5th Special Forces Regiment, and the Firefighting and Rescue Corps, aimed at rehearsing rescue operations in times of natural disasters. The training unfolded in the water, supported by the Ministry of Interior Air Service and an Mi-171 helicopter. Phase 1 included parachute jumps from the helicopter hovering at 300m above the water surface. Phase 2 included extraction training and saw groups being extracted by the helicopter from the water with the use of rope, fast rope rappels from



the helicopter, jumps into the water from the helicopter hovering at 7m above the water surface. The aim is to conduct training in the water at least once a year and compare and align tactical procedures. Based on a written agreement, the cooperation between the Police Corps and the 5th Special Forces Regiment has since long advanced in key areas such as parachute, marksmanship, sniper and diver training. A case in point is the recent training which saw personnel of the Police Special Intervention Unit and the 5th SOF Regiment firing from a Bell 429 helicopter. Also planned are nighttime live firing and nighttime rappels from helicopters.