



## Strategic partner

(3 September) A meeting between Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Matthew G. Boyse was held as part of Mr Boyse's official visit to Slovakia. Also in attendance at the meeting were US Ambassador Bridget A. Brink, US Air Attaché Lt Col Gregory Christiansen and Political Officer Jonathan Herzog.

"Slovakia and the United States of America have a truly strong bilateral relationship in the field of security and defence. The US is also our strategic partner within the North Atlantic Alliance and, importantly, on the direction of our countries, we are unequivocally on the same track," said Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, noting that the discussion focused on deepening our security and defence cooperation, acquisitions for armed forces and security of critical infrastructure. The conversation was, therefore, dominated especially by the opportunities to use US funding to replace the Warsaw Pact-era equipment in service with the Slovak Armed Forces and the ongoing negotiations to reschedule Slovakia's payments under the F-16 fighter jets contract.

At the meeting, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Boyse appreciated the position of the Slovak Republic and its representatives on the situation in Belarus as a clear signal for upholding democracy. Apart from this, he highlighted the MOD's open communications. Among others, Minister Naď updated Mr Boyse on the MOD's activities in countering disinformation and hybrid threats.

During his three-day trip to Slovakia, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Boyse also met with Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Ivan Korčok and Minister of Finance Eduard Heger. He also visited the National Security Authority and the NATO Force Integration Unit Slovakia at Vajnory Barracks.

## Follow-up to Gov Manifesto

(3 September) The Defence Minister's Collegium (MOD Office Board) approved the Follow-up to Government Manifesto in Defence. The document defines in detail what steps and when the MOD wants to take to enable the MOD leaders to meet the commitments laid down in the SVK GOV Manifesto 2020-2024. The Defence Minister thanked his colleagues for the ambitious plans, which are already being implemented and where progress on the commitments will be reviewed regularly.

## SNP marked by ceremonies

(4 September) SVK Air Force HQ hosted a ceremony to mark both the 76th anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising (SNP) and SVK Constitution Day. The ceremony was led by SVK Air Force Commander Brig Gen Róbert Kleštinec. After the reading out of the Presidential Orders on Anniversary Days, selected soldiers were awarded the 75th SNP Anniversary Commemorative Medal, the SVK Minister of Defence Commemorative Medal, 3rd Grade, and the Military Cross for Loyalty to Armed Forces, 3rd Grade. Similar ceremonies were held at SVK Army HQ, HQ BA GAR, and other SVK military establishments.

## 25th International Military Ascent of Mt Kriváň

(5 September) On behalf of the Ministry of Defence, Defence State Secretary Marian Majer took part in the 25th International Military Ascent of Mt Kriváň in honour of the 76th anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising (SNP). Representatives of the Armed Forces and former Chief of Defence Lt Gen Peter Vojtek joined him in paying tribute to the memory of the SNP fighters at the Fallen Partisans Memorial at Štrbské pleso in the High Tatras. Reflecting on the annual Mt Kriváň climb, Mr Majer said: "I am very pleased to have participated in this year's event. It has a long tradition in our armed forces, which contributes to building relations with the public, strengthening patriotism, reinforcing ties, and bringing together armed forces of the participating countries." The State Secretary also paused to remember Cpt in memoriam Štefan Morávka and Cpt in memoriam Ján Rášo who made the ultimate sacrifice whilst fighting in the area of Štrbské pleso. Following the authorisation by Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, the 25th International Military Ascent of Mt Kriváň was organised by the Slovak Soldiers Association.



- SVK personnel serving on the international crisis management operation in Latvia organised **Slovak International Day** at the Ādaži base on 1 Sept. The event aimed to raise awareness of Slovakia among the NATO countries committed to enhanced Forward Presence (eFP).

- The SVK Armed Forces are planning to train 330 **Active Reserves soldiers** next year. Those interested who meet the entry criteria laid down in legislation can contact the SVK Armed Forces Recruitment Teams, based in Slovakia's regional capitals, no later than 25 Sept. More information on the application process and points of contact is available on the MOD's website: <https://mosr.sk/oznamenie-ministerstva-obranysr-o-moznosti-zaradenia-vojakov-v-zalohe-do-aktivnych-zaloh/>.

- On 3 Sept, a SVK Air Force Mi-17M helicopter departed the Helicopter Wing Prešov bound for the Czech Republic to join **Ex Ample Strike**, focused on aligning the actions of Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs), aircraft and helicopter crews and commanders of Army units in a multinational environment.

- Members of the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra undertook **theoretical training for rail movements** on 2-3 Sept. Subsequently, they practised rail movement procedures at Nitra Railway Station.

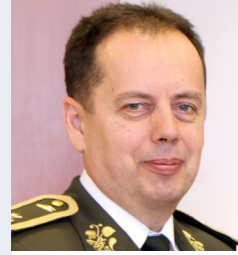
- In early September, **service personnel were called** on to aid the search for František Tkáč, a 73-year old elderly man, who had been missing since 30 August 2020. A total of 30 soldiers of CBRN Bn Rožňava along with military equipment were deployed to support the search in the Podlesok recreational area, located at the village of Hrabušice, in the Slovak Paradise National Park.

- Last Sunday of August saw a party bidding farewell to the summer holidays, titled "On Board a Unicorn", with members of the **SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour** presenting their show programme.

- In partnership with the Educational and Cultural Activities Section of the SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office Liptovský Mikuláš, the Martin Garrison Club, Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin, hosted the 30th **Folk Rock Army Festival**.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to local motorists as 11 **Allied road movements** are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 7 to 13 Sept 2020. The movements have been approved by the SVK Public Health Authority. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct convoy operations from/to: TC Lešť – Nitra, Levice – TC Lešť and back, Zemianske Kostolany – TC Lešť and back, Sliač – Žilina and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Martin and back, Trenčín – Záhorie, Zemianske Kostolany – Žilina and back, Nováky – Driemota, Nováky – Záhorie, Zemianske Kostolany – Zvolen and back, and within the city of Nitra.

## New head of Slovak Army



(2 September) Brig Gen Ivan Pach was appointed the new Commander of the Slovak Army in Trenčín. He was officially introduced in his new role by CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, in the presence of the Army Commanders Corps and invited guests. Recently, Brig Gen Pach served as DCOS at JFC Brunssum. Prior to this posting,

he held the post of COS for Strategic Planning, SVK Defence Staff. He began his military career by pursuing his studies at the Military Academy at Vyškov, where he took the Main Battle Tank (MBT) Troop Leaders Course. Subsequently, he held a series of command and staff appointments across the Army and the Defence Staff. During his career, he was assigned to work within NATO structures. In his remarks, CHOD Gen Zmeko said: "Numerous challenges lie ahead for the new commander, including, notably, ensuring the continuity of efforts to build the Army in all of its areas, so that the Army as a whole is capable of undertaking missions as set out in law." Gen Zmeko referred to the post of Slovak Army Commander as prestigious, one that requires not just total commitment to duties, but also outstanding personal and professional qualities and extensive experience of Defence.

## New Director General of LOTN

(1 September) Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) has a new Director General. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has authorised Ľubomír Galko to lead the company until a regular selection procedure for the post takes place. He is to replace the outgoing Director General and Chair of the Board, Vladimír Šimanský. Mr Naď said: "Ľubomír Galko takes indisputable credit for fighting corruption and has a wealth of managerial experience from different areas – he is thoroughly familiar with Defence as he served in the capacity of Defence Minister, he was also an MP and a manager in private companies." He added that Galko has adequate security clearance for the post. The head of the MOD wants to utilise Galko's expertise in order to fight corruption and introduce greater transparency into the processes within the state-owned company. "In the past, he went after such cases particularly hard. That is why I rely on him to approach LOTN in the same way. The former MOD leadership has left the company in very bad numbers and in a condition that has not much in common with transparency," he emphasised, adding that he will continue to replace managers across Defence, where justified and necessary. A regular selection procedure for the post of Director General of LOTN is scheduled to take place within the next 6 months.

## Slovak Rifles: 5 weeks of intense training in the field

(4 September) Ex Slovak Rifles, the intense 5-week training programme of 13th Mechanised Battalion Group was concluded at TC Lešť. Nearly 1,000 soldiers from across units of the SVK Army and SVK Air Force, augmented by some other elements of the SVK Armed Forces and 280 pieces of military equipment, tested their readiness by undergoing intense training and certification. Lt Col Richard Kiraly, Commander 13th Mech Bn Levice, said: "The certification exercise, which marks the culmination of the nearly two-year preparation, was originally planned for June. However, due to the epidemiological situation, we had to



reschedule it and take anti-pandemic measures."

The last week of the exercise tested the coordination and readiness of the command staff and Group units to perform assigned tasks, when their actions on the battalion-level tactical live-fire exercise were tested by a certification team from the SVK Army and Defence Staff. The final phase of the exercise was inspected by the new Commander of the SVK

Army, Brig Gen Ivan Pach. Once certified, 13th Mech Bn Grp will take on the role of a unit earmarked for NATO collective defence operations, with its stand-by period starting from 1 Jan 2021.