



## Threats and strategies

(9 December) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad attended the International ITAPA Congress in Bratislava. Speaking on the discussion panel "Do We Know How To Face Hybrid Threats and Disinformation?", he underscored the necessity to deliver an effective and coordinated response to hybrid threats, including to disinformation narratives, faced by Slovakia today. Key to the Nation's answer to them are the new strategic documents – the SVK Security Strategy and the SVK Defence Strategy.

Mr Nad said: "In assessing the security landscape, the Security Strategy clearly states that Slovakia faces hybrid threats. That's why we want to strengthen our capacity and expertise in public administration and state-wide coordination in this area." In that spirit, he appreciated the excellent collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in formulating the new strategic documents.

Disinformation and hybrid threats are also treated in the new SVK Defence Strategy, which sets out that identifying potential threats and delivering a timely response to them is a pre-requisite for tackling challenges in cyberspace. "Of course, prevention proves most effective. Therefore, the Defence Strategy reckons with the promotion of public awareness of how the defence of the State is delivered, which will increase public resilience against disinformation and malign propaganda," he emphasised.

Another important initiative is the Action Plan For Coordination of Fight Against Hybrid Threats and Disinformation. Its ambition is to identify problems and solutions in this field. Slovakia has approached hybrid threats actively within NATO since the Alliance recognised cyberspace as a domain of operations in 2016, as well as committing to bolstering cyber defence at the national level.



## Mobile test sites

(10 December) Following the call for a rollout of additional test sites by the Ministry of Health, the MOD has set up 18 mobile test sites across military facilities in Slovakia. These are open to the public from 10:00 to 18:00 every working day. As well as serving the needs of the public, the sites also cater for the requirement of the Armed Forces to check soldiers for the virus whenever required. Minister Nad noted that the Armed Forces are ready to test a minimum of 250 people a day at each test site thanks to the personnel and assets deployed there. The mobile test sites have special pathways leading to their entrances, ensuring the safety of military personnel and members of the public. The test sites are operational in the military garrisons of Bratislava, Poprad, Trenčín, Hlohovec, Levice, Martin, Michalovce, Prešov, Rožňava, Sereď, Topoľčany, Trebišov, Ružomberok, Malacky, Nitra, Sliac, Žilina and Liptovský Mikuláš.

## Recognising Service leavers for their long-time work

(10 December) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad and Chief of the Defence Staff Gen Daniel Zmeko met with 11 Service leavers, including a general, nine colonels and a sergeant major. They will be retiring from Service with effect from 31 December 2020 and receiving a full career pension.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad said: "To the Armed Forces over the years of their service, all of these soldiers have given the best of themselves – their time, talent, effort and commitment, doing their utmost towards the security of Slovakia and its citizens. For this, they deserve my deep respect and gratitude." Minister Nad and Gen Zmeko thanked the leavers of the SVK Armed Forces for their dedicated service and awarded them military medals.



- Using an Airbus A330 Voyager, the Royal Air Force (RAF) transported SVK troops from and to NATO's eFP in Latvia on 3 and 10 Dec. In turn, the SVK military has provided the UK Armed Forces with 9 pre-paid flying hours under the Strategic Airlift International Solution (SALIS) project.
- Service personnel took over five specially designed UDS excavators to meet the requirements of the **Engineer Battalion Sereď** and those of the SVK Air Force. As a priority, SVK sappers will support military and disaster relief operations, including during natural disasters or industrial incidents such as fire and floods.
- **SVK EUFOR Althea troops** took part in a blood donation campaign organised by the Red Cross in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Alongside performing your duties on a daily basis, I am thankful to you for finding time to support such an important event!" said Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad.
- Through its grants, this year the MOD has supported a number of interesting projects in the run-up to Christmas, including a book of fairy tales titled **A Prince and the Beauty of the Earth** by the **Military Support Foundation**. With 378 pages in Slovak and English languages, the book contains fairy tales from over 30 countries where SVK troops have served on peace support missions and operations since 1993.
- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as three **Allied road movements** by US and Croatian troops are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 14 to 20 December 2020. The MOD stresses that the Allied transits have been approved in line with SVK Public Health Authority-issued guidelines.

Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct convoy movements from/to: Nitra – Kuchyňa, Kuchyňa – Moldava nad Bodvou, Moldava nad Bodvou – Nitra, Zemianske Kostolany – Bratislava and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Nitra and back, Trebišov – Viničné, Viničné – Kuchyňa, Prešov – Zemianske Kostolany and back, and Zemianske Kostolany – Levice and back.

## The Full Field Kit

radio programme on **Radio Regina**, live on **Fri at 21.05** with a rebroadcast at **00.30 on Sat**, will focus on **major 2020 developments across Defence**. Please, forward your suggestions and opinions to [pinapolna@mod.gov.sk](mailto:pinapolna@mod.gov.sk).

## Artillerymen along with equipment head out to Baltics

(7 December) For the first time in history, Slovakia is set to deploy an artillery unit along with its artillery systems abroad. Specifically, this concerns artillerymen of the Self-propelled Artillery Battalion Michalovce, who will be operating the ZUZANA Self-propelled Gun Howitzer (SpGH), the ALIGATOR Forward Observation Artillery Vehicle (AFOV), and other special purpose and support equipment. As part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltic States, they will be tasked to deliver indirect fire support to the NATO eFP BG Latvia. Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad said: "In the coming days an artillery unit will take over from our Mechanised Company in the Baltics and what is of importance is that our artillery systems will be deployed for the first time. For our



service personnel, this is a unique opportunity to reaffirm the qualities of the Slovak Armed Forces and contribute to enhancing cooperation, collective defence and the solidarity of Allies. I keep my fingers crossed for them and I wish them every success in accomplishing a great many missions." He went on to make it clear that NATO's eFP across the Baltic States is not an offensive operation, but it is training and defensive in nature. From December 2020 onwards, a total of 130 SVK military personnel will be deployed on Ādaži Training Area as part of the SVK Task Force dubbed "GENERAL KORDA", integrating with another eight NATO member countries: Canada, Czechia, Slovenia, Spain, Poland, Italy, Montenegro and Albania.

## Cooperation with France

(7 December) Today's meeting between Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad and French Ambassador HE Mr Christophe Léonzi was dedicated to current issues of the SVK-FRA politico-military engagement. As part of the talks, there was room to discuss Slovakia's EU and NATO commitments and the modernisation programmes of the Slovak Armed Forces, including the procurement of new radar systems. On COVID-19 operations, Minister Nad updated Ambassador Léonzi on the preparation and conduct of Op Shared Responsibility, giving details of its organisation, including on many different aspects of logistics, material and personnel. Minister Nad briefed Ambassador Léonzi on the procurement of new 3D radar systems to enter service with the SVK Air Force.

## Thank you to military chaplains

(10 December) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad visited the Central Office of Ecumenical and Pastoral Service (EPS) in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps to thank military chaplains for their service on domestic and international crisis management missions and operations.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad said: "The work of our Chaplaincy Service may not be the most visible part of our Armed Forces, yet it is of immense importance. Military chaplains offer assistance every day, whereas they are able and willing to help people who find themselves even in the most difficult of circumstances. For their service and exceptional deeds, I want to thank them in person." Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad awarded and presented them with the 75th SNP Anniversary and End of WW2 Medal.

## State budget for 2021 passed

(9 December) Parliament passed the Draft State Budget for 2021, allocating 1.67 billion or 1.75% of GDP to the Ministry of Defence, of which €447 million the Ministry of Finance has reserved for capital expenditure in its General Treasury Administration Budget. Speaking about the state budget, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad said: "I am delighted that we are edging closer to 2% of GDP that we want to invest in defence. I will do the maximum I can to spend every single euro in a purposeful, effective, economical and transparent way to drive forward improvements in Service conditions, financial support and social welfare for soldiers, equipment procurement and modernisation projects, and hence take the Armed Forces forward."