



## Procurement of 3D radars

(13 January) The SVK Government agreed with the MOD's proposal to procure 17 3D radar systems from Israel under a G2G Agreement. This is the most advantageous complex offer for the purchase price of €148.2m, VAT included, which fully and completely meets the technical and operational requirements of the SVK Armed Forces. The new equipment is to replace 24 radars, of which all, except for one, have reached the end of their service life.

Appreciating the Government's decision, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad said: "Since 2010 Slovakia has kept trying to procure advanced, functional and reliable radar systems, but to no avail for different reasons. Therefore, it pleases me so much that this Government has succeeded in doing so. Safeguarding our airspace is a key factor in delivering on our priority to ensure the security of our country and citizens."

Alongside the Israeli offer, the Ministry of Defence submitted to the SVK Government the offer of the United Kingdom for €193.4m, VAT included, and the offer of France for €249.9m, VAT included. However, the two countries exceeded the total estimated purchase price set at €155mil. The lowest price and fully compliant radar parameters pointed in favour of the Israeli bid, and so did an analysis of the NATO Communications and Information (NCI) Agency, which found the Israeli bid to be the most advantageous solution when it comes to integrating systems in the NATO environment. Needless to add, the same airspace surveillance systems have been procured by the Czech Republic and Hungary.

On the advantages of the winning bid, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad said that this means getting cutting-edge technology for a lower price than the one Israel offered in the previous tender in 2019. The Israeli offer is €5m lower than the previous one and delivers a saving of €35m on life cycle costs. In addition, the winning bid guarantees reinvesting 35% of the contract price, approx. €50m, in Slovakia. "The money will be used to support domestic economy and employment. Israel has also satisfied the condition for a declaration of commitment to involving the SVK defence industry in this procurement project, whereas we will insist that a state-run company operating in the SVK defence industry must be the industrial project partner in Slovakia," he said.

Yet another important factor strengthening the legitimacy of the SVK Government's decision is the transparency of the whole tender. Most importantly, not a single change to the competition conditions was made throughout the tender process.

On the evaluation process, the head of the MOD emphasised that individual bids were evaluated by a 42-member MOD Tender Evaluation Panel. Needless to note that no interest groups, nor politicians or he himself intervened in the selection process. By procuring 17 pieces of 3D mobile medium, short and very short range radars, the MOD will ensure round-the-clock surveillance, air traffic control (ATC), and a continuous air situational picture (ASP) over Slovakia within the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS). Equally important, this will significantly strengthen the security of the Schengen border. After today's decision of the SVK Government, the MOD will enter into negotiations with representatives of the Israeli Government to negotiate all terms & conditions and coordinate the steps ahead. If all conditions are met and a deal is agreed, the Minister has been given the mandate to sign the G2G contract. If no agreement is reached by 31 Mar 2021, the Ministry of Defence will enter into negotiations with the UK Government and, subsequently, with the French Government.

## L. Galko: We care about health of our employees, they will be tested regularly

(12 January) The managers of Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN), an MOD-owned joint stock company, are fully aware of their responsibility to safeguard the health of their employees, which is why they have decided to mass test them regularly for COVID-19. In an effort to stop the virus from spreading widely, round 1 of testing took place in accordance with a planned time schedule and with distancing measures in place on Tuesday 12 Jan 2021. The company's employees were also checked for coronavirus antibodies. LOTN Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors Ľubomír Galko said: "Some LOTN employees work either fully or partially from home, but when aircraft need to be repaired, most of the employees must be present in the company. After the difficult year 2020 when there was a shortage of contracts, it's good news that our repair services are on demand in 2021. So, each employee is needed and forms an inseparable part of our team to help deliver good economic results and our contractual commitments. On the other hand, there is the ongoing pandemic and we must approach it with utmost responsibility. Four employees have tested positive for coronavirus in today's testing, which equates to a positivity rate of 1.66%. "As such I hail the in-house testing programme a success. The newly detected cases will help us protect our employees from getting the infection in the near future. Of course, strict measures are in place across our society due to the pandemic and the state of emergency. We care about our employees and their health, which is why we are committed to testing them regularly. In hard times like these, this will allow us to work towards delivering our contracts, so that we take LOTN forward with success," concluded Ľubomír Galko.



- The Office of SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General organised the **Sanitation Worker In Emergencies Course** at Martin Garrison's Podháj accommodation facilities. 48 Armed Forces personnel passed the course successfully from 12 to 15 Jan. They can be deployed to medical facilities and retirement homes in support of medical staff as part of domestic crisis management operations. The course participants received the Certificate of Attendance from Director of the Office of Slovak Armed Forces Surgeon General Col Roman Jantoš MD.

- The **Azimuth 24/7 YouTube Channel** regularly brings a unique insight into the life of the SVK Armed Forces. This time we visit the Nitra hospital where military personnel are helping medical staff to cope with the influx of coronavirus patients. Another video feed is a tribute to air defenders and artillerymen who mark 15 years since the establishment of their units. Team Azimuth 24/7 is looking for a new member. For more information see the latest video feeds at the Azimuth 24/7 YouTube Channel.

- Commander of the Special Operations Forces **Col Branislav Benka** met with the husband of the recipient of the Military Deed of the Year Award, military medic SSgt Ivana Krivošová, who is currently serving in Afghanistan. They talked to her via a videolink. SSgt Ivana Krivošová works with the Office of SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General and her husband SSgt Peter Krivoš serves with the Special Operations Forces. Col Benka thanked them for their service, congratulated SSgt Krivošová on her award, and gave a bunch of flowers for her to her husband.

- Slovakia's first artillery troops in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence commemorated **Artillery and Air Defence Day** on 15 Jan. A fire support battery, reconnaissance teams, and a fire support coordination group conducted a two-week intense training activity, culminating in a live fire exercise involving the Zuzana Self-Propelled Gun Howitzers (SpGH). Fresh snow on the sandy grounds with temperatures reaching -18°C tested the drivers' skills, the operators' readiness and the SpGH platforms. The artillerymen accomplished the tasks very well. At the conclusion of the live fire exercise, Battery Commander Capt Tomáš Quecke read out the Order of the SVK Chief of Defence on the occasion of Artillery and Air Defence Day.

- 175 soldier trainees went through the gates of the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin to join **Initial Military Training (IMT)** as part of the first intake in 2021.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as nine Allied **road movements** by US, Croatian and Polish troops are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 18 to 24 January 2021. The MOD stresses that the Allied transits have been approved in line with the SVK Public Health Authority-issued guidelines. Over the same period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct road convoy movements from/to: Martin – Prešov and back, Prešov – Trebišov and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Nitra and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Michalovce and back, Sliac – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Trebišov – Viničné and Viničné – Kuchyňa, as well as a round trip railway movement from Zemianske Kostolany to Prešov.

## CMH launches vaccination



(11 January) The SNP Central Military Hospital (CMH) – Faculty Hospital Ružomberok launched its coronavirus vaccination campaign targeting its employees. "We have 3,900 doses of the vaccine at disposal. Nearly 600 employees have shown their interest in getting vaccinated," said CMH Director Brig Vladimír Lengvarský MD MPH, who is the first person to have been vaccinated against coronavirus in the hospital. "In the fight against COVID-19, it is necessary to protect the health of our health professionals, so that they continue to provide medical care to our citizens. That's why I'm very pleased that the Defence-managed SNP Central Military Hospital Ružomberok has begun the vaccination programme. I wish to thank our hospital staff for their dedicated work and I wish them a lot of energy for the days to come," said Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad. The 1st floor of the Hospital Directorate has been converted into a vaccination centre. Every employee who shows interest in the vaccination will take a test for anti-bodies and an antigen swab test before getting vaccinated. Members of the wide public will be vaccinated in the new coronavirus pavilion. Currently, 56 coronavirus patients are being treated in the Ružomberok hospital. Of them, 13 are on ventilators. The hospital has converted 141 beds for coronavirus patients and has 16 ventilators.

## Georgia in NATO MNMPBAT



(14 January) The accession process of Georgia's MOD Military Police to the NATO Multinational Military Police Battalion (MNMPBAT) was completed during an official ceremony on 28 Dec 2020.

The Partnership Agreement was signed by Commander of the Military Police Department Col Giorgi Bubunauri (GEO) and representatives of all MNMPBAT countries. Due to pandemic restrictions in place, the accession ceremony was held via a videolink. Georgia's partnership status is the first step towards being granted full participant status in NATO MNMPBAT in 2022. The accession ceremony was attended by Deputy Chief of the Defence Forces Brig Irakli Chichinadze, Deputy Leader of SNGP Core Team Col Marian Dorka, Defence Attaché of Poland to Georgia Col Adam Awdziej and Head of the MP initiative Col Piotr Pawlica.

## Training Year 2021 kicks off below Zobor Hill somewhat untraditionally

(14 January) With the epidemiological situation worsening dramatically in Nitra County, the Nitra City Council Crisis Management Staff and the Nitra County Security Council approved three rounds of county-wide testing for COVID-19 with the antigen swab tests. In line with the SVK Government's decision No. 1 of 6 Jan 2021, the SVK Armed Forces set aside up to 150 soldiers, including 30 medical professionals. 116 test sites were open to the public for testing from Fri 8 Jan to Sun 10 Jan. Regional Command (RC) Nitra was reactivated under the command of Col Jozef Paňko. Members of the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra, reinforced by personnel of the 12th Mechanised Battalion Nitra, were put in charge of the test sites, with military medical professionals taking swab tests at the sites. RC Nitra coordinated their

activities, provided 24/7 situational updates, operated a call centre, and actively engaged with local authorities. The commanders of the test sites were trained in how to use the TrustOne app, a pilot project to speed up



the administrative process for testing and replace the paper version of the COVID-19 test result certificate. Commander RC Nitra Jozef Paňko himself verified the readiness of individual test sites and the degree of their organisation. Testing got off to a good start and there were words of praise from Nitra City leaders, mayors of municipalities and citizens. 55 military personnel were on the front line at the test sites on Fri, 142 on Sat, and 124 on Sun. 95,558 residents were tested for COVID-19 from 8 to 10 Jan, with a 2.44% positivity rate.