



Slovakia has a new strategy

(27 January) The parliamentary plenum passed the SVK Defence Strategy as a fundamental strategic document. More than 15 years on from the 2005 SVK Defence Strategy, Slovakia now has an updated strategic defence review in the field of security and defence, one which fully reflects today's challenges of the ever-changing security landscape. The proposal was supported by 108 MPs out of 120 MPs present in the Parliament. The SVK Security Strategy was approved on 28 Jan.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "The SVK Government has committed to creating an adequate strategic framework for the provision of State defence. After an exemplary cooperation of all parties involved, I'm very pleased that we've succeeded in fulfilling one of the SVK Government Manifesto commitments, and perhaps even more importantly, in formulating and approving such an important document as the SVK Defence Strategy after so many years." For this, he gave a special thanks to all those involved in drafting it. "The new SVK Defence Strategy is mainly the outcome of close cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. It recognises Slovakia as having anchored its foreign policy in the Euro-Atlantic region, thereby contributing significantly to strengthening relations with our partners in the field of security and defence, whilst at the same time creating the conditions for delivering joint solutions to current challenges," he added. The SVK Defence Strategy was drafted in cooperation with other central government bodies, political representatives and the wider defence community, including academia and local defence industry. All proposed ideas were worked into the final draft document.

In line with the adopted document, the basic goal of SVK defence policy remains to preserve Slovakia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders. It reckons with enhancing the quality of State defence management, upgrading the capacities and capabilities of the SVK Armed Forces, and giving the domestic defence industry a greater stake in delivery of defence. In addition, it relies on achieving greater readiness of SVK citizens to deliver State defence and on making sure that there are enough resources for defence and that they are used effectively and transparently. The SVK Parliament also agreed with the proposal for an uplift of military personnel to support EUFOR Op Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and for setting aside soldiers for the Immediate Reserve Force (IRF). Out of 124 MPs present in the Parliament, 111 MPs voted for the proposal. This comes as the UK Armed Forces have withdrawn their personnel from the operation after Brexit. (consistent with the latest mandate, up to 60 military personnel (the original mandate was for 51 soldiers) can now be deployed in support of EUFOR Op Althea as from 1 February 2021. This will enable SVK military personnel to take command of the Liaison and Observation Team (LOT) in Banja Luka. The SVK Government also agreed to set aside 160 soldiers for the out-of-country Immediate Reserve Force.

Officers and generals receive certificates of promotion

(28 January) Five colonels took over the brigadier's stars and the certificates of promotion during an official promotion ceremony held today at the Grassalkovich Palace, Bratislava. At the ceremony, President of the Slovak Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová promoted Col Pavol Tököly, Col Róber Tóth, Col Roman Jantoš, Col Branislav Benka and Col Ladislav Dovhun to Brigadier (OF-6), whilst concurrently promoting Brig Ivan Pach and Brig Štefan Kovács to Major General (OF-7) and Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda to Lieutenant General (OF-8). Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď made it clear that these officers and generals were promoted on the merit of their service to the country. "Their long-time distinguished record of service to the benefit of the State and our citizens speaks in favour of them," he said. He further noted that the Government-approved proposal for officer and general officer appointments and promotions is fully compliant with the needs of the Slovak Armed Forces to staff key positions within the command structures as well as with the requirement to keep balance in the Officers Corps.



- Working in close cooperation with Tokajik village authorities, the Museum of Military History Svidník, Institute of Military History Bratislava, has restored the **Tokajik Tragedy Memorial** along with the cemetery and the Tokajik Tragedy Memorial Site. The project has seen the full restoration of the cemetery entrance to the site, graves, wooden elements, lighting, pavements and external walls.

- On 25 Jan, 31 officers joined the 18th **Higher Command Staff Course** hosted by Gen Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy. The officers will finish the course by defending their papers on 28 and 29 Apr.

- New appointments. On 25 Jan, Commander SVK Army Brig Ivan Pach bade farewell to Col Slavomír Verčimák, DCOS SVK Army, whose next appointment as Commander **2nd Mech Bde Prešov** has already been announced. Lt Col Štefan Oravkin has been named the new Commander Supply Base (SB) II Martin. DCOM SB II Lt Col Milan Videnský is leaving after 28 years of service with effect from 1 Feb 2021. Maj Ľubomír Petrik has been promoted to Lt Col and appointed the new COS SB II. Maj Ján Dolník is leaving the Service after 25 years of service under his belt.

- SVK Armed Forces YouTube Channel – **Azimuth 24/7** Episode 19 will introduce a 1st lieutenant you most probably already know from a TV series and fashion magazines: Adam of the SVK Presidential Guard of Honour. And thanks to combined efforts of Sereď-based sappers and Humenné-based firefighters, a provisional bridge over the River Hornád has been set up between Kysak and Veľká Lodina.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as seven **Allied road movements** are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 1 to 7 Feb 2021. Over the period, the SVK Armed Forces will conduct road movements from/to: Zemianske Kostolany – Michalovce and back, Ruskov – Nováky, Zemianske Kostolany – Nitra and back, and Záhorec – Ruskov.

The FULL FIELD KIT
radio programme on Radio Regina, live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat, will bring an update on the artillerymen of Michalovce serving with the NATO eFP BG Latvia. Your opinions and suggestions are welcome via email to pinapolna@mod.gov.sk.

Ministry of Defence to give out €320,000 in grants to NGOs this year

(29 January) The SVK Ministry of Defence will give out grants to NGOs to see their meaningful projects through to completion. Compared to last year, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has decided to increase the amount of grants available more than threefold, in other words, this year the MOD is to disburse €320,000 in grants to NGO projects. The deadline for sending applications is 31 Mar 2021. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "I guess there will be no shortage of applicants. Thanks to distributing these financial resources among NGOs, we will contribute to fulfilling one of our goals – to arouse interest in and raise public awareness of the themes our Ministry lives as business as usual." He went on to add that those eligible to apply for grants, i.e. civic associations, foundations, non-investment funds and non-profit organisations should send written applications. The MOD plans to support projects aimed at educational events, military themed activities and training for young people, cultural, social and sporting activities which motivate

Op Saving Lives Together

(26 January) As part of Bratislava county-wide screening for COVID-19, members of the SVK Presidential Guard of Honour (GOH) and of HQ BA GAR participated in testing local populations. They worked as coordinators at 72 testing sites. Their task was to ensure smooth screening and compliance with the epidemiological measures in place. Four medical staff administered swab tests at Testing Site 302 – Dukla Barracks. Members of the Logistics Battalion Hlohovec, too, joined the fight against coronavirus. Up to 100 logisticians supported Op Saving Lives Together in the role of testing site coordinators under the command of Regional Command (RC) Hlohovec. Military Police assigned eight military policemen to testing sites and 10 patrols. A MP mobile testing team was deployed to Zvolen Garrison under RC Zvolen, to test MP personnel and Armed Forces military and civilian staff and family members.

NATO Military Committee



(27 January) Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko took part in the 185th NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session. Topics of discussion included NATO missions, operations, key concepts and activities. Allied Chiefs of Defence and the operational partners of Resolute Support (RS) in Afghanistan, NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) and KFOR in Kosovo discussed current developments and future perspectives. In separate meetings, Gen Zmeko met with the new SVK Permanent Representative to NATO Peter Bátor and spoke with Ukrainian Chief of Defence Serhiy Korniychuk about further cooperation.

Developing cooperation with ROK

(28 January) Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer held talks with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Slovakia, HE Mr Chung Byung Hwa at MOD Main Building. During the meeting with the South Korean Ambassador, Deputy Defence Minister Majer provided an update on the MOD's goals and priorities in the field of security and defence and presented the new SVK Defence Strategy. Also discussed was the SVK-ROK bilateral engagement, including support for domestic defence industry and cyber security cooperation. Today's discussion topics also included the SVK Army and SVK Air Force modernisation programmes, ways to support defence manufacturers, armaments cooperation, and F-16 fighter jet pilot training. Special attention was paid to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Korea, which is being drafted to make sure that the SVK-ROK ties go from strength to strength.

Slovak citizens towards patriotism and which raise greater public awareness of NATO and EU issues, as well as promoting the SVK Armed Forces, catering for the cultural, spiritual and social needs of regular soldiers, reservists and veterans, and supporting top level and high performing sportspeople and sporting talents. Also eligible for grants are NGOs that can facilitate the staffing and recruiting process in the SVK Armed Forces or protect and develop military cultural and historical heritage, with special focus on military history. Grants may also be awarded to cover the costs associated with participation in events organised by international organisations working closely with armed forces, including membership fees. To provide guidance for applicants, the MOD has set out 15 priority areas for projects. Any further enquiries and applications for grants should be sent by email to dotacie@mod.gov.sk.