



NATO to withdraw from Afghanistan

(14 February) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' participated in a North Atlantic Council (NAC) video conference meeting of Allied Foreign and Defence Ministers. The central theme of the meeting was the drawdown of Resolute Support Mission (RSM) forces from Afghanistan.

On Afghanistan, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' said: "Today's NATO decision to start withdrawing forces from Afghanistan is proof that our work brings concrete results in the form of restoring a sustainable, relatively secure state of the country. Even thanks to the Slovak contributions, terrorist groups have been denied safe haven in the country." Also present at the meeting was Foreign and European Affairs Deputy Minister Martin Klus.

Speaking at the meeting, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' said: "We feel justification that the situation in the country and the ongoing peace negotiations enable us to adopt a decision to gradually end NATO's nearly 20-year-long engagement in Afghanistan." He specified that the withdrawal of SVK troops from Afghanistan should be completed between 1 May and 11 September 2021.

The MOD along with other Allies and partners will plan the next steps in withdrawing our troops from the region in a way there is no threat to the results achieved and the sustainable, relatively secure state of the country. At the conclusion of the NAC meeting, Minister Nad' confirmed the MOD and Slovakia will continue to support the Afghan security forces to remain capable of ensuring the security of the country and the Afghan people.

Through its participation in international crisis management operations, including providing humanitarian and development aid, Slovakia has contributed significantly to the stability of Afghanistan and the building of Afghan national capacities.

Market research continued

(15 April) The Military Technical and Testing Institute (VTSÚ) Záhorie hosted static and dynamic demonstrations of the ASCOD Tracked Armoured Fighting Vehicle



by General Dynamics European Land Systems (GDELS). The ASCOD Capabilities Demonstration Day was attended by Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad', Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, and National Armaments Director Jozef Zekucia. The SVK MOD aims to select the most cost-effective and optimised solution to upgrading the SVK Army's fleet of infantry fighting vehicles. Mr Nad' said: "Our requirements on this issue are clear – the final solution must be effective and compliant with all conditions as set out by service members, and, of course, it must be an economical and transparent process." As he added, this procurement process will play its part in delivering our NATO commitment to standing up a Heavy Mechanised Brigade. The aim of the event was to present the technical features and functional parameters of the ASCOD Armoured Fighting Vehicle through specific firing and driving demonstration scenarios. As part of the official engagement, MOD officials and GDELS representatives met for talks to explore how best to get the SVK defence industry involved in the production and delivery of new armoured fighting vehicles for the SVK Armed Forces.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' welcomes Žampa brothers

(13 April) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' met with brothers Adam and Andreas Žampa, sportsmen of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica and Slovak World Cup alpine ski racers. He thanked them for representing the Military Sports Centre and Slovakia. He was keen to find out how the MOD could contribute to further improving the training conditions for the Dukla members. Mr Nad' said: "Undoubtedly, the Žampa brothers have great sporting potential and we will help them capitalize on it." He wants to see more meetings with Dukla sportsmen and women to discuss their views. The MOD plans to upgrade the infrastructure and equipment of the Military Sports Centre, so that all Dukla members can enjoy supportive training conditions. Among the biggest investments are the complex reconstruction works to the Training Stadium in Štiavnický. As a result, compared to 2019, the 2020 budget of the Centre was increased by about 125%. This year the Centre will have its accommodation facility upgraded and the main administrative building insulated.



"I am pleased with the ongoing intense dialogue with the MOD leadership, with their step forward in making investments in equipment, and with overall support," said Adam Žampa, the first SVK skier to have made it to the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup Finals giant slalom, where he placed 17th this year.

- The Information Security Branch, Stationary CIS (ZaSKIS) Base Trenčín, warns the CIS users in Defence of **phishing emails** in which fraudsters come across as employees of Slovak Post, postal services operator, and using a fraudulent email in English, they offer cryptocurrency services. Do not respond to such emails, nor click on the URL links in them, but you should report this immediately to the ZaSKIS Call Centre Trenčín on 0960 401 111. Administrators will delete such emails from service email boxes.

- Located at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin, the NCO Academy's this year's first **OR-5 Course** for the corporals in the Other Ranks category to be promoted to the most junior NCO rank of Sergeant is culminating. The participants followed lessons via the Internet as part of the distance learning module before attending classes at the Martin-based NCO Academy and undertaking practical training on Martin Garrison's Sučany Training Ground for eight days.

- 113 male and female candidates for joining the Services have completed their compulsory pre-boot camp quarantine and are now going to undertake 7 weeks of **initial military training** at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin.

- As well as performing duty tasks on Op EUFOR Althea in BaH, SVK service personnel, aided by the Military Support Foundation, help people in need. A SVK team of Novo Sarajevo has donated durable food and personal hygiene items to three families. The Red Cross director in Trnov RS appreciated the charitable help of the SVK team of Foča in the form of disinfectants and personal hygiene items. In addition, service personnel of the SVK LOT Visegrad donated 200 infusions and 125 infusion adapters for a local hospital.

- As part of the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP), the International Courses Section at AOS organised online **initial tactical and operational planning courses** for 52 participants from 12 military educational institutions based in Ukraine.

- **Capt Michal Hloža** took up the appointment of Chief of Staff SVK Army Command Support Battalion.

- Michalovce Garrison's Biela Hora Training Ground and Poruba pod Vihorlatom Firing Range hosted concentrated **training for snipers** from 22nd Mech Bn Michalovce. It consisted of topographical, tactical and firing modules. PFC Miroslav Benedek was named Best Sniper on the range.

- After nearly 30 years of service in the SVK Army and nearly 20 years of service with CSS Bn Prešov, **Maj Alena Kochanská**, COS CSS Bn Prešov, has left the Armed Forces.

- 18 reservists underwent regular **training of the Active Reserves** for CBRN Bn Rožňava on 12-23 April. The training of active reservists at TC Lešť was overseen by Capt Machajdíkova, with focus on performance of tasks in crisis situations.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as 11 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 19 to 25 Apr 2021, and so are SVK military road movements from/to: Michalovce – Dubnica nad Váhom and back, Alekšince – Lešť, Nitra – Lešť, Viničné – Lešť, Martin – Prešov, Prešov – Trebišov and back, Nitra – Zemianske Kostolány, Rožňava – Prešov and back, Zemianske Kostolány – Martin and back, Poprad – Ruskov, Zemianske Kostolány – Lešť, Prešov – Zemianske Kostolány and back. Also scheduled are rail movements from/to: Zlatovce – Trebišov, Martin – Trebišov and Zemianske Kostolány – Prešov.

The FULL FIELD KIT radio programme
on **• RÁDIO REGINA, live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat, will present SVK soldiers in Afghanistan.**

Your suggestions and opinions are much appreciated by email: plnapolna@mod.gov.sk.

We keep our promises



(16 April) As part of his away day trips to individual units and facilities of the SVK Armed Forces, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' revisited the military units based in Michalovce.

The aim of the fact-finding mission was to see for himself the state and progress achieved in the MOD's investment activities through which the MOD seeks to restore the inherited infrastructure which has been underinvested in the long term. Over the past months, one of the buildings at City Barracks, which fell into disrepair and failed to meet the current hygienic and safety standards, has undergone reconstruction and upgrade. "One of our priority goals – to improve everyday Service conditions – is gradually becoming a reality. Although there is a lot of work ahead of us, I believe our efforts will bring desired results and will be appreciated by our service personnel," said Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad'. As part of his away day, he paid a visit to Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area. The MOD has set aside €4,126,800 incl. VAT for the projects to upgrade the infrastructure at City and Dukla Barracks in Michalovce.



DDM Majer in Sweden

(13 April) Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer paid a visit to the Kingdom of Sweden. Joined by representatives of the SVK Armed Forces, Mr Majer visited BAE Systems Hägglunds as part of a market research being conducted under the SVK MOD's IFV Programme for the purpose of delivering on Slovakia's NATO commitment to standing up a Heavy Mechanised Brigade. As part of the official programme, Deputy Defence Minister Majer also held online talks with State Secretary of the Swedish Ministry of Defence Jan-Olof Lind on current themes and possibilities of bilateral cooperation. Swedish State Secretary Lind expressed his interest in restoring the SWE-SVK Commission as work is underway on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between both countries.

Gift from Germany



(12 April) The Federal Republic of Germany has gifted 31 new ventilators, worth approx. €150,000, to the Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital Ružomberok to treat

seriously ill COVID-19 patients. 25 ventilators were gifted by the Federal Ministry of Defence and 6 ventilators by the Federal Ministry of Health. Defence Minister Nad' extended the warmest of thanks to both Federal Ministries for the gift on behalf of Slovakia. The medical devices have been delivered to the Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General by the DEU DA. They are to be handed over to the CMH-FH Ružomberok in the coming days.