



## V4 on defence

(21 June) The Visegrad Group has the potential and interest in extending its cooperation in the field of defence and security. Alongside its V4 Battle Group, prospective joint procurement programmes and coordination of statements within the transatlantic structures, the V4 seeks to extend its cooperation to include strategic communications (STRATCOM), Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď announced after the V4 Defence Ministers Meeting at HQ MND-NE in Elblag, Poland.

“Joint exercises are a most suitable platform for improving the ability of our armed forces to operate together on operations. It was with pleasure that I provided an update on Ex Slovak Shield as it takes place these days in Slovakia. Although our experience shows that identifying joint V4 armaments programmes is quite challenging, we will continue to look for projects that may generate savings,” said Minister Naď. On the V4’s future prospective cooperation, Mr Naď said: “The preparation of the V4 EU Battle Group for its standby period in the first half of 2023 remains one of our priorities. The joint munitions procurement project, too, is an excellent result for the Visegrad Group. Looking into the future, through more projects like these, our goal is to strengthen cooperation among our defence manufacturers.”

Ministers used the meeting to align their positions on issues related to the current NATO and EU agendas. The discussion on the European Union revolved around the Strategic Compass. At the conclusion of the meeting, the V4 presidency was formally handed over to Hungary.

## Minister in visit to Prague

(22 June) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď participated in the opening of Jagello 2000’s “Our Security Cannot Be Taken for Granted” Security Conference in Prague. Mr Naď spoke on the panel dedicated to the recent NATO Summit of Allied leaders in Brussels along with Defence Minister Lubomír Metnar and Foreign Affairs Minister Jakub Kulháněk. The head of the MOD emphasised that the best security guarantee is the international order based on clear rules and compliance with them. In this context, he praised the recent NATO Summit of Allied leaders and the adopted NATO 2030 reform agenda. Also discussed were the current themes and issues of new cyber and energy security threats that both countries must face.

As part of the Defence Minister’s official working trip to Czechia, the Slovak Embassy in Prague hosted an awards ceremony where, on the recommendation of the CZE MOD, Mr Naď presented the 75th SNP Anniversary and End of WW2 Commemorative Medal to seven Czech citizens and WW2 veterans.

## Gen Štefánik remembered

(24 June) To mark the 141st anniversary of Gen M. R. Štefánik’s birthday, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer attended a remembrance ceremony in tribute to Gen Štefánik at the 2nd Czechoslovak Parachute Brigade Memorial in Krpáčovo. In his statement, Mr Majer said: “We must never forget his persistent message of struggle for freedom and democracy. We owe this to our veterans and all those who lost their lives in the fight for our better future. This is the most important legacy for our future generations.” During the ceremony, he presented commemorative medals to five WW2 veterans.



## 3rd Veteran Ascent of Mt Ďumbier in tribute to veterans and Gen Štefánik

(26 June) The 3rd Veteran Ascent of Mt Ďumbier with a remembrance ceremony at the M. R. Štefánik Memorial, organised by the MOD’s Human Resources Department, was attended by 300 hikers. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: “We have come here to pay our respects and honour to all those who sacrificed their strength, energy and lives for the benefit of others. Today, we show our respects to one of our nation’s most prominent personalities – Gen Štefánik and all veterans, whether it be WW1 and WW2 veterans or contemporary veterans.”



Among those who attended the event were Health Minister Vladimír Lengvarský, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, Chief of the Strategic Crisis Management Centre Brig Tibor Králik, military diplomats from Germany, Hungary, the Russian Federation and China, sportsmen and women of the DUKLA Military Sports Centre, including skiers Adam and Andreas Žampa. Due to a storm alert, only some made it to the top of the peak, yet all of them took home the message of respect for veterans.

- Commander of the SVK Air Force Brig Róbert Tóth welcomed Brigadier General R. Dale Lyles, Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard, to the Tactical Wing Sliač on 22 June. Still, that afternoon Brig Gen Lyles met with Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Gen Daniel Zmeko.

- The Ministry of Defence has issued warnings to members of the public that there is a temporary ban on entering military woodlands in the Military Districts Záhorie and Valaškovce, because they are on high alert for the risk of fire with effect from 25 June 2021.

- In Martin, SVK Army tank units took part in training to hone the tank crews’ skills in crossing water obstacles, fording and driving underwater with the use of the ZP-10 system.

- On 22 June, members of the Defence Fire Service and members of the Fire and Rescue Corps took part in training aimed at rescuing skiers from chairlifts in case of a technical failure or accident.

- The Dukla Lookout Tower will be closed to the public due to planned refurbishment works with effect from 28 June.

- CSEL for the SVK Army Command Support Battalion MŠgt Maroš Fraňo is leaving the SVK Armed Forces with effect from 30 June. As a Service leaver, he was presented the SVK Chief of Defence Memorial Cross, 3rd Grade.

- Members of the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin gathered for a ceremony marking 172 years since the execution of Juraj Langsfeld, a patriot and a volunteer officer, at the Juraj Langsfeld Memorial in Kremnica on 22 June.

- To mark Earth Day on 23 June, members of the US CAT Team 1525 and personnel of the SVK CIMIC unit joined the reconstruction works to the football pitch in Sereď-Horný Čepceň. They dug 40 holes and cemented the fence posts. The football facility is scheduled to reopen to young soccer players in September.

- The Commander of the Slovak Contingent deployed with NATO’s eFP BG Latvia organised Sports Day on 22-23 June. Cpl Peter Jakubko was named the most universal sportsman with 377 points out of 400. P1C Soňa Majerníková was named the best sportswoman.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as 26 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia in support of Ex Strong Will, Ex Defender Europe 21 and Ex Atlantic Resolve, and after the end of Ex Slovak Shield 2021 from 28 June to 4 July 2021. Over the same period the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: TC Lešť – Michalovce, Koliňanský vrch – Nitra, Trenčín – Nitra, Michalovce – Prešov, Kamenica nad Cirochou – Prešov, Kamenica nad Cirochou – Trebišov, Michalovce – Hlohovec, Kamenica nad Cirochou – Michalovce, Sereď – TC Lešť and back, Michalovce – Trebišov, Prešov – Hlohovec, Trebišov – Sliač, Sereď – Hlohovec, TC Lešť – Hlohovec, Brodské – Nitra, Trenčín – Sereď, Trebišov – Veľké Ozorovce, Sklené – Ruskov, Prešov – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Sliač – Trenčín and back, Nováky – Ruskov, Zemianske Kostolany – Trebišov, Trenčín – Nováky, Zemianske Kostolany – Michalovce and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Levice and back, and within Sereď. Also scheduled are military rail movements from/to: Sása-Pliešovce – Levice, Sása-Pliešovce – Trebišov, and Sása-Pliešovce – Martin.

## Memorial restored in Badín

(22 June) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď attended the Czechoslovak Legionaries Memorial unveiling ceremony in Badín. The memorial is a faithful replica of the 1935 memorial dedicated to the legionaries fallen in

the Battle of Slovakia against the Hungarian Red Army in 1919. The memorial was damaged during the wartime Slovak State before being completely removed by Communist officials. The memorial integrates a Christian double cross and five squares with the names of the Czechoslovak regiments and battalions that were engaged in fighting at Badín.

## Hybrid Action Plan introduced

(22 June) The proposed Action Plan for Coordination of the Fight Against Hybrid Threats was introduced at the meeting of deputy ministers and heads of security agencies and constitutional bodies representing 16 institutions at the Ministry of Defence.

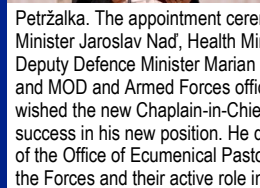
The meeting was initiated by Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer with a view to fine-tuning the contours of the document’s content and agreeing the next steps ahead in delivering the ambitions spelled out in the document. The key points of the Action Plan include investing in human resources and software instruments for the fight against disinformation, conducting an audit to identify the resilience of the State against hybrid threats, strengthening the State’s strategic communications, building population resilience, protecting electoral processes, and addressing foreign power influence in Slovakia.

Deputy defence ministers agreed on further steps in finalising the text of the Action Plan and outlined a “roadmap” for the document’s approval by the Security Council and the Cabinet after interdepartmental consultations.

## New Chaplain-in-Chief appointed

(24 June) Col Victor Sabo was appointed Chaplain-in-Chief of the Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service (EPS) in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps at the Holy Trinity Church in Bratislava’s

Petržalka. The appointment ceremony was attended by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, Health Minister Vladimír Lengvarský, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, Members of Parliament, and MOD and Armed Forces officials. The Defence Minister wished the new Chaplain-in-Chief lots of strength and the best of success in his new position. He drew attention to the importance of the Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service and the Bishopric of the Forces and their active role in the SVK Armed Forces.



## Readiness of SVK Armed Forces proven on Ex Slovak Shield 2021

(24 June) After the month-long Slovak Shield 2021 exercise, the exercising troops were given the ENDEX command to end the exercise. In his statement, SVK Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko said: “Despite the pause in training due to

the pandemic, our armed forces have maintained a high level of professionalism in the planning processes and in operating weapon systems. From this exercise we take away a lot of valuable lessons learned and we will work them into systemic changes so as to increase our readiness.” This year’s Ex Slovak Shield was unique in terms of its complexity. Nearly all SVK

Armed Forces units were put at the highest state of combat readiness on 2 June 2021. Subsequently, they carried out missions along three lines of efforts related to mobilisation, force protection, intense pre-deployment training before being deployed on operations to defend the Slovak Republic.

One of the mission-essential training tasks was to eliminate

the enemy’s intense hybrid activity. Therefore, the exercise scenario was set in the period shortly before the outbreak of armed conflict, while armed forces continued to combat the pandemic.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: “I revisited our servicemen and women at Lešť throughout the exercise. They had to operate in truly demanding conditions, across challenging terrain, and under time stress. I am absolutely satisfied with the organisation of this extensive exercise, which spanned several locations in Slovakia, and with the entire course of

the exercise. My thanks go out to my colleagues and Allies for their outstanding collaboration.”

Overall, over 8,000 servicemen and women with 650 pieces of vehicles and equipment took part in Ex Slovak Shield 2021. The training audience at TC Lešť involved military units from Czechia, Hungary, Poland and the United States of America.

