



Theme: Afghanistan

(22 October) The military, security and political situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban regained control of the country was one of the central themes of the NATO Defence Ministers Meeting in Brussels. This marked the first NATO defence ministerial in person format since Feb 2020.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "On Afghanistan, we addressed not only the current developments, but we self-critically and openly talked about the mistakes the Alliance had made there." Mr Naď underlined that the stabilisation of the situation in Afghanistan remains the primary goal of all Allies.

Also discussed was how to further strengthen the Alliance's defence and defence and how to boost its defence capabilities. Ministers approved the 2021 NATO Capability Targets. "These targets represent a key element which has a significant impact on the plan and development of SVK defence capacities and capabilities. We are aware of our commitments towards our Allies and we do approach them in a responsible manner," said Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď. The ministerial sent out a strong appeal urging all NATO Member States to ensure adequate defence funding and to meet the NATO target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence by 2024.

In this respect, Minister Naď confirmed Slovakia's commitment to standing up a Heavy Mechanised Brigade and updated his partners on the progress made in delivering the armoured capability procurement plan, which is essential in forming the military unit.

In a signing ceremony on 22 Oct, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď signed the Declaration of Intent for the NATO Innovation Fund on behalf of the Slovak Republic.

This initiative follows on from NATO's June 2021 Brussels Summit where Allied leaders adopted the NATO 2030 agenda with the ambition to retain its technological edge by facilitating wider cooperation of Allied nations on technologies and innovations.

NATO's latest innovation package includes NATO's Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), which seeks to link NATO's structures with the civilian sector and academia to drive R&D of innovative startups.

Ministers talked about expanding NATO-EU cooperation, even in the context of both organisations drafting their strategic documents, as well as addressing security challenges.

A meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers of the countries contributing to the NATO eFP Battlegroup Latvia was held on the margins of the NATO ministerial, where Minister Naď updated his partners on the SVK operational deployment.

CZE defence companies in Bratislava

(20 October) Defence Ministry Jaroslav Naď along with MOD and Armed Forces officials attended a presentation of Czech defence and security companies in Bratislava. Also present at the meeting aimed at identifying potential areas of cooperation between CZE and SVK arms manufacturers were representatives of the SVK Security and Defence Industry Association. In his remarks, Mr Naď emphasised that cooperation in the defence and security environment is guided, above all else, by the principle of mutual benefit to both countries. "Over and above the scope of our cultural closeness and good relationship, the high quality of equipment, the price offer, and the role of our domestic industry in the project are the decisive factors," said the Minister.

Among those at the presentation of 10 Czech arms companies were Czech Ambassador to Slovakia HE Mr Tomáš Tuhý and Director of the CZE MOD's Industrial Cooperation Management Department Radka Konderlová.

Slovak Armed Forces have new generals

(19 October) During today's promotion ceremony at the Grassalkovich Palace in Bratislava, SVK President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová handed over the certificates of promotion to three active duty servicemen. Also in attendance at the promotion ceremony were Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko. Col Alexander Kollárík and Col Slavomír Verčimák were promoted to the most junior general officer rank of Brigadier, and Maj Gen Vladimír Šimko was promoted to Lieutenant General. Slovakia's first astronaut Col (Rtd) Ivan Bella received his first general's star. His promotion to Brigadier (Rtd) comes as a moral recognition for displaying the highest levels of professionalism during his active duty service and for representing the SVK MOD and Slovakia during the Štefánik Space Mission.

Brig Kollárík, Brig Verčimák, and Lt Gen Šimko were originally posted to fill senior command and staff appointments at more senior ranks than they held. They have, until today's promotion, served in a lower rank. Currently, there are 16 senior command and staff appointments for generals (ranked from OF-6 to OF-9) in the SVK Armed Forces and in the MOD.



- At the invitation of the Ministry of Education, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer attended the EXPO 2021 Dubai's Space Week. During the event, he met with representatives of space tech companies and research establishments and briefed them on R&D space funding from the EU and NATO. As part of the official programme, the Slovak delegation received a tour of the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai.

- The 11th Communications and Information Technologies (CIT) Conference, organised by the Information Department at the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS), was held online on 13-15 Oct. 22 scientific papers and two presentations were delivered at the CIT conference by experts from Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia. The Best Scientific Paper Award went to Patrik Harnoš (AOS) for his dissertation thesis.

- Due to the emergency caused by the fire incident at the Surgery Pavilion of the Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital Ružomberok on 17 Oct, the hospital managers met at a crisis management staff meeting and decided to temporarily suspend the services of the Physiotherapy, Balneology and Rehabilitation Therapy Workplace as of 22 Oct until further notice.

- The Military Police Department Trenčín hosted a meeting between representatives of the SVK Military Police and representatives of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations on 19 Oct. The aim of the meeting was to exchange experience on crime investigation and to coordinate future cooperation.

- Defence Attachés (DAs) from 20 countries visited Prešov Garrison. They received a tour of Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area and watched a live fire demonstration of the ZUZANA 2 Self-propelled Gun Howitzers.

- The Logistics Department at the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) organised the Logistics Course - Level 1. While on the short-term course, 19 SVK Army personnel developed practical knowledge and skills in the field of general and military logistics, with a focus on implementing the principles of logistical theory and practice in the SVK Armed Forces.

- As part of military logistics, cadets of the 3rd-year Bachelor of Science (BSc) programme at AOS carried out a familiarisation placement at the Repair Battalion Martin and the Supply Base II Martin. They also familiarised themselves with the units' structure, capabilities and equipment.

- The Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra hosted Ex Nitra 2021, a three-day partial mobilisation exercise, with the participation of public authorities of the Nitra region and staff of the Nitra, Levice and Nové Zámky County Offices.

- Reconnaissance platoons and intelligence groups, part of Mech Bns, 1 Mech Bde, conducted concentrated training on Turecký Vrch Training Area on 18-22 Oct. The three-day bilateral tactical training exercise tested the planning and conduct of missions by reconnaissance platoons and S-2 intelligence groups.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as 24 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 25-31 Oct 2021. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Kuchyňa – Nitra, Nitra – Moldava nad Bodvou, Moldava nad Bodvou – Kuchyňa, Makov – Hlohovec, Kuchyňa – Sliac, Sliac – Trenčín and back, Rašov – Záhorie, Zemianske Kostolany – Martin and back, Sklené – Nováky, Zemianske Kostolany – Sereď and back, Sklené – Trenčín, Trenčín – Nemšová, Nováky – Nemšová, Trenčín – Záhorie, Zemianske Kostolany – Sliac and back, Sklené – Lešť, and Zemianske Kostolany – Levice and back.

MWD handlers and their dogs from three ministries in challenging conditions

(21 October) Under the guidance of the SVK Military Police, a total of 25 military working dog (MWD) handlers and 30

MWDs from across the Defence, Interior and Justice Ministries tested their abilities to work in challenging conditions at the 13th Mech Bn Levice premises over the past two days.

On Wed 20 Oct, the MWD handlers, who work with search, drug detection and patrol dogs, tested their abilities and the skills of their four legged colleagues in demanding conditions in a military underground shelter and in the motor pool area during the normal operation of the Battalion. The assigned tasks put the MWD handlers and MWDs through their paces.

The next day saw the MWD handlers and their MWDs conduct specialist searches for explosives and locate different

Army soldiers recognised

(21 October) CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and COM SVK ARMY Maj Gen Ivan Pach presented medals and badges to 2nd Mech Bde personnel at a meeting of commanders chaired by the head of the SVK Army. Among those recognised were COM 2 Mech Bde Prešov Brig Slavomír Verčimák with the award of the SVK CHOD Badge (2nd Grade), DCOM 22 Mech Bn Michalovce Maj Ján Štepta with the award of the SVK CHOD Badge (3rd Grade). Among the recipients of the SVK Army Commemorative Medal was Senior Assistant of the Operations Section (2 Mech Bde) Sgt 1C Peter Stano. Platoon Sergeant for Recce Ptn (CS Coy, 22 Mech Bn) Sgt 1C Peter Bednár received the SVK CHOD Badge (1st Grade).



Ex EMO 2021

(20 October) Soldiers of the Gemer-Malohont-based CBRND Battalion, part of 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany, and members of the Integrated Rescue Service took part in a coordination exercise at Slovakia's Mochovce nuclear power plant. The exercise tested the procedures and coordination of a multiagency response in the event of a nuclear incident at the Mochovce nuclear power plant, run by Slovak electric utility company Slovenské elektrárne, a.s. The CBRND Battalion unit, led by Maj Roman Sustrik, carried out tasks in the decontamination area at Tekovské Lužany.

Table Top Exercise

(21 October) Kutuzov Barracks was the venue for "Table Top Exercise – Host Nation Support (TTX HNS) in the State of Security", a joint exercise for selected MOD and Defence Staff elements. Host Nation Support to Allied forces is an international commitment for Slovakia. It has a strategic position on the NATO's eastern flank. The main aim of the exercise was to provide HNS at the MOD level, to identify shortages and to suggest solutions. The MOD will soon apply the lessons learned from the exercise to support Ex Saber Strike 2022. Ex TTX HNS has demonstrated that the Slovak Armed Forces alone cannot provide HNS to the extent required. Nevertheless, solutions to implement this international commitment can be found at both MOD and national levels.



quantities of planted narcotics and psychotropic substances. The MWDs had to cope with an unusual environment, insofar as they conducted sweeps of vehicles while these were being maintained. Director of the SVK Military Police Col Valentin Cebo gave his assessment of the joint training activity, saying: "We believe the training has been beneficial to all those involved and it will strengthen their ability to promptly adjust themselves to a new unfamiliar location, because quick and right reactions remain at the core of actions by both MWD handlers and MWDs." Col Cebo thanked the SVK Armed Forces and COM 13 Mech Bn Levice Maj Marián Golis for his maximum support and for making the Battalion premises and equipment available for the training.