



Talks in the Pentagon

(28 October) Bilateral talks between the highest representatives of the Slovak Ministry of Defence and the U.S. Department of Defense brought a shift and confirmed our shared interest in taking the SVK-U.S. defence and security relationship forward, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď announced after his meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "I appreciate there is a consensus of interest in finalising the Defense Cooperation Agreement, which demonstrates our effort to give the strategic partnership between Slovakia and the United States of America an updated legal framework and to explore new opportunities for its advancement. This will be a comprehensive agreement which will provide the basis for regular bilateral dialogue between the Slovak Republic and the USA on foreign and security policy, defence, and on other areas of common interest."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III called Slovakia a reliable ally and conveyed thanks for SVK involvement in Afghanistan as part of NATO's Resolute Support Mission and for the assistance the Slovak SOF provided during the evacuation of vulnerable Afghans from Afghanistan. Similarly, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď extended his thanks to the U.S. Armed Forces for their invaluable support in evacuating 52 SVK citizens, partners and local residents from Afghanistan.

Slovakia and UN

(25 October) The conditions for making SVK troop contributions to the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP) are set to be regulated by new memoranda. They were signed today by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and UN Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support Atul Khare at UN HQ in New York. "They introduce all specific aspects of SVK involvement in Cyprus, because the existing legal documents no longer reflect our reality," said the Minister. One of the two documents relates to our engineer units and the other one to the infantry company. While at the UN, Minister Naď also laid a wreath at the UN Peacekeepers Memorial.

Minister visits SVK F-16 pilots

(28 October) The SVK MOD and Armed Forces delegation to the USA, led by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, paid a visit to Lockheed Martin's F-16 production line in Greenville, South Carolina where the newest and most advanced F-16 Block 70 aircraft are being built for Slovakia. Mr Naď emphasised that the fighter jet replacement programme means not only buying aircraft, but this is also a great opportunity to deepen the SVK-U.S. strategic partnership. In building this partnership, MOD leaders place particular emphasis on the SVK defence industry's role and want to see it involved in the manufacturing process. For this reason, LOTN representatives, too, were part of the SVK delegation and talks. Minister Naď announced sponsorship gifts of US\$150,000 and US\$30,000 from Lockheed Martin for the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok to help restore its premises damaged in the recent fire and to buy medical devices, including a new mobile diagnostic ultrasound system and an ultralight ventilator for patients. He also announced sponsorship aid from our U.S. partner for the Institute of Military History, and he would welcome some intense support for the SNP Museum. The delegation along with Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Juraj Krúpa and DCHOD Lt Gen Lubomír Svoboda also visited the SVK F-16 pilots undergoing training in Arizona.

Slovak service personnel return home from tours of duty abroad

(29 October) A total of 236 Slovak service personnel returned home on successful completion of their tours of duty abroad. Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, Secretary General of the MOD's Service Office, and senior generals honoured the returning troops in a homecoming ceremony held at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin. Having served tours of duty abroad, 212 military personnel returned from UNFICYP in Cyprus, 17 from Op ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4 from EUTM in Mali, 2 from EUTM in the Republic of Central Africa, and 1 military observer from UNTSO in the Middle East. Addressing the returning troops, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer thanked them for representing our country abroad, expressed his strong belief that their wealth of experience from operations would be motivational in the next stage of their careers, and remembered to thank the families of the soldiers for their support. Commander of the Strategic Crisis Management Centre (DS) Brig Tibor Králik delivered his remarks to the returning troops on behalf of SVK Armed Forces Command. 428 SVK military personnel, of whom 36 are servicewomen, are currently serving on international crisis management missions and operations. A total of 34,108 SVK service personnel, including 642 servicewomen, have completed tours of duty abroad to date.



- To mark Czechoslovak Independence Day on 28 Oct, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer along with Prime Minister Eduard Heger and members of the Cabinet attended a commemoration event at the **Czechoslovak Statehood Memorial** in Bratislava.

- UN Senior Political Affairs Officer Charles Anyidoho paid a visit to UNFICYP. Accompanied by Force Commander Maj Gen Ingrid Margrethe Gjerde, he also visited Camp Štefánik and Sector 4 where the guests were shown around by SLOVCON COM Lt Col Róbert Plávka.

- The Slovak Republic is interested in strengthening its bilateral defence and security engagement with the Kingdom of Spain, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer said during his meeting with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to Slovakia, Her Excellency Ms Lorea Arribalzaga Ceballos on 25 Oct.

- **Engineer Battalion Sereď** was reorganised to form 91 Engineer Regiment Sereď with effect from 1 Nov 2021. The reorganisation of the engineer units includes the stand-up of 91 Engineer Regiment Sereď, 901 Engineer Battalion Sereď, 902 Engineer Battalion Michalovce and 905 Specialist Combat Support Centre Nováky.

- The Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence (CBRND) Battalion Rožňava was reorganised into **103 CBRND Battalion** Rožňava with effect from 1 Nov 2021.

- The **SVK Air Force** was reorganised into 2 Brigades Zvolen, 11 Brigades Nitra, 81 Wing Sliac, 46 Wing Kuchyňa and 51 Wing Prešov with effect from 1 Nov 2021.

- With effect from 1 Nov 2021, **ISTAR Battalion** was reorganised into 65 Surveillance Battalion Prešov, with its official address: 38 Čapajevova Street, Prešov.

- A **commanders meeting**, chaired by Commander of the Tactical Wing Sliac Col Josef Hausner, took place on 26 Oct, in the presence of SVK Air Force Commander Brig Róbert Tóth. At the meeting, COM Tac Wng Sliac Col Josef Hausner delivered the 2020 Annual Assessment Report and gave an assessment of the first and second training periods in 2021.

- The Domažina firing range hosted a joint **special tactical police training** with focus on firing from a helicopter. The aim of the training activity was to deepen the cooperation of police units and share expertise between the MOI and MOD police forces. The training was also attended by specialist training instructors and members of the Military Police Crisis Management Section.

- The Deployable CIS Base Ružomberok and the Training Centre Lešť hosted **Ex RDM Challenge**, designed to test the capability to deploy information and communications systems (CIS) in the field, with the training audience drawn from 2 and 3 Centres of DCIS Base Ružomberok.

- The latest edition of **Azimuth 24/7** takes our audience to Ex Toxic Valley 2021 in Zemianske Kostolany.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as 12 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 1-7 Nov 2021. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Martin – Sučany and back, Martin – Poprad, Prešov – Trebišov, Martin – Lešť and back, Trebišov – Moldava nad Bodvou, Zemianske Kostolany – Trenčín and back, Sklené – Nemšová, Nemšová – Nováky and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Žilina and back, and Zemianske Kostolany – Bratislava and back. There will also be a SVK military rail movement from Kuchyňa to Zemianske Kostolany.

EUMC in Chiefs of Defence session

(26 October) SVK Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko took part in the EU Military Committee (EUMC) in Chiefs of Defence session in Brussels on 25-26 Oct 2021. The meeting of EU Chiefs of Defence coincided with the 20th anniversary of the EUMC. EU Chiefs of Defence discussed the preparation of the Strategic Concept draft, with a focus on crisis management and military expertise to be worked into the document.

In his statement, Gen Zmeko pointed to the need to have robust and flexible mandates for EU missions and operations, and their assets and human resources, and to plan predictively with a view to securing the adequate operational readiness needed to conduct EU missions and operations. EU CHODs also considered the options for expanding the EU's military readiness to respond promptly to potential crises with EU rapid response forces.

SVK Surgeon General in Germany

(28 October) Surgeon General of the SVK Armed Forces Brig Roman Jantoš visited his German colleagues in Koblenz. He met with Surgeon General of the Bundeswehr Lt Gen Ulrich Baumgärtner MD and familiarised himself with the Bundeswehr Medical Service's structure and tasks. He was then received by Brig Dr Stephan Kowitz at the Multinational Medical Coordination Centre/European Medical Command (MMCC/EMC), which is tasked with providing medical services to NATO and EU militaries in support of international crisis management operations, collective defence and national defence. The aim of the meeting was to discuss posting a SVK Army officer to MMCC/EMC, starting from 2022.

Winners of Defence-wide displays



(30 October) A panel of judges evaluated the entries for the 12th edition of the PhotoAttack and Gallery ML Competitive Displays, organised by the Educational and Cultural Activities Section, SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office, in cooperation with the Garrison

Clubs and the Cultural and Educational Activities Centre Zvolen. 77 entrants from the ranks of serving and ex-service personnel, pensioners, civilian employees and their families from across Defence participated in the contest with 235 entries.

Individual categories of PhotoAttack 2021 were won by Slávka Kmečová of Prešov GAR Club, Lt Col (in Reserves) Peter Sobek of Trenčín GAR Club (the winning photo is pictured here) and Cpl Adrián Klema of Helicopter Wing Prešov.

Gallery ML 2021's Painting & Sculpture category saw Dana Pašáková of DCIS Base Ružomberok as its winner, SSGT Monika Škutová of DCIS Base Ružomberok took first place in the Applied Arts category, and Lenka Čaklošová of Trenčín GAR Club triumphed in the Children's Works category.

The Slovak Armed Forces Personnel Office Director's Prize and the Cultural and Educational Activities Section Chief's Prize went to Filip Malát of Prešov GAR Club and SSGT Jana Macháčová of SVK MOD, respectively.

Cadets of Armed Forces Academy fire mortars at Lešť TC

(29 October) The Training Centre Lešť hosted a mortar training activity for 4th-year and 5th-year G-20 Artillery Trade cadets of the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS), following their placements in the Michalovce-based Mechanised Battalion. As part of their training, they went through all the mortar preparation stages, including setting up a mortar position, the boresighting and zeroing of mortars, target acquisition, and firing.

They appreciated giving commands at the mortar positions, making calculations on the accuracy of the mortar, as well as firing the SER 52 82mm mortar. Especially for the 5th-

year cadets, who will graduate from AOS in the middle of next year, real military training was a welcome opportunity.



Maj Michal Vajda of the Military Tactics Department at AOS, who used to serve with Mech Bn Michalovce, called for more practical training for senior cadets. He revealed there were more female than male cadets on this intake at Lešť. "They are fully committed to familiarising themselves with practical issues of their military job. They excel at executing their tasks with high precision. I am glad to see our cadets getting once again involved in practical training at military units," said Maj Vajda.