



DCA to enhance security

(14 December) The Ministries of Defence and Foreign and European Affairs have prepared the draft Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the United States of America, which may significantly enhance the security and defence of Slovakia and that of our Allies in NATO. The DCA aims to set the legal framework for a strengthened SVK-U.S. partnership and existing cooperation, which is expected to bring in a raft of benefits.

Defence Minister Naď said: "After the unsuccess of the previous government in 2018, we have returned to the negotiating table with a view to attending to this unfinished business. For the Allies, this is an absolutely normal and standard bilateral agreement which 23 out of the 30 NATO Member States already have, including our neighbours – Poland and Hungary, and without which Slovakia would be impoverished by missing out on significant benefits."

Foreign and European Affairs Minister Ivan Korčok and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko joined Minister Naď in making statements on the draft DCA at a press conference at the Cabinet Office.

Mr Naď said: "In the long term and more closely than ever, we have cooperated on defence and security with the USA even at the level of our Armed Forces. And therefore, an agreement governing our cooperation is an entirely natural need to get the processes up and running effectively. Thanks to clear organisational and technical arrangements, we will be able to better rely on our Ally in the eventuality of an emergency." In addition to providing the legal framework and clear rules, the Agreement will be a prerequisite to receiving U.S. funding for the infrastructure of the SVK Armed Forces, this means delivering savings against the SVK defence budget. In the first stage, Slovakia will be able to use US\$100m in funding to modernise its defence infrastructure.

Foreign and European Affairs Minister Ivan Korčok noted that the Agreement is a practical expression of the fact that NATO and the USA are the guarantor of our security and defence. "Moreover, this Agreement leaves the decisions on whatever relates to our joint defence activities with the USA on SVK territory in the hands of SVK bodies," he said.

CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko expressed his appreciation for the DCA, saying: "From the perspective of the Armed Forces, we welcome the Agreement's contribution to setting unequivocal rules for organising training and exercises, to coordinating military activities in response to today's security challenges, and last but not least, to making investments in our military infrastructure. This will bring savings of funds that can be reinvested into other areas."

The draft Defense Cooperation Agreement has been released to the public as part of the interdepartmental consultation procedures. Subsequently, the draft DCA will go through the SVK Government and Parliament before being ratified by the SVK President.

CEDC Ministerial

(15 December) In a video conference, Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC) and Western Balkans (WB) defence ministers met to tackle defence and security challenges at this time of the pandemic in an effort to strengthen their regional cooperation with the EU and to foster an insightful understanding of current issues in the European Union. Speaking of Pristina's representation at today's CEDC meeting, Minister Naď said: "This was namely because the subject of the video conference was linked to the themes existentially common to all the countries of the region. Take the negative phenomena associated with the pandemic such as polarisation and radicalisation of society, for example. The answer to this lies in the responsiveness of governments by way of early assistance and a show of solidarity."

M. Majer brings a bit of homeland to SVK personnel in BiH and Cyprus

(18 December) As part of the pre-Christmas tradition of visiting military personnel on operations abroad, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer headed off to meet with our soldiers serving with EUFOR Op Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina and with UNFICYP in Cyprus. As they will not have that opportunity to be at home for Christmas due to being on duty, he has brought them Christmas trees, gifts and ingredients for a traditional Slovak Christmas sauerkraut soup. Mr Majer said: "My visit here is to say Thank You to the men and women of the Slovak Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Cyprus and to all servicemen and women deployed on crisis management missions and operations abroad. They all deserve our huge thanks for the superb work they have been doing abroad and for representing Slovakia so well." During his official programme, Mr Majer also met with Commander EUFOR Op Althea Maj Gen Alexander Platzer, Commander NATO HQ Sarajevo Brig Gen Pamela McGaha, UNFICYP Senior Advisor Aderemi Adekoya, and UNFICYP Chief of Staff Col John Hanson. 241 SVK personnel, of whom 26 are service-women, are currently serving with UNFICYP in Cyprus. The 40th rotation of SVK troops took place in September 2021. 46 SVK personnel are currently serving with EUFOR Op Althea and 160 soldiers are on-standby as the out-of-country Immediate Reserve Force.



- Despite being deployed on the frontline of the battle against COVID-19, members of **22 Mech Bn Michalovce** remembered their friends from the Children's Home in Michalovce. In the run-up to Christmas, they raised money to buy computers for distance learning. And they also added three multifunctional printers and Christmas gingerbread cakes to.

- Under the pilot MOD Green Concept, these days the MOD has replaced three obsolete combustion engine-powered cars for **electric vehicles (EV)**. In modernising its fleet, the MOD plans to continue purchasing ecologically friendly vehicles.

- On 6 Sept - 17 Dec, the Education Centre at the Gen M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš delivered the **19th Higher Command Staff Course**. On successful completion of the course, 43 officers are now eligible for promotion to Lt Col and Col. The modified course programme was focused on national and international security, operational art of war, command and control, and social science issues.

- Red berets were presented to the successful graduates of the 3rd Airborne Course at **52 Airborne Battalion** on 16 Dec. In his keynote speech, 52 Abn Bn Commander Lt Col Jozef Molčan greeted the graduates and thanked them for their contribution to the Battalion's joint efforts towards building the SVK Special Operations Forces and presented them with the SOF symbol – the red beret.

- The traditional **'Christmas Academy'**, hosted by the Gen M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, will not be held in its traditional format due to the pandemic restrictions. Yet, the Bishop of the Forces has delivered the Armed Forces his Christmas message, wishes and programme in a video that is available [on the internet](#).

- Commander **12 Mech Bn** Lt Col Gabriel Janovič handed a symbolic cheque worth 3,600 euros over to Cpl Jozef Gális who lost his house and almost all his possessions in a devastating fire. The call for donations was issued by the Battalion Commander along with the Military Support Foundation.

- The latest edition of **Azimuth 24/7**, available on YouTube, is dedicated to 13 Mechanised Battalion on training exercise at TC Lešť.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as an Allied road movement is scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 20 to 26 Dec 2021. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Zvolen – Martin and back, Martin – Michalovce and back, Martin – Sereď, within the town of Sereď, Nitra – Trenčín and back, Martin – Dubnica nad Váhom and back, Michalovce – Kamenica nad Cirochou and back, Michalovce – Moldava nad Bodvou, within the town of Moldava nad Bodvou, Moldava nad Bodvou – Rožňava, Kuchyňa – Levice, Zemienske Kostolany – Levice and back, and Ruskov – Gemerská Hôrka. Also planned are SVK military rail movements from/to: Vrútky – Nováky, Prešov – Zemienske Kostolany, Sereď – Moldava nad Bodvou, and Kuchyňa – Zemienske Kostolany.

XMAS FULL FIELD KIT

presents military solidarity and charity live on **Radio Regina on Fri 24 Dec at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat 25 Dec and broadcasts greetings from soldiers on missions and operations abroad live on Radio Slovakia on Sun 26 Dec at 21.00.**

Highest positioned SVK Armed Forces workplace for those without fear

(13 December) Members of 2 SVK Air Force Brigade provide, among others, radar surveillance of SVK airspace on a 24/7/365 basis. They are stationed across the whole of Slovakia. Interestingly, one of their workplaces is a little bit different from the others. Based in the Štiavnica Mountains, the Radar Surveillance Company Močiar has the highest positioned workplace in the Slovak Armed Forces. While its support element is 730m a.s.l., its combat element is 792m a.s.l. The company, led by Capt Daniel Némét, provides continuous radar surveillance of



airspace and undertakes tasks for the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS). Radar operators operate in a mountainous area with very difficult access, especially in the winter period. The harsh winter conditions require them to give up certain comforts that their city-based colleagues are used to. Food, drinking water and fuel to power an electric generator need to be moved up to the combat element. The company commander says that work at

Močiar is only for those who are not fearful of working in harsh conditions.

GEO Defence Minister visits MOD

(17 December) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď welcomed Georgian Defence Minister Juansher Burchuladze to the Ministry of Defence in an official welcome ceremony with full military honours. During the meeting, both leaders praised the quality of bilateral engagement between the countries and identified additional ways to develop the SVK-GEO defence relationship, including cooperation between defence industries. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "In a meeting with Minister Burchuladze, I reaffirmed Slovakia's support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thanks to progress made in its Euro-Atlantic integration efforts, this country is an ever closer partner. I'm pleased that our good quality relationship at the political level is laying a solid foundation for taking our cooperation even in the field of defence and security forward." As part of his programme, Defence Minister Burchuladze also held a discussion with Chair of the SVK Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Juraj Krúpa.

Soldiers return from Latvia



(15 December) SVK soldiers deployed to Latvia in support of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence have returned after a year-long tour of duty. They were greeted in

a homecoming ceremony by Commander 2 Mech Bde Col Ondrej Vaško at Košice airport. In his remarks, Col Vaško thanked them for a job well done. This marked the historically first deployment of SVK artillerymen to NATO's eFP, testing their readiness to conduct operations in an international environment outside of Slovakia. 135 SVK soldiers, mainly from SpGH Bn Michalovce are currently deployed as part of the NATO eFP BG Latvia.

Hospital quality reconfirmed

(16 December) The Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital Ružomberok is among Slovakia's top performing hospitals. For the third time, it has defended its second place in the state university and faculty hospitals category in this year's Slovakia's Best Hospitals ranking by INEKO. The hospital excelled in patients' satisfaction with medical care, staff performance, and the quality of accommodation and catering. Equally important, access to information and low postoperative mortality rates were highly praised by patients. Director of the Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital Ružomberok Assoc Prof Róbert Rusnák MD PhD put this success down to the hospital staff's team work and thanked the MOD as the founding authority. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "I perceive this success as a mirror of their toil and determination which bond the hospital staff together. I appreciate that neither the pandemic nor any other unforeseeable happenings have bearing on the quality level of medical services they provide. They are true professionals who have our unequivocal support."