



2023 Defence Budget to include higher military salaries

(14 Oct) It is for the first time in history that Slovakia is to fulfil its pledge to take Slovakia's total Defence spend to at least 2% of GDP. At the Cabinet meeting on 14 Oct, the SVK government approved the 2023 Defence Budget Proposal at 2.01% of GDP.

Defence Minister Naď said: "Every euro spent on defence means investing in our security. Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, it is clear our duty is to have modern armed forces that are trained to highest standards. And that's exactly what the MOD is working on after decades of neglect in Defence."

He went on: "Years-long neglected modernisation and infrastructure need considerable funding, which is why about 30% of the budget will be spent on these areas. Of course, a large part of the funds will go to personnel. A 7% pay rise we have negotiated to be payable as from 1 Jan 2023 is good news for soldiers! Thanks to our good management, we are not asking for any extra money, the salary increase will come out of the MOD's existing budget." The Defence Budget 2023 still requires approval from Parliament.



Protecting European skies together

(13 Oct) NATO Defence Ministers met at NATO HQ in Brussels to open assistance issues for Ukraine in its defence against Russia's unprovoked aggression. Consultations also took place within the UDCG in the Ramstein format, bringing together over 50 countries. Also in attendance were Sweden and Finland. Thanks largely to an information update from Ukrainian Defence Minister Olexii Reznikov, NATO defence leaders identified further areas of effective aid for Ukraine, agreeing to secure continued political, humanitarian, economic and military support. Slovakia joined other countries in expressing their interest in backing Germany's initiative for a European air and missile defence system. According to Minister Naď, the initiative aims to strengthen NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence in Europe, while envisaging the common acquisition of air defence assets by European nations. "The project could bring savings to the participating countries, shorter delivery periods, joint logistics solutions, and greater industry involvement," Minister Naď explained, noting that this is not a binding commitment for Slovakia, but rather a declaration of our interest in pursuing joint activities with Allies.



State Secretary Majer visits Georgia

(11 Oct) State Secretary Marian Majer's official visit to Georgia began in Tbilisi, with a series of meetings with 1st Deputy Defence Minister of Georgia Ms Lela Chikovani, the Head of the NATO Liaison Office Georgia, and representatives of the local security community and education & training establishments. They discussed deepening SVK-GEO ties, the opportunities for defence industrial cooperation, the support for Georgia's defence capacity building, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine with its impact on European security. "Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders is a basic condition for a peaceful solution to this conflict," State Secretary Majer said, noting that Slovakia does not recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia since they are being occupied by Russia. The SVK delegation announced its intent to set up a Slovak Defence Attaché's Office in Tbilisi as early as next year. "Thanks to this step, our bilateral defence cooperation will be made simpler and will take on a new quality. I am firmly convinced this will be an excellent opportunity to extend our links to cover new areas," Majer added. The official programme included a visit to the Defence Institution Building School in Tbilisi, where a Slovakian is working as a specialist in defence education, a tour of the NATO Joint Training and Evaluation Centre, a trip to the line of contact with Russia-occupied GEO territory, and a visit to a GEO Army base.



- A reconnaissance training exercise, dubbed **Clear Sign**, saw recon teams of the CZE Army's 102 Recce Bn Prostějov teaming up with those of the SVK Army's 65 Recce Bn Prešov to test their knowledge and skills in conducting in-depth ground recon missions on Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area (TA) on 11 Oct, with focus on observation, monitoring and gathering information.

- COM SVK AF Maj Gen Róbert Tóth's **Military Council** convened on 13 Oct. To mark the occasion, Com 11 Bde Nitra Col Pavol Kožlej and Com 51 Wing Prešov Col Marek Homola were presented with the Minister of Defence Commemorative Medal.

- Czechia's Hradec Králové hosted **Ex Medical Man 2022** as an international certification exercise for selected elements of the Visegrad Four European Union Battlegroup (V4 EU BG), including members of SVK MEDMILCOM. The aim of the exercise was to align the actions of the multinational medical force, to test communication and information systems, to respond to a mass casualty event, and to carry out medevac missions. The assessment of the 24-member SVK medical team was positive.

- The **Dušan Fatšík Memorial Competition** brought together members of 5 SOF Rgt Žilina to pay tribute to their departed fellow colleague and friend, MSgt (OR-8) Dušan Fatšík. Over 30 SOF operatives battled it out, shooting at six metal targets on a small arms shooting range. The first place in the shoot-off and the Challenge Trophy went to a home team.

- The Training & Canine Branch of MP Dept Vlkavová - Hronek has delivered **qualification courses for members of the SVK Military Police**, covering all relevant aspects of legislation, all arms training, and incident response procedures. The courses culminated with written and oral tests. All course participants have passed the tests successfully.

- As part of NATO's **Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)**, representatives of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Armed Forces visited the General M.R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš, to learn more about the career development system for SVK officers. The BiH delegation was greeted by Deputy Commandant for Education Col Aurel Sabó and Director of the Commandant's Office and Head of NATO's DEEP in BiH Lt Col Martin Chovavenc. The guests had a keen interest in course planning & design, instructor selection, student assessment, feedback provided to the Academy, and the activities of the AOS Simulation Centre.

- The Transparex Supplier Information Database (SID) Register presented the **Responsible Procurer Award 2021** to the General M.R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš. Of the existing 5,400 public procurement authorities, AOS ranks to top SVK public procurers with an A+ rating.

- Lt Petra Harantová, member of the Financial and Economic Service, won the **gold medal** in the U59kg category at the Slovak Weightlifting Championships in Dolný Kubín, claiming the Slovak Weightlifting Champion title with her performance totalling 124kg in the "Olympic lifts".

FULL FIELD KIT
Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents international training for Army divers on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

The number of Dutch service personnel and assets reduced in Slovakia

(10 Oct) Working closely with Slovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has moved to reduce the number of Dutch service personnel and assets in the NATO MN BG SVK, including the withdrawal of a Dutch Patriot air defence (AD) battery from Sliac Air Base. This decision comes naturally following an assessment of the security situation in Slovakia and in the region as a range of other measures has been implemented to boost Slovakia's defences since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Our allies have agreed to stay here as long as necessary. Given that we have put a large number of security measures in place, we can now reduce the presence of allied troops and assets on the ground. I want to thank the Netherlands for keeping its troops

20 years of 1 Mech Bde TO



its assigned missions with honour. According to Gen Zmeko, the Slovak Armed Forces are at their best state of operational readiness in their history. Standing shoulder to shoulder with our Allies, they are ready to react to any threat to the security of our country.

Tankmen undergo intensive drills



PLTSGT Sgt 1C (OR-7) Peter Krajník, was on the conduct of defensive operations and counter-attacks with short preparation time. 14 Tank Battalion is continuing to deliver the 2022 programme of intensive training.

Joint CZE-SVK Mortar Battery



infantrymen worked with their mortar systems to reinforce their skills, gaining valuable experience from working in an international environment.

(13 Oct) Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko presided over a special "birthday" ceremony to mark 20 years of 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany. In his speech, he highlighted that the Brigade's history has been interwoven with professionalism, since 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany has always accomplished all of

(14 Oct) Tank crews of 1 Tank Troop, part of 14 Tank Battalion, underwent intensive tactical drills both day and night at Trebišov Garrison's Veľké Ozorovce training ground on 11-14 Oct. Focus of the tactical training, led by Com 1 Tnk Trp Lt Jozef Turčík and

(11 Oct) The NATO MN BG SVK comprises a joint CZE-SVK Mortar Battery. Therefore, the Mortar Platoon of 22 Mech Bn Michalovce and CZE Army mortar men trained together in order to achieve even better coordination and performance in executing firing tasks. The indirect fire

in Slovakia at a crucial moment," Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said.



It comes as no surprise that contributions to the NATO MN BG SVK change with the evolving situation and the assigned tasks. The withdrawal of the Dutch Patriot missile system will not affect Slovakia's defensive capabilities. Operating alongside other SBAD systems, two German Patriot batteries will remain in Slovakia. Additionally, a U.S. Patriot battery is based at Kuchyňa-Malacky Air Base. The Dutch AD element will be repositioned back to Slovakia immediately once the situation necessitates it. Meanwhile, the Netherlands will keep a reduced military presence in Slovakia and will retain its ability to make those capabilities available to the NATO MN BG SVK whenever necessary.