



## Farewell to the President

(13 October) To honour the passing away of the first President of the Slovak Republic, His Excellency Mr Michal Kováč, Slovakia held a national day of mourning and state funeral. Besides the SVK MOD leaders, hundreds of Slovak Armed Forces personnel bid their farewell to the Commander-in-Chief of the then Army of the Slovak Republic.

Michal Kováč held the Office of the President of the Slovak Republic from 1993 to 1998. Draped in the state flag and borne on a historical gun carriage, the coffin containing his remains was transported from Bratislava Castle to the Presidential Palace, while being escorted by the Honour Guard of the President of the Slovak Republic and the SVK Armed Forces Military Band. A 122mm vz. 38/74 artillery howitzer was provided for the occasion by the Military History Museum in Piešťany.

During the military ceremony held in the courtyard of the Presidential Palace, the Slovak national anthem was played and distinguished guests honoured the memory of President Kováč with a minute of silence. To pay tribute to him, a total of 20 gun salutes were fired from the Tyršovo Square. The coffin with the body of President Michal Kováč was then taken from the gun carriage and placed into a civilian hearse for its ride to St Martin's Cathedral, where a Holy Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased was held in the presence of the state officials and distinguished international guests. In attendance at the funeral service were Czech President Miloš Zeman, Czech ex-President Václav Klaus, Hungarian ex-President Pál Schmitt, Polish Secretary of State at the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland Krzysztof Szczepiński, President of the Federal Council at the Austrian Parliament Mario Lindner, Romanian ex-President Emil Constantinescu and Romanian Minister of Defence Mihnea Motoc.

Ex-President Kováč was laid to rest in the circle of his closest family at the Ondrejský Cemetery in Bratislava without media coverage and the presence of the public. The funeral ceremony was attended by his next-of-kin and members of the Honour Guard of the President of the Slovak Republic. The public had been given the opportunity to bid their last farewell to the Slovak President at Bratislava Castle on Wednesday, 12 Oct. The first President of the Slovak Republic, Kováč, passed away at the age of 86 as a result of heart failure at St Michael's Hospital in Bratislava on Wednesday, 5 Oct.

## Minister of Defence in meeting with new US Ambassador

(11 October) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the new US Ambassador, His Excellency Mr Adam H. Sterling, to discuss options for co-operation in the field of defence. Topics included defence spending, strategic documents, modernisation, troops on operations in Afghanistan. "We also discussed the joint EU Army, which has now been the subject of various discussions. On this issue, we are in agreement that there should be no duplication of NATO and EU tasks and competences," said the head of the MOD. Amongst others, he updated the US Ambassador on Slovakia's strategic documents from the MOD's perspective, such as the SVK Government-approved White Paper on Defence of the Slovak Republic and the Defence and Military Strategies of the Slovak Republic. Besides this, the MOD has also been participating in the drafting of the new Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic. The Minister expressed his appreciation for the US contribution to the SVK NFIU and the long-time co-operation between the SVK Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard. US Ambassador Sterling acknowledged that the United States wishes to continue fostering this co-operation. Other items on the agenda brought up at the meeting were the joint V4's contribution to the Baltics, the SVK Military Police's involvement in EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean, as well as joint training exercises. Also, there was agreement between the partners in their opinions on the excellent level of co-operation between the SVK Special Forces and the US Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan, including their joint training.



## Co-operation goes on successfully

(10 October) Among the topics discussed at the meeting between Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Major General Courtney P. Carr, the Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard, were the participation of Indiana National Guard members in international training exercises on the territory of Slovakia, strategic documents, and modernisation projects. This year Indiana National Guard members have participated in Exercise Slovak Warthog and Exercise Tobruq Legacy, as well as deploying on Exercise Slovak Shield 2016, the largest exercise held on the territory of Slovakia this year. The Minister informed Major General Carr of the strategic documents being formulated in the field of defence, emphasising that they come in response to the persistent threats of extremism, migration and terrorism. He went on to inform him of the ongoing preparations for drafting the Military Strategy of the Slovak Republic. Also discussed was the Slovak Republic's commitment to standing up a mechanised brigade, its contribution to EUNAVOR MED Operation Sophia, and a hike in the SVK MOD's defence budget next year.

- SVK Air Force Deputy Commander Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc received Col Werner Knappe, accompanied by the German Defence Attaché Lt Col Rüdiger Heinrich and Maj Frank Demming at the Tactical Wing Sliač on 12 Oct. General Staff (GS) Col Vladimír Lisý acquainted the German expert team with the tasks, objectives and activities of the Tactical Wing Sliač. The guests saw MIG-29 and L-39 simulators, received a tour of the Technical Repairs and Prescribed Works Squadron Workstation, and as well visited the Combat and Training Squadron. In the afternoon this was followed by a meeting on the SVK AF HQ premises in Zvolen. The talks allowed the participants to outline options for further co-operation.

- On 10 Oct, Bratislava hosted a meeting to assess the results of the tasks to transport delegations by minivans during the category A events that have so far been organised under the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The meeting was attended by the State Secretary at the SVK Ministry of Defence, Róbert Ondrejčák, the First Vice-President of the Police Corps, Col Jaroslav Málik, the Director of the Military Police, Col Michal Migát, and the Commander of the Strategic Crisis Management Centre at the SVK General Staff, Col Ján Bujňák. The State Secretary appreciated that the transport tasks by minivans have so far been accomplished successfully throughout all of the 21 SK PRESS Category A events and extended his thanks to the assembled service personnel and civilian employees for representing the MOD. A total of 9 members of the Military Police, 14 dispatchers – SVK Armed Forces personnel, 47 minivan drivers, and 4 SVK Armed Forces civilian employees have been involved in carrying out the transport tasks. The actual number of transports has amounted to 1,479, covering an overall distance of 120,000km. To support the SK PRES events, the SVK MOD has made available 3,281 SVK Armed Forces personnel and 130 Military Police members.

- On Saturday, 9 Oct, the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General's Office held a homecoming ceremony for Maj Štefánka Bujdoša, MSgt Igor Migra and MSgt Jozef Smutný on their return from the 17th Field Surgical Team deployed with the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. They had been deployed with the CZE Contingent since 18 May at the request of the Army of the Czech Republic (ACR). During the ceremony, their approach to the discharge of their duties was appreciated by the Surgeon General of the SVK Armed Forces, Col Vladimír Lengvarský. He presented the soldiers with the Medal for Participation in Military Operation and thanked them for the job well done.

- An opening ceremony to mark the beginning of the new Academic Year 2016 – 2017 and hence the start of studies by the new students – SVK Armed Forces Academy (AFA) cadets at the Aviation Faculty was held at the Technical University in Košice on 7 Oct. In attendance at the assembly of the Aviation Faculty students, employees and leaders was the Rector of the Technical University in Košice, Stanislav Kmet, the Quaestor at the Technical University in Košice Marcel Behúň, Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim, the Commander of the SVK Air Force, Maj Gen Miroslav Korba, the Commandant (Rector) of the General M. R. Štefánik SVK Armed Forces Academy, Assoc Prof Jozef Puttera, CSC, and the Deputy Commandant (Vice Rector) of the General M. R. Štefánik SVK Armed Forces Academy for Military Affairs, Col Lubomír Matta.



## More than just a visit to an exercise

(13 October) As part of his visit to Slovakia on Tuesday, 13 Oct, the Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard visited the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš, where he held talks with the Commandant (Rector) of the Academy and the Commandant of the Education Centre in an attempt to explore the possibilities for exchanging lessons learned in officer education. On Wednesday, Major General Carr received a tour of the SVK National Uprising Museum in Banská Bystrica and met with Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica (MSC DBB) sportsmen and women. At Sliač Air Force Base he visited an Indiana National Guard unit deployed on Exercise Slovak Shield, operating UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. The last day of his trip he devoted to visiting the military units at the Training Centre Lešť, where Exercise Slovak Shield was just drawing to a close. Major General Carr met there with US Armed Forces personnel operating in a formation of international units. One of them was a combined engineer company, which was practising carrying out demolition operations. At this occasion, he awarded the Indiana Commendation Medal to the Command Sergeant Major of the Engineer Battalion Sered for his active role in preparing joint training exercises.

## Slovak Shield 2016 – the largest exercise on our territory this year is over

(13 October) Exercise Slovak Shield 2016 has reached its final stage with a series of dynamic displays at the Lešť Training Centre. "The teams formed of different armies had no problems coping with the tactical situations. The troops cooperated well," concluded the exercise director, 1st DCHOD Lt

Coordination Cell (AllCC), commanded by Col Slavomír Milde, was tasked with coordinating Close Air Support (CAS) and Surface Based Air Defence (SBAD) missions in conjunction with the combat arms units and the Air Operation Centre (AOC), of the AF and SBAD Brigade. Apart from using air assets, the Brigade intervened against air enemy by employing the S-300 PMU, 2K12 KUB and 9K38 IGLA anti-aircraft missile systems. Close air support was provided by L-39 Albatros trainer aircraft and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, with the latter being as well used for medical evacuation, reconnaissance and transport flights. During the exercise, support staff from the Combat Support Brigade Trenčín stored and dispensed 61,000 litres of diesel fuel, 1,000 litres of petrol fuel, more than 36,000 warm meals, and nearly 2,500 Meals Ready To Eat (MREs). In addition, they built and ran a number of camps for the exercising troops and arranged for approx. 100 minor or major repairs of the deployed assets. In delivering transport services, they had to cover up to 2,000km. As part of Slovak Shield 2016, volunteers from the Slovak Red Cross territorial teams, based in Banská Bystrica and Bratislava,

rehearsed linking up with others and building up coordination in procedures. The Red Cross plays an irreplaceable role in conflicts thanks to its guaranteed neutrality. For the purpose of the exercise, it also assisted in preparing simulated dummy casualties, hence making the exercise as realistic as possible in dealing with combat and non-combat casualties. Slovak Shield 2016 ran from 29 September to 14 October and was attended by almost 1,700 troops from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, the USA and Germany. The exercise unfolded concurrently at Lešť and at the SVK Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, as well as in Trenčín, Topoľčany and Bratislava. The exercise was designed to test the ability of troops to respond, at all levels of command, to a variety of threats, ranging from the non-military ones through to the necessity to deploy a multinational task force in order to defend the territorial integrity of an Allied country.



Gen Pavel Macko, with satisfaction. In his statement, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic Gen Milan Maxim highlighted that international exercises with our Allied partners bring practical experience to our commanders, command staffs and troops in planning, commanding and controlling operations. Within Exercise Slovak Shield 2016, the Airlift

