



Partners and fellow colleagues

(17 September) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met for talks with UK Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach at SVK MOD Main Building on 11 September 2017.

Topics of discussion included changes to the security landscape in Europe and across the world, as well as the bilateral defence engagement between the SVK and UK Armed Forces in the field of military training and exercises. Also addressed was the significance of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltics.

During the meeting, Head of the UK's Armed Forces pledged he would consider posting a UK officer to the NFIU Slovakia. On Afghanistan, Air Chief Marshal Peach and Minister Gajdoš were in agreement that there has been a shift in the situation on the ground since 2001. Also discussed were the developments in Iraq, the need to maintain the executive mandate of Operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the role of NATO eFP in the Baltics. The UK Chief of Defence appreciated the SVK Armed Force's long-term commitment to UNFICYP in Cyprus.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach will become the new Chairman of the NATO Military Committee (CMC). Allied Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) elected him to this position during the Military Committee Conference in Tirana, Albania. Air Chief Marshal Peach (61) will take over as CMC from former Czech CHOD General Petr Pavel next year. General Pavel, who has held the position since 2015, welcomed the election of Sir Stuart and expressed his conviction that he will be aided in the leadership of the NATO Military Committee by his vast experience as UK Chief of Defence Staff.

Minister attends conference

(12 September) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš attended the introductory part of the Civic Defence Activities in the Context of Current Developments Conference, which was held under the auspices of the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security, Anton Hrnko. The Generals Club of the Slovak Republic and the Soldiers Union of the Slovak Republic helped to organise the conference.



"Naturally, across society there arises a need for people to have the ability to defend themselves. In fact, it is a legitimate right of our citizens. That is why it is our responsibility to provide them with a background that will enable them to defend our homeland, their close ones, and property in a qualified manner whenever required," said Anton Hrnko, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security.

Also addressed were potential areas of cooperation between the SVK Armed Forces and civic associations on Homeland Defence activities. According to Minister Gajdoš, Homeland Defence activities and preparation of Slovak citizens for the delivery of national defence is on the MOD's current agenda. "One way we want to stimulate our citizens' interest in Homeland Defence is through voluntary military training (VMT). Similarly, we activated the system for building Active Reserves, under which the first soldiers in Reserve underwent training earlier this year," said Head of the MOD.

Defence Development Plan under interdepartmental consultations

(14 September) The MOD submitted its "Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Developing the SVK Armed Forces with an Outlook to 2030" to be discussed in interdepartmental consultations. Until recently, this sort of a comprehensive strategic document, one which represents a defence investment plan up to 2030, has been non-existent for more than 25 years in Defence. It builds on the Security, Defence and Military Strategies of the Slovak Republic, which respond to changes of the security environment and set out strategic goals and enablers. Bearing this in mind, the MOD's priority is to continue building and developing the SVK Armed Forces systematically and systematically, so that they are modern, fully operational, trustworthy, whilst offering adequate potential and being capable of delivering the defence of the SVK REP and participating in the collective defence of NATO and the EU. The basic principle behind the plan is to achieve maximum efficiency with the tax payers' money. Another underlying principle is to involve the domestic defence industry in the modernisation of the SVK Armed Forces to the maximum extent possible, with the aim of boosting Slovakia's employment levels, economy, and GDP growth. The Long-Term Defence Development Plan sets out personnel, armaments, infrastructure and training priorities. At the core of the plan is a list of armaments, equipment, CIS and infrastructure modernisation projects, with implementation timelines linked to specific capabilities. The plan defines ways to implement projects in collaboration with the SVK defence industry and via European solutions, especially the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as well as through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The estimates in the document hinge on the premise that the government will live up to its pledge to commit 2 % of GDP on defence spending (1.6 % of GDP by 2020 and 2 % of GDP by 2024), of which a minimum of 20 % will go on modernisation. On 13 September, State Secretary Róbert Ondrejcsák introduced the new Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic Proposal to representatives of NGOs and the Slovak Security and Defence Industry Association, and to independent experts.

- CHOD Gen Milan Maxim bid his farewell to the 5th rotation members of Field Surgical Team during a ceremony on 13 Sept before their deployment to **Kabul, Afghanistan**. 1 surgeon – anaesthesiologist and 3 specialists will work alongside their Czech colleagues in a ROLE 2 Field Hospital. The rotation is the culmination of SVK-CZE cooperation on military medicine and is the last one under the valid agreement with the CZE side.

- After its previous 7 stopovers across Slovakia the **Czechoslovak Legion train** made it to Nitra Railway Station on 12 Sept. The replica of the original Czechoslovak Legion Train in Russia of 1918 – 1920 was open to the local public until 17 Sept.

- The Republic of Poland will be hosting Ex Dragon 2017 on Drawsko-Pomorskie Training Area on 23-29 Sept, with the training audience drawn from the Host Nation, the UK, Latvia, Lithuania, the USA, Romania, Ukraine, Georgia, Italy and Slovakia. Another tactical exercise, Ex **Lynx 2017**, is being held in preparation for Ex Dragon 2017 on 16-20 Sept. Taking part in the exercises are troops from Poland, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom, with the aim of improving the ability of Bde HQs to command and control tactical missions. The SVK military is represented on the exercise by members of 2nd Mech Bde.

- In connection with Holocaust Victims Day on 13 Sept, members of BA GAR HQ paid a visit to the **Holocaust Museum in Sereď** to attend a social and scientific seminar on the subject-matter.

- Lešť Training Area saw the units of CBRN Bn (1st Mech Bde, SVK LF) to be assigned to VJTF/ NRF 2018 engaged in a **combat readiness verification exercise** on 11-13 Sept. Lt Col Giovanni Cappello and Capt Vincenzo De Luca, of HQ NRDC-ITA NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-Italy, participated in the exercise as observers.

- On 13 Sept, members of **Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Michalovce** held a ceremony to commemorate the 59th anniversary of the passing away of Maj Gen Alexander Korda, whose name the unit bears in its honorific title. On this occasion, "Maj Gen Alexander Korda" Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Commander Lt Col Roman Bobal, CSEL MSgt Radúz Baláz, and Military Chaplain 1st Lt Simon Czap paid their respects to A. Korda at his grave in Vrútky.

- SVK MOD alerts the residents of Slovakia to the **upcoming movements of Allied military vehicles**, scheduled for 18-24 Sept. Over the period, there will be a total of 47 road moves, especially in support of Ex Blonde Avalanche and a Special Operations Forces exercise at TC Lešť. In the case of large convoys, movements will be conducted along the route TC Lešť – Rožňava.

13th MWD and MWD Handlers Championships in Defence

(12 September) Military Working Dog (MWD) handlers of Sliáč Air Base and their MWDs triumphed at the 13th MWD and MWD Handlers Championships in Defence. They were organised by the Cynology Section of the Military Police Training and Cynology Department Vikanová-Hronsek and overseen by Maj Peter Šoltés. 7 MWD handlers along with their MWDs from across Defence battled it out in the multi-purpose dog category. The disciplines included obedience, military discipline, defence and tracking techniques. MWD handlers competed as individuals as well as teams. The team competition decided who would take home the rotating trophy. Karol Letenay and his dog Boss, of Sliáč Air Base, picked up the 2017 Best MWD Handler and MWD in Defence title, with 453/500 points. This is the 3rd consecutive year he has defended the first place. MWD handler Boris Hronec and his dog Kasper, of Sliáč Air Base, placed second with 405 points. Third-place finisher was MWD handler Pavol Kováč and his dog Bony, of Military Unit 5728 Nováky, with 379 points. The Sliáč Air Base MWD handlers won the team category. Thus, the

SVK Military Aviation Day

(14 September) Representatives of local governments, General M. R. Štefánik Slovak Aviation Union, Slovak Airmen Union, Slovak Soldiers Union and SVK AF personnel came together – at the invitation of Commander SVK Air Force Brig Lubomír Svoboda – at the former airfield near the village of Zolná to commemorate Slovak Military Aviation Day. After a wreath-laying ceremony at the 1st Czechoslovak Fighter Regiment Memorial, Deputy Commander SVK Air Force Brig Miroslav Lorinc handed out the Meritorious Airman, Technician and SBAD Specialist Badges to selected SVK AF & SBAD members. Traditionally, taking part in the commemoration event were cyclists of the 21st Tactical Aviation Base (Czech Air Force), whose cycling route took them from Časlav to Zolná.

Back from UNFICYP

(12 September) A total of 92 SVK Armed Forces personnel have returned from UNFICYP, Cyprus. Chief of Defence Gen Maxim welcomed them home during a homecoming ceremony held in Nitra. The United Nations-led mission is the largest one in terms of the SVK military's total deployment on a crisis management operation abroad. Slovakia is the Lead Nation of Sector 4. The SVK Armed Forces have been committed to Cyprus for 16 years.

Franco-Slovak dialogue

(11 September) SVK MOD State Secretary Róbert Ondrejcsák visited Paris to follow up on the conclusions of the Salzburg meeting between French President E. Macron and Prime Minister R. Fico on 23 August. During the meeting at the French MOD, State Secretary G. Darrieusseq and Director General for International Relations and Strategy P. Errera confirmed France's intent to lead the process of European integration via the strengthening of military capabilities, operational engagements, defence industries, and the EU Member States' multinational cooperation. During his trip to France, R. Ondrejcsák also held talks with Minister for European Affairs N. Loiseau. By laying flowers at memorials, he paid his respects to the memory of General Štefánik and the French partisans who had fought in the Slovak National Uprising in WWII.

Beware of false profiles!

(12 September) The MOD issues this notice to warn people about the false profiles on Facebook that are mistakenly associated with the SVK MOD and Armed Forces. The links to the official Facebook profiles can be found on the following websites: www.mosr.sk and www.mil.sk. The 3 official Facebook profiles are at: <https://www.facebook.com/mosr.sk/>, <https://www.facebook.com/Peter-Gajdoš-1789569397953972/> and <https://www.facebook.com/ozbrojenisily/>. All the other profiles featuring military affairs, armed forces, military units, and the SVK MOD are not official. The SVK MOD wishes to distance itself from them and their content.



trophy will remain at Sliáč Air Base. This is the 5th consecutive year the Sliáč Air Base team have placed first.