



Minister of Defence in Greece

(3 October) On his official visit to the Hellenic Republic, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with Greek Minister of National Defence Panos Kammenos for talks, mainly to look into options for joint training and education, cooperation within NATO and the European Union, and international crisis management operations. "I asked Minister Kammenos to consider placing a Greek Armed Forces officer on the staff of the NFU Slovakia as well as making a contribution to the NATO Trust Fund for Ukraine, where our country is the Lead Nation," remarked Head of the SVK MOD.

At the meeting, Minister Kammenos underscored the restart of the new period of SVK-GRC bilateral defence engagement. He praised the cooperation of our countries within the European Union and NATO, while emphasising that they are jointly committed to countering terrorism and illegal migration. "Of great importance is cooperation in the defence industry, where Slovakia has had a rich tradition," he added.

The European Union's current security and defence initiatives, dominated by the Permanent Structure Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF), were also discussed at the meeting with the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr Nikolaos Voutsis, who commended the work of Slovak UNFICYP personnel in Cyprus.

During the visit, Minister Gajdoš opened an Industry Day. To support Slovakia's domestic defence industry, also in attendance at the event were representatives of Slovak defence industry manufacturers.

According to the Minister, the basis for furthering SVK-GRC cooperation will be the Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry of National Defence of the Hellenic Republic and the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic. It will define the respective forms of military economic and technical cooperation. Currently, the Draft Plan for Bilateral Cooperation between the SVK and GRC MODs for 2018 is now ready.

During the Crete leg of his official visit to Greece, Minister Gajdoš visited Souda Bay Naval Base, a Hellenic Air Force base, a NATO maritime training centre at the naval base, and a multinational firing installation. The Head of the SVK MOD appreciated the high quality of the military installations and professional readiness of local military personnel.

While still in Athens, the Slovak delegation attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Syntagma Square to pay tribute to the memory of all Servicemen and women who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

Military top-level sports mark 50 years in Banská Bystrica

(5 October) Military top-level sports mark their 50th anniversary of their foundation. During the ceremony in Banská Bystrica, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš thanked the military sportsmen and women, their coaches and support teams for their outstanding representation of Slovakia. Addressing the military sporting community at the Gala Evening, Head of the SVK MOD said: "There is no doubt that sports connect people. This has been the case here below Urpin Hill for 50 years already. This half-centenary in the red-orange jersey has brought 10 Olympic Gold Medals, 22 Olympic medals, more than 80 World Champion titles, and over 100 European Champion titles. And if we add to this other sporting events, we can count up to 1100 medals." Speaking in front of the entire team of the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica (MSC DBB), Director of the MSC DBB Col Roman Benčík emphasised: "We all are helping to make sure that our best sportsmen and women –



wearing the national shirts with the state emblem of the Slovak Republic – can, with pride and dignity, represent our Slovak sports amidst the fierce international competition. Without Dukla, there is no doubt there would be fewer of those who could represent our country and the SVK Armed Forces in the world." During the Gala Evening, the sportsmen and women of the centre were awarded in three categories for their outstanding achievements. The programme also featured a side event, an exhibition chronicling the history of military top-level sports. The current structure of the MSC DUKLA was formed by amalgamating the two existing Army Sports Clubs Banská Bystrica and Trenčín. Today's MSC DBB houses athletics, biathlon, judo, marksmanship, water slalom, wrestling, weight lifting, canoeing, road cycling, karate, body building, alpine skiing, swimming, water motor sports, white water canoeing, modern pentathlon, ski jumps, and gymnastics.

Minister pays tribute to the heroes of the Battle of the Dukla Pass

(6 October) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid tribute to the heroes of the Battle of the Dukla Pass (Carpatho-Dukla Offensive). The 73rd anniversary commemorations at the Dukla Pass Memorial were attended by Slovakia's three highest state representatives, including Slovak Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko, with the participation of a Czech parliamentary delegation, led by the Speaker of the Czech Parliament's Chamber of Deputies, Mr Jan Hamáček. At the "Gate to Freedom", as the Dukla Pass is symbolically called, Head of the SVK MOD presented war veterans with commemorative plaquettes. Speaking at the commemoration ceremony, Head of the SVK MOD said: "As a nation, never ever can we allow the memory of the heroes of the Battle of the Dukla Pass to fade into oblivion. The birth of our nation's freedom was not an easy one, and peace has never been and will never be a matter of course. As young people are often unaware of this, we are obliged to remind them of such events." At the same time, he emphasised that there is a need for children and young people to visit memorial sites associated with the history of the Slovak Nation. The commemorative gathering in tribute of the heroes of the Battle of the Dukla Pass continued with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Statue of Army General Ludvík Svoboda and at the Soviet Army Monument in Svidník. Traditionally, distinguished guests were treated to a tour of the Museum of Military History Svidník and the Lookout Tower at Dukla.



- In the delegation of the Speaker of the Czech Parliament's Chamber of Deputies, Mr Jan Hamáček, who is visiting Slovakia at the invitation of Slovak Parliamentary Chairman and SNS leader Andrej Danko, two surviving WWII veterans. Maj Gen Emil Boček and Brig Václav Kuchynka. SVK MOD leaders presented the veterans with the SVK Minister of Defence Commemorative Plaquettes on the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the Battle of the Dukla Pass (Carpatho-Dukla Offensive).

- A change of responsibility ceremony, with the participation of DCOM CSS Bde Col Róbert Kecsó, was held at Jaselské Barracks on 29 Sept. Lt Col Pavol Kobík assumed the appointment of **Commander Combat Support Service (CSS) Brigade** from Maj Branislav Chrenko, who served as interim COM CSS Bde (since 31 Aug) after the departure of Lt Col Stanislav Križan.

- Members of the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre, based in Martin, took part in the international **Soft Caps 2017 exercise** on Ócsa Training Area in Hungary on 19-29 September. They trained together in a brigade-sized formation of teams from Poland, Slovenia and Hungary. The exercise was aimed at the provision of support to evacuation of refugees. At the conclusion of the exercise, the Officer Commanding the Exercise, Col Csaba Szilágyi, expressed his satisfaction with the job well done and thanked everyone for their high quality performance.

- The Chapel of St Michael the Archangel in Zvolen hosted a **Forgiveness Mass** on 1 October. It was attended by military and police chaplains from across the region. The main celebrant and preacher of the service was Padre Stanislav Bindaš of St Vincent De Paul.

- The first ceremony involving all the international contingents of Sector 4 took place on 2 October in UNFICYP, Cyprus with Lt Col **Jaroslav Marko** as new S4 Commander. At the ceremony he assessed the progress made in the area of responsibility (S4 AOR) and recognised selected members with Commemorative Certificates for their exceptional commitment and professional approach.

- SVK MOD informs the public of the **upcoming military movements**, scheduled from 9 to 15 Oct. A total of 23 road moves and 1 railway movement will take place across Slovakia. This will mainly involve Polish troops and their assets crossing our territory. Also scheduled are SVK Armed Forces convoys heading from Michalovce, Sereď and Trenčín to Lešť Training Area.

- There was a voluntary work session on the grounds of the **Institute of Military History (VHÚ)** in Svidník and at Dukla by employees of the Museum Section Svidník (VHU) and members of the SVK Armed Forces. The work included protective coatings, placement of handrails, maintenance work, gardening, and an authentic border column from Dukla was installed at the Museum Section Svidník.

Strategic documents approved

(4 October) The SVK Security Council and Government approved the strategic documents as formulated by the SVK Ministry of Defence – Defence and Military Strategies of the Slovak Republic and the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Developing the SVK Armed Forces with an Outlook to 2030. The MOD has thus met another of its pledges set out in the SVK Government Manifesto Commitments. These documents build on the updated Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic, as formulated by the SVK Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

SVK-CZE cooperation



(4 October) As part of the bilateral cooperation between the Controls Department, SVK MOD, and the Supervision and Controls Department, CZE MOD, a working meeting took place on 3 - 4 October in Bratislava. The Slovak delegation, led by Director General of the Controls Department Miloš Mojtó, and the Czech delegation, led by Deputy Director of the Supervision and Controls Department Antonín Rada, shared information and hands-on experience on control activities and application of legislation to control and inspection processes. Next meeting will be held in 2018 in the Czech Republic.

SVK to deploy troops to Iraq

(4 October) The SVK Security Council and Government approved the mandate for the deployment of up to 25 SVK Armed Forces personnel to Iraq. Their task will be to provide training, advice and assistance in building the capacities of the Iraqi Security Forces under the NATO Training and Capacity Building in Iraq (NTCB-I). The document still needs to be endorsed by Parliament. In addition to this, Slovakia intends to send up to 4 pcs of specialist mine clearance equipment to Iraq. The deployment, which is planned for a year-long period, will be effected on 30 October 2017 at the earliest and may not be continuous but interrupted. This is because it will take into account the training phases of the NTCB-I and the skill levels of Iraqi Armed Forces instructors. Logistic support will require other partner countries to cooperate together. The activity of the SVK Armed Forces in Iraq will be implemented under NATO's Defence Capacity Building (DCB) package for Iraq with the approval of the Republic of Iraq and in accordance with international agreements or international contractual documents.

NATO scientists in Bratislava



(6 October) From Monday to Friday Bratislava hosted discussions of scientists from the NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO). Monday and Tuesday saw a symposium on sensors and their application across the military. Wednesday

through Friday saw the Sensors and Electronics Technology (SET) Panel delving into the details of SET issues. The symposium and discussions were directed by the Chair of the SET Panel, Mr Augustus Way Fountain, of the United States of America. Slovakia was represented by Assoc. Prof. Ing. Ján Ochoďnický, PhD. from the M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy.

Sliáč airmen on training

(3 October) Airmen of the Tactical Wing (TW) Sliáč, led by its Chief of the Parachute, Airborne and Rescue Service, Sgt 1st Class Peter Balog, rehearsed in-flight emergency exit procedures. The rehearsal was followed by a test, wherein the airmen had to resolve a series of simulated scenarios, ranging from ejection seat failure, cockpit canopy cover blockage, second pilot blockage, all the way through to the necessity to exit aircraft without the ejection system.