



Summit pledges will be honoured

(13 October) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the Ambassador of the United States of America, HE Mr Adam Sterling, for talks at MOD Main Building. At the bilateral meeting, they delved into current areas of SVK-U.S. defence engagement. He updated the U.S. Ambassador on the MOD's strategic documents, which, following their approval by the SVK Security Council and Government, are now on their way to Parliament. Another theme on the bilateral agenda was defence spending. Minister Gajdoš reaffirmed Slovakia's commitment made at the Wales and Warsaw Summits and informed the U.S. Ambassador of a hike in the 2018 defence budget. They also discussed the SVK soldiers' deployment to Iraq. In this respect, Minister Gajdoš reassured Ambassador Sterling that the fight against terrorism is among the MOD's priorities.

Advancing SVK-TUR cooperation

(13 October) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš held talks with the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, HE Mrs Arsligül Üğdül. Aside from SVK-TUR defence ties and industry cooperation issues, they addressed current security developments. On the Turkish initiatives, the Minister said: "I appreciate that the Turkish side has confirmed to place a Turkish officer on the staff of the NFIU SVK and I welcome the opportunity for our troops to join a military exercise in Turkey." To promote both defence industrial bases, they discussed the IDEB and IDEF defence fairs and options of reciprocal support. The Minister also updated Ambassador Üğdül on the approved strategic documents and the upcoming modernisation projects in Defence.

Iraq deployment approved

(13 October) Members of Parliament today endorsed the mandate for dispatching up to 25 SVK Armed Forces members 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 role of the Slovak soldiers will be to partake in training Iraqi Armed Forces instructors in areas such as demining and repairs of Soviet-era military hardware. The SVK Armed Forces members will not participate in combat operations, nor in their planning. In addition, Slovakia wants to send 4 pieces of specialist mine clearance equipment to Iraq. The deployment, planned for a year-long period, is due on 30 October 2017 at the earliest and may not be continuous but interrupted.

NFIU Commanders' Conference in Vajnory is over

(11 October) The conference conclusions, the role and tasks of the NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) at a time of crisis, and so-called NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) were the topics addressed at a press briefing held at the conclusion of the 5th NFIU Commanders' Conference in Vajnory. Lt Gen Manfred Hofmann, Commander Multinational Corps Northeast (MNCNE) and Chairman of the Conference, evaluated the progress and results of the NFIU Slovakia. On 1 June 2017, one year on since its launch, the NFIU SVK achieved Full Capability (FC) and is now ready, whenever needed, to take over responsibility for command of operations on NATO's northeastern flank. "Our presence here would not have been possible if not the phenomenal support that we have received from our Slovak allies. I would like to thank the SVK Armed Forces and all Slovaks for their attitude to and support for NATO's presence in the region." Among other things, in 2017 NATO activities were stepped up across Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. On the reinforcement of the flank, Lt Gen Hofmann said: "The presence of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) units is a clear demonstration of NATO's strong bond and partnership and is sending an unmistakable message: NATO stands as one!" The NFIU Slovakia, based at Bratislava's Vajnory Barracks, operates under the command of MNCNE Szczecin and identifies logistic and transport options and support infrastructure.



- Members of 13th Mech Bn Levice concluded their training on Lešt Training Area on 10-12 Oct, to finish the phasing of their squadrons. On 11 Oct, the trigonometric-shaped Kamenný Vrch (Stone Hill) firing range saw a squadron-level tactical exercise with combat fire, built around the theme of **Mechanised Squadron in attack after full preparation**. The exercise was held with drill ammunition, aided by the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) 2000.

- Members of Michalovce-based Engr Coy, Engr Bn Sereď, 1st Mech Bde Topoľčany, underwent a specialist tactical training on 11-12 Oct on the range at Jaseňovský Vrch (Ash Tree Hill), with the theme of **Engineer Company engaged in performance of engineer support tasks during operations of manoeuvre units**. Their mission was to provide support to 1st Mech Sqn, 13th Mech Bn Levice.

- Members of **Helicopter Wing (HW) Prešov** held a ceremony to mark the 14th anniversary of the Mi-17 helicopter crash of 9 Oct 2003 in the village of Pušovce. In attendance were also the next-of-kin of the aircrew who perished in the crash.

- Following the commemorations at Dukla and Svidník, units of Bratislava Garrison HQ visited the German Military Cemetery in Hunklova to pay respects to almost 3,100 **fallen German soldiers** who died in the Battle of the Dukla Pass (Carpatho-Dukla Offensive).

- Pilots from Transport Wing (TW) Kuchyňa participated in **pilot training on the L-410 Turbolet Simulator** at Ostrava-Mošnov Airport. The virtual trainer enabled them to negotiate a series of dangerous in-flight incidents and to rehearse L-410 flight procedures and limitations. They practised unusual and dangerous in-flight emergencies, which cannot be simulated during a flight.

- The national preparation for the **7th rotation of the SVK Contingent RSM Afghanistan** drew to a close at Peace Support Operations Training Unit, Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin. The training culminated with a command staff rehearsal, involving SVK Armed Forces members who had served with an assessment team as part of previous rotations.

- Tmava saw a ceremony to mark the **50th anniversary of military archival services in Slovakia** on 12 Oct. Director of the Military Archives – Central Registry Tmava Jozef Petráš welcomed CHOD Gen Milan Maxim, directors of the partner Military Archives from Czechia and Hungary, and other guests.

- SVK MOD informs the public of the **upcoming military movements**, scheduled from 16 to 22 Oct. A total of 16 Allied road moves will take place across Slovakia. These will mainly involve Polish troops and their assets crossing our territory on their way back from NATO MIOTC in Greece. Also scheduled are SVK Armed Forces convoys from Rožňava to Zemianske Kostolany and two railway movements.

13th Literary Competition

(11 October) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš announced the 13th Literary Competition for Secondary School and College Students. Those interested in sending their entries on the theme – Our security cannot be taken for granted – can contact the MOD by email at sutaz@mod.gov.sk from 12 Oct to 13 Nov. They will be divided into two categories: secondary school students and college/university students. Assuming that the works written in the literary genres of your own choice in Slovak language meet the required conditions, they will enter the first round to be judged on their excellence by the MOD Literary Commission. The best 5 entries will then be selected in each category. In the second round, they will be evaluated by the public in an online vote on the SVK MOD Facebook between 22-30 Nov. The first three winning candidates in each category will receive financial prizes of €400 (1st place), €300 (2nd place) and €200 (3rd place). The conditions, dates and other information is available at www.mosr.sk and www.facebook.com/mosr.sk.

On the stand-up of V4 EU BG

(12 October) In the presence of DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko, a working meeting on the stand-up of the V4 EU Battle Group (V4 EU BG) began on 10 Oct. Being the most important V4 project in Defence, the V4 EU BG is to be on stand-by in the second half of 2019. 32 foreign participants and SVK Armed Forces members addressed the stand-up of the V4 EU BG as part of 8 specialist working groups. Military experts from CZE, HUN, POL, and SVK worked out, among other things, proposals for high demand, low density capabilities, requirements for specific capabilities, communications support issues, planning documentation for the stand-up of the V4 EU BG. Slovakia will once again be the Lead Nation for CBRN.

SVK SD17 is culminating



(15 October) Over 1,400 SVK soldiers along with members of the Czech Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard (USA), have entered the final phase of the year-long Slovak Shield 2017 exercise series. Their tasks are geared towards the defence of the Slovak Republic in a Multinational Task Force formation. The aim of the exercise is to certify the Mechanised Brigade – National Commitment 2017. Commenting on the stand-up process, CHOD Gen Milan Maxim said: "Our intent is to bring the years-long process of building the Mechanised Brigade through to completion and to identify problematic areas so that we can focus all our efforts on them." This year's Slovak Shield series will culminate on Thursday (19 Oct) with a capabilities demonstration day and the exercising troops demonstrating a mission to push the enemy out of a built-up area in line with the battle order.

P. Gajdoš: The defence and security of Slovakia cannot be subject to political wrangling



(12 October) The defence of the Slovak Republic and the security of Slovak citizens cannot be subject to political wrangling. This message was communicated by SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš at a press conference, where he together with Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security/

Deputy Chairman of the Slovak National Party (SNS) Anton Hrnko and representatives of the SVK MOD presented strategic documents to the public. The 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 were approved last week by the SVK Security Council and Government and are now on their way to Parliament. Head of the SVK MOD emphasised that the priority of the SVK MOD under the Slovak National Party (SNS) leadership is to continue building and developing the SVK Armed Forces systematically and systematically. "Ultimately, we want the Armed Forces to be modern, fully mission capable and trustworthy, whilst offering adequate

potential, and being capable of delivering the defence of the Slovak Republic and participating in the collective defence of NATO and the EU," he noted. At the same time, he stressed the need to involve the Slovak defence industry in the modernisation of the SVK Armed Forces to a maximum extent possible. Thus, the MOD will meet yet another of its SVK Government Manifesto Commitments. Chairman of the Defence & Security Committee Anton Hrnko appreciated the SNS-led MOD having drawn up the documents. "They are important for the security and future shape of the Armed Forces, because until recently this plan had been completely non-existent for almost 25 years," he noted. Separately, he highlighted the Long-Term Defence Development Plan, which focuses on the building of the Armed Forces. "According to Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, it is our duty to develop our individual and collective ability to resist an armed attack," he reminded. The coordinator for the strategic documents and the chairman of the commission to assess them was the General Secretary of the SVK MOD's Service Office, Ján Holko. "In addition to ensuring the Armed Forces' standard day-to-day activity, we have, from the very beginning, paid maximum attention to efforts to process the said strategic documents in the shortest time possible and at a required

level of quality," he emphasised. He further argued that personnel issues are of equal importance and must be addressed carefully even in light of the defence investment plan. "Here we must deal with in-depth analyses and go back to 2006 or even before, when the political decision was made for the Armed Forces to go fully professional from evening to morning," noted the General Secretary, adding that the current state of affairs requires an analysis to look into what this process has brought, what motivates individuals, and how the entire personnel replacement system has changed. On the Military Strategy, Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim said that it characterises the functionalities and capacities that must be catered for through the Armed Forces' specific capabilities, including the command and control (C2) system, the Army – Combat Arms (CA) units, Combat Support (CS) units, Combat Service Support (CSS) units, military medical units, the SVK Air Force, and the Special Operations Forces (SOF). "For tactical units, the ongoing long-term transformation aims to deliver higher mobility, resilience, fire efficiency, usability, sustainability, flexibility and interoperability, as well as boosting their ability to conduct missions in a variety of geographical and climatic conditions," accentuated Gen Maxim.