



## Minister introduces a plan

(9 February) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš updated SVK MPs in Parliament on the modernisation plans for the SVK Armed Forces, which the MOD will pursue in line with the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with an Outlook to 2030. The Minister received full support, among others, from Parliamentary Chairman and SNS leader Andrej Danko.

"In modernising the SVK military, we want to use preferentially the capacities and capabilities of the domestic defence industry. We deny any allegations that we want to extend our dependency on Soviet-made military equipment by one way or the other," said the Minister. He went on to remind that the SVK MOD has a realistic investment plan in place up until 2030, whereas until recently such document did not exist in the department.

On the information about the cancellation of the competitive bidding for 3D surveillance radars, which has been under the spotlight of media attention recently, Peter Gajdoš said that the MOD has not taken this step yet, but it is considering this option due to the technical problems associated with the tender, which has been in progress for the past almost 3 years.

## We do not lack transparency

(11 February) The aim of the MOD leadership is to enhance the defence of the Slovak Republic and the security of Slovak citizens and to ensure a systemic and systematic modernisation of the SVK Armed Forces in line with the Long-Term Defence Development Plan. This was announced by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš during his appearance on "5 Minutes to 12", a Radio and Television Slovakia (RTVS) political discussion programme. The MOD categorically rejects that it acts non-transparently in modernising the Armed Forces. "We are proceeding in accordance with current legislation. We release everything we can release," said the Minister. He emphasised he welcomes every interest in the defence of the country and is ready for discussion. He reminded that the SVK Security Council and Cabinet members, the MPs on the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security, and the MPs who participated in the special parliamentary session on defence issues – they all have been briefed on the procurement of 8x8 and 4x4 vehicles. On other modernisation projects, the Minister denied any claims that the MOD wants to extend its dependency on Soviet-made military equipment. Intense negotiations on the future of the supersonic fleet are underway, whereas only Swedish and U.S. bids are now being considered. Despite false media information, no official decision on the cancellation of the 3D surveillance radar has been taken as of today.

## Soldier trainees train in Martin and Little Fatra

(8 February) The Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin and Martin Garrison's Sučany training ground, located at the foot of the Little Fatra Mountains, are hosting the training of soldier trainees and cadets. On 8 Jan, Martin saw 98 soldier trainees and 41 college graduates begin their 7-week training programme, combined with basic military training (BMT). Their tactical training will culminate with a final exercise. SVK Army Drill Sergeant MSgt Milan Mikuš, who has previous experience from his tour of duty in ISAF and courses in DEU and USA, is satisfied with the cadets' commitment to training: "This platoon is one of the best I have seen over the past years. They are future officers, they are a bit more experienced, and they know what they want to achieve in their lives." Among those with the best results thus far are Pte Eva Jenisová, Pte Martin Demian and Pte Veronika Petrušová. Marksmanship and grenade throwing are still ahead of them. On successful completion of BMT, new regular soldiers will attend a passing-out

## Military policemen decorated in Banská Bystrica

(9 February) The SNP Museum Banská Bystrica hosted a ceremony to mark the return of the first Military Police (MP) personnel from EUNAVFOR MED Operation SOPHIA I and to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the establishment of the SVK Military Police. The military policemen were greeted by State Secretary Marián Saloň, DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko, Director of the SVK MP Col Michal Migát, Commander of the HUN MP Brig Sándor Mergancz, Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Mons František Rábek, DCOM SVK Air Force Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, and other guests. The SVK Military Police marked its 27th anniversary. In his remarks, Director of the SVK MP Col Michal Migát underscored the work of all policemen and women and thanked them for performing their duties at the highest standard in Slovakia as well as on operations and missions abroad. Selected MP members were decorated with medals, and so were State Secretary Marián Saloň, DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko, Mons František Rábek, Brig Sándor Mergancz, and Director of the SNP Museum Stanislav Mičev.



- The Czech Ambassador to Slovakia, HE Ms Livia Klausová, accompanied by Czech Defence Attaché Maj Gen Ján Gurník, paid a visit to **Helicopter Wing (HW) Prešov** on 7 Feb. They were welcomed by DCOM Lt Col Peter Kríž and COS Lt Col Pavel Klučerovský, who briefed them on HW Prešov operations. Ambassador Klausová was keen to find out about the coordination of rescue services in Slovakia and the training of personnel on the UH-60 Black Hawk multipurpose rotorcraft.

- The SVK MOD hosted the initial meeting of the **Framework Nation Concept Cluster CBRN Protection Subcluster Exercises Working Group** on 8 Feb. The aim of the meeting was to present the options and capabilities of CBRN specialists to the benefit of the countries participating in the Framework Nation Concept (FNC) CBRN Protection Cluster, and to discuss the participation of multinational CBRN troops in national CBRN exercises. Developing a common scenario database for tactical level exercises was high on the agenda.

- On 7 Feb, Commander Bratislava Garrison Col Slavomír Milde welcomed **Chief of the SVK Military Presidential Office** Brig Ivan Šimko, accompanied by Commander Presidential Seat Col Norbert Kádek and Advisor to the SVK President Michal Luciak. They discussed cooperation and planned activities, with a focus on promoting the presentation of Slovakia and its Armed Forces at home and abroad.

- Designated Chiefs of Branches and Sections at the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen and C2S Wing Zvolen carried out an **independent staff rehearsal** at HQ AIRCOM Zvolen on 7 Feb in preparation for Exercise Air Shield 2018, which is scheduled for the beginning of October.

- On 2 Feb, the Hall of Honour and Fame at Martin-based Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base hosted a graduation ceremony for **military training instructors**. The course subjects included methodology, conduct of training, education and psychology. Staff Sergeant Ján Mrlan, of MP Vlkánová, was named Best Graduate of the Course.

- The SVK MOD informs the drivers in Slovakia of the upcoming **Allied military movements**, scheduled from 12-18 Feb 2018. A total of 4 Allied road moves will take place across Slovakia over the period. They will mainly involve Polish and U.S. troops transporting materiel. This week will also see SVK military road movements and round trip convoys with oversize cargo of equipment along the routes: Prešov – Valaškovce, Hlohovec – TC Lešť, Michalovce – Biela Hora; and additional round trip convoys with oversize cargo of equipment along the routes: Nitra – Koliňanský vrch, Prešov – Trebišov, Martin – Sučany, Valaškovce – Veľké Ozorovce.

## Preparations for Toxic Valley 2018

(7 February) The SVK General Staff hosted the initial planning conference for the 6th Sampling and Identification of Chemical Agents (SICA) and Mobile Chemical Labs Conference Toxic Valley 2018 on 2-7 Feb. It was attended by representatives of the SVK Armed Forces, C-IED COE Madrid, JCBRND COE Vyškov, and from BEL, CZE, FRA, HUN, DEU, POL, AUT, SVN, USA and GBR. The participation in the exercise has so far been confirmed by 8 SICA teams, 3 Weapons Intelligence teams, 13 observers, 12 international EVAL team members from 11 countries, and 3 NATO Centres of Excellence. The main planning conference will be held on 11-12 Apr in Bratislava.

## SVK AF reviews TY 2017 results

(8 February) Zvolen hosted a convention of commanders, chaired by Commander SVK Air Force Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, with the participation of DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian, CSEL for the SVK Armed Forces Sgt Maj Vladimír Beluš, and other guests. The participants familiarised themselves with lessons learned from fielding new air assets, personnel sustainability and replacement, a flights safety analysis. The main session was dedicated to evaluating the results of Training Year (TY) 2017 and presenting the 2018 goals. Maj Gen Kocian awarded Maj Gen Svoboda and selected SVK AF members with the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the SVK Armed Forces Medal.



## With Ambassador on cooperation

(5 February) The SVK-U.S. cooperation on defence, strategic documents and the modernisation of the SVK military topped the agenda of the meeting between SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and the Ambassador of the United States of America to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Adam H. Sterling. They built on the visit of SACEUR General Curtis M. Scaparrotti to the SVK MOD last week. He visited Slovakia on the occasion of the Central European Chiefs of Defence Conference + Adjutants General of U.S. National Guards. Speaking about the MOD's strategic documents, the Minister reminded that the MOD will go ahead with modernisation projects in line with the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with an Outlook to 2030. Also discussed at the meeting was NATO-EU cooperation and international exercises.

## HUN Minister in visit to MOD

(6 February) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with HUN Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó at MOD Main Building. Topics of discussion included bilateral cooperation, joint international exercises, cooperation on international crisis management operations, and the EU's PESCO initiative, including Slovakia's EuroArtillery Indirect Fire Support (IFS) project. At the meeting, Minister Gajdoš underscored Hungary's annual role in organising the act of commemoration in the village of Hejce.

## TG Štefánik personnel at NFIU

(6 February) The July 2016 NATO Summit approved the stand-up of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in POL, LTU, LVA and EST. SVK personnel will serve in Latvia as part of Task Group (TG) Štefánik under the Canadian-led eFP battlegroup. As part of their pre-deployment briefs on 6 Feb, the key TG Štefánik personnel visited the NFIU SVK to be updated on the history and operations of NATO's eFP BGs in the Baltics, with a particular focus on the CAN-led eFP BG in Latvia. In a videoconference call with its officers, the TG Štefánik leaders had the opportunity to ask questions on their next posting and details of deployment.



parade in Martin on 23 Feb before transiting to follow-on training. The cadets will return to the SVK Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš to go on with their study programmes.