

## Visit of VADM Kilrain

(27 July) Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko welcomed Commander of the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (COM NSHQ) Vice Admiral Colin J. Kilrain to the MOD. The July NATO Brussels Summit, Slovakia's fulfilment of commitments, and its contributions to international crisis management operations were the main topics of the meeting.

On our defence pledges made at the NATO Brussels Summit, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "At the NATO summit our delegation declared both an increase in troop levels in Afghanistan under the valid mandate and a continuation in performing tasks in Latvia. We're also ready to join NATO's new training mission in Iraq, because we want to make it clear that we want to participate actively in improving the security situation."

At the joint meeting, Vice Admiral Kilrain highly commended the readiness of the Slovak Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel on a tour of the Resolute Support Mission (RSM), Afghanistan and those posted to the NSHQ, Mons, Belgium.

Minister Gajdoš updated Vice Admiral Kilrain on the Slovak Armed Forces' modernization projects aligned to the 2030 Long-Term Defence Development Plan. He illustrated this point by reference to 2 C-27J Spartan airlifters and 4 UH-60M Black Hawk utility helicopters that have recently been brought into service. He reminded that the Slovak Cabinet has already given its consent to the purchases of 14 F-16 Block 70/72 multi-role fighter jets, the replacement of 3D surveillance medium-, short- and very short-range radars, and the modernization of the 8x8 and 4x4 platforms has also been underway.



## Kuchyňa temporarily closed

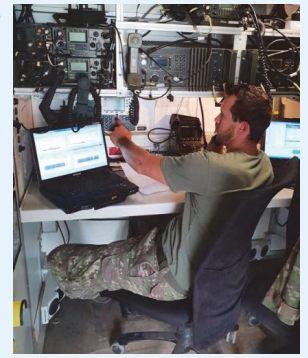
(24 July) Kuchyňa Air Base, home to the General M. R. Štefánik Transport Wing, will be temporarily closed due to scheduled repair works on the runway pavements from 27 July 2018 to the end of August 2018. The operational air assets in service with the Wing will be temporarily transferred to the Otto Smik Tactical Wing at Sliach Air Base.

The price of material for the planned repair of runway pavements is estimated at €15,000, whereas repair works will be done by members of the SVK Air Force using their own equipment.

The last time the runway of Kuchyňa Air Base was reconstructed was in 1985.

## Providing CIS support to Exercise MACE XIX

(27 July) Members of the Deployable Communications and Information Systems Base (DCISB) attended Exercise Mace XIX, the SVK Air Force's largest exercise, on 9-27 July. Taking part in the exercise were 19 countries with over two dozen air assets. The exercise was aimed at operators using SBAD systems, including the S-300 and the 2K12KUB; Allied pilots breaking through "enemy" air defences; SBAD forces using electronic countermeasures (ECM), i.e. active jamming, and passive surveillance. Members of the DCISB played a role in making the missions of troops go smooth by providing the CIS infrastructure and securing voice and data communications not only for SVK personnel but also for foreign troops. In the area of deployment, 37 soldiers set up and sustained communications among six locations, aided by 13 pieces of communication equipment and 11 wheeled vehicles. The system was maintained by a group of administrators who along with Chief of the Signals Workshop Sergeant 1st Class Horný fine-tuned the system to flawless operation. The last time the air exercise of this type and extent was supported by the DCISB was in 2014.



- 4 Slovak soldiers from Martin-based Repairs Battalion are deploying with NATO's **non-combat training and capacity building mission in Iraq**. They will train instructors of the Iraqi Security Forces on repairing Soviet-era military equipment. The service personnel attended a farewell ceremony in the presence of Commander SVK Land Forces Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, Deputy Commander Crisis Management Strategic Centre (General Staff) Col Marián Kurilla, Commander Combat Service Support Brigade Col Zuzana Kraushuberová.

- The Commander SVK Land Forces has announced a **competitive selection for service personnel** for the position of a Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Specialist in the ISTAR Battalion Prešov. For more information, go to <http://www.mil.sk/79481/?pg=1>.

- Children from across Slovakia met in the Valčianska Valley near the widely known Snowland Ski Resort for **Children's Army Camp**, led by professional Army drill instructors. They were put through an initial physical test before undertaking drills and tactical, medical, CBRN and topographical training. The programme was enriched by essential self-defence techniques and a night march.

- As a tradition, the **SVK Armed Forces Military Band** has performed music at the Cultural Summer Festival in Bratislava. The military ensemble, led by Maj Boris Hokina, has provided musical entertainment, playing compositions of popular bands, Slovak folklore songs, and military parade music in Hviezdoslav Square.

- Teaming up with the Mobile Blood Transfusion Unit, of the Slovak National Uprising Central Military Hospital – Faculty Hospital Ružomberok, a **blood donation drive** was held at the Training and Mobilization Replenishment Base Martin on 25 July. Among those giving blood were donors were members of the Base and Voluntary Military Training soldiers. A total of 47 soldiers gave blood, many of them for the first time.

- The SVK MOD urges drivers to take caution as there will be 15 **Allied military movements** across Slovakia over the period between 30 July and 5 August 2018. They will mainly involve US and POL troops. SVK Army convoys will carry oversized cargo along the routes: Prešov – Ružomberok – Banská Bystrica – Sliach; Martin – Turčianske Teplice – Harmanec – Banská Bystrica – Nemecká; and Sliach – Nitra – Hlohovec – Trenčín – Martin – Sliach.

## Inquiry into legality of paramilitaries

(23 July) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš has filed a motion with the Office of the Prosecutor General to initiate an inquiry into the legality of the paramilitary group 'Slovak Recruits'. The reason for this is that the group provides military training to Slovak citizens with an unclear objective and that it may have misused the SVK military's phased-out combat assets and the SVK Armed Forces insignia.

Speaking about the paramilitary group, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Active duty service in the Armed Forces, Voluntary Military Training, and Active Reserves are today the only legal means available to our citizens to prepare for the defence of our homeland. That is why we will no longer tolerate the activities of the militant group, whose objectives and background are obscure." He went on to add: "It is not acceptable for a parallel military group, which wants to alternate with the SVK Armed Forces, to operate in Slovakia."

As General Secretary of the SVK MOD's Service Office Ján Holko added, yet another problem is that there is a clear attempt of Kotleba MP – the People's Party Our Slovakia to take control over the paramilitary organization. "This should be alarming not only to the media that give a space to them but also to all citizens," he stressed. He further reminded that members of the Slovak Recruits have used and misused the Slovak Armed Forces insignia and uniforms, whereas there is currently no legislation to regulate it. "That is why we have already held talks with Parliamentary Chairman and SNS leader Andrej Danko, and in Autumn 2018 we will adopt, amongst others, legislative measures so that only service personnel are allowed to use the SVK Armed Forces uniforms," he said.

Similarly, the MOD wants to make sure that the phased-out military weaponry and vehicles earmarked for disposal by sale of surplus equipment or as exhibits for museum purposes will not be misused in any way in the future. "It is unacceptable that a paramilitary organization is training with this equipment," said the General Secretary of the SVK MOD's Service Office. The MOD is currently looking into all agreements that have been concluded between the Institute of Military History and civil organizations. "We refuse to cooperate, in any way whatsoever, with the civil organizations where there might be just the slightest suspicion of military equipment being misused," emphasised Minister Gajdoš.



## Candidates interested in joining the Active Reserves have a month to apply

(29 July) Candidates interested in joining the Active Reserves still have a month (until 31 August) to apply. The SVK Armed Forces plan to train over 300 active reservists and training exercises will run between April and June 2019. Those who meet the legal requirements should contact the Army Recruitment Groups, located in Slovakia's regional capitals, depending on their domicile. Next year the SVK Armed Forces are set to train 116 active reservists for the 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov, 95 active reservists for the Engineer Battalion Sereď, 75 active reservists for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Battalion Rožňava, and 15 active reservists for the Military Police Department Trenčín.

The first training exercise will take place at the 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov on 15-26 April 2019, to be

followed by training exercises at the CBRN Defence Battalion Rožňava on 20-31 May 2019 and at the Engineer Battalion Sereď and at a Military Police facility on 10-21 June 2019.

Active reservists are entitled to 600 euros per year, provided that they have passed through 75% of the regular training programme. The active reservists who are employees are entitled to a commensurate amount of rank-based military pay for the training period and free military clothing. In addition, transport fares to and from the training facilities and their salaries will be reimbursed to their employers

as per the Labour Code. The active reservists who are self-employed will see their business income reimbursed for the period of regular training. The MOD will also refund the premiums for social and public health insurance of the employees and the self-employed for the period of training.

