



Premier at Ex Slovak Shield

(27 September) As part of this year's largest multinational training event in Slovakia – Exercise Slovak Shield 2018 at the Lešť Training Centre, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš introduced the capabilities of the SVK Armed Forces to Premier Peter Pellegrini and members of the SVK Cabinet during the Distinguished Visitors Day. Nearly 1,500 Slovak and international troops took part in the exercise.

Speaking about SVK defence modernization to media at Lešť, Premier Peter Pellegrini said: "Over the past months we have been and will still be witness to one of the most extensive modernization efforts in the Armed Forces since the foundation of the Slovak Republic. That is why we have decided to come to Lešť at the conclusion of this international exercise in order to verify how some of the cutting-edge technologies are used and to what extent our Slovak Armed Forces are interoperable with NATO partners."

On the need for members of the Cabinet to familiarise themselves with the capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces, Defence Minister Gajdoš said: "The aim of this modernization, requiring an increased investment in defence, is to strengthen our military capabilities and enable our soldiers to get better prepared to guarantee the security of Slovak citizens. And precisely because it is members of the Cabinet who give consent to historical investments in modernising the Armed Forces, they should see for themselves what the money is spent on."

On a major capability uplift in the Armed Forces in support of deterrence, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko said: "This Cabinet has adopted very significant decisions, ones that allowed our armed forces to keep up with today's technological advances. I wish to underline that the Armed Forces are not being modernised because we are preparing for war, but because we want to preserve peace, since it is only the weak who fall victim to aggression."

Highlighting the interoperability among Allies in pursuit of collective defence, Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "As part of Ex Slovak Shield, we are practising interoperability with NATO partners and all the planning that goes into delivering the self-defence of the Slovak Republic. We have made the best of all available facilities that the unique Training Centre Lešť has to offer. And we are pleased with the results of the exercise."

In addition to SVK Armed Forces personnel, this year the exercise was attended by troops from the Visegrad Group (V4) Armed Forces, the United States Army Europe (USAREUR), and the Indiana National Guard (INNG), operating over 200 pieces of military equipment. This year's Slovak Shield 2018 series was geared towards training troops in response to current security challenges, from exercising all levels of Armed Forces Command, assisted by Slovak defence plans, to activating Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Ex Slovak Shield 2018 took place at the Training Centre Lešť and the Simulation Centre of Liptovský Mikuláš-based General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy. Some phases of the exercise also involved Slovak Armed Forces units stationed at their permanent bases across Slovakia.

MOD makes transparent purchases via NSPA and FMS

(25 September) The MOD has, over the past 2 years, conducted historically the highest number of purchases of military material, munitions and equipment through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) and the U.S. Government's Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme (not counting the procurement of UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters). NSPA and FMS represent one of the most transparent and effective ways to procure military equipment and armaments for the Slovak Armed Forces. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "In 2017, we purchased goods worth nearly €13 million through the NSPA agency, which is historically the highest number of purchases since 2008, and there was an equally significant increase in the volume of purchases under FMS, of course, even if not counting the purchase of the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters." Aided by NSPA, he revealed, the MOD has delivered savings of 30-40 per cent in the cost of munitions. Catering to the requirements of NATO Member States and Partner countries, NSPA delivers goods and services, with arms producers participating directly in an international competitive bidding process without intermediaries. It also provides logistics support, life cycle management, and services. NSPA operates on a "no profit – no loss" basis. This means it generates no profit and no loss. The U.S. Government's FMS is a government-to-government (G2G) sales agreement which guarantees transparency, whilst ruling out any form of corruption.



- On 26 Sept, Zvolen was the venue of the 4th meeting of the SVK Air Force Commander's Military Council this training year. The meeting was chaired by DCOM SVK AF Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, in the presence of Director of the Military Aviation State Authority Branch Lubomir Zák (MOD), Chief Inspector of Flight Safety Col Ján Salaj (MOD), Chief of the SVK Air Force Support Branch Col Adolf Uličný (GS), key personnel of the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM, and commanders of subordinate units. The next meeting of the Military Council is due in Oct 2018.

- Members of the Presidential Guard of Honour underwent tactical training for snipers – specialists on Turecký Vrch Training Area on 24-27 Sept. During this intense four-day training activity, snipers practised their sniping skills in coordination with observers in simulated combat conditions.

- On 26 Sept, the Tactical Wing Sliach held an additional selection process for personnel to be deployed to UNFICYP as part of the March 2019 rotation. Potential candidates were tested on English language and basic combat skills, and held entry interviews. Selected candidates will attend a 4-week training under the aegis of the SVK Air Force, and a 2-week training is scheduled for key military personnel in Martin.

- As from 1 Oct 2018, those interested in serving with the 5th Special Forces Regiment are no longer subject to the requirement to serve for two years in the Armed Forces before applying to join the Regiment. Under the new arrangements, they can submit their application forms on completion of basic military training. Next rounds of the selection process will most probably take place in April and June 2019. For more information, go to www.regutacia.sk.

- Czech-Slovak Garrison Culture Day, organised by HQ Bratislava Garrison in collaboration with HQ Prague Garrison and the Slovak Presidential Guard of Honour, was held on 23 Sept in Bratislava's Main Square to mark the centenary of the Czechoslovak Republic and the 25th anniversary of the Slovak Armed Forces. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš, Brigadier General Milan Schulc, DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian, and other guests were also in attendance.

- The Military Parish of St Joan of Arc, based at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) in Liptovský Mikuláš, has been gifted a new baptism bowl. The author and donor, Marián Kunkela, is a local parishioner. Robert Kandrik, graphic designer and local parishioner, assisted in designing the baptism bowl, which will be officially blessed by the local dean in the Easter period.

- Drivers are asked to be alert and drive with care as there will be 1 military railway and 20 road movements across Slovakia in the period between 1 and 7 Oct 2018. They will mainly include US and POL troops. In addition to this, SVK Army troops are scheduled to convoy from Sása to Nitra and from Sása to Martin. There will also be movements of SVK Army vehicles transporting oversized cargo from Zemianske Kostofany to Budkovce and from Martin to Michalovce.

MATC Steering Committee

(25 September) The Helicopter Wing Prešov hosted historically the first Steering Committee Conference of the Multinational Aviation Training Centre (MATC) after its activation as a NATO Military Body. In attendance were Air Force Commanders and Deputy Commanders of all participating countries – SVK, CZE, HUN, HRV, as well as a representative of the US Armed Forces. A presentation of the NATO-accredited MATC topped the agenda. MATC provides training for flying and technical personnel, with focus on helicopter and fixed wing aircraft. The SVK Air Force has sent its pilots, radar operators for combat operations and aircraft technicians to undertake training at this organization, as well as planning to make the best of the courses suitable for UH-60M Black Hawk crews.

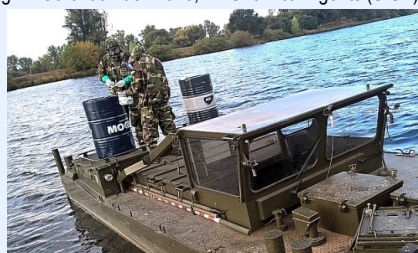


V4 CHODs meet in Halič

(26 September) CZE, HUN, POL and SVK Chiefs of Defence met in Halič under the SVK V4 Presidency on 25 September, to be updated on the stand-up of the V4 EU Battle Group, the V4 training events and Special Operations Forces (SOF) cooperation, as well as how to develop the regional cooperation in the field of military medicine. Speaking at the meeting, CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "I opened up new areas of cooperation on SOF and training of military medical professionals. The cooperation on training of medical professionals and the development of SOFs are among the most important tasks in this dynamically changing security environment, allowing an overlap of deploying them even in peacetime and in favour of civilian populations. The Slovak side opened the issue of centralised efforts to stand up EU BGs, which the participating parties found interesting and agreed to elaborate on it. Lt Gen Zmeko concluded: "We will deliver on our defence priorities and elaborate on our new themes so as to allow the next V4 Presidency country to ensure continuity." As part of the second day, the CHODs visited Ex Slovak Shield at the Training Centre Lešť.

Coronat Mask 2018: International CBRN Defence exercise

(25 September) The garrison training ground for CZE CBRN troops at Tisá near Děčín is hosting Ex Coronat Mask 2018, an international chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) Defence exercise, running from 17-27 Sept, with the participation of 1,350 international troops with 480 pieces of military equipment. The exercise, being attended by the CZE, DEU, ITA, POL and SVK Armed Forces, was inspected by the highest representatives of the NATO Framework Nations Concept, Col Henry Neumann, Col Jiří Gajdoš, and Col Klaus Schiffer. On this occasion, they hailed the outstanding collaboration



among the international Sampling and Identification of Chemical Agents (SICA) teams and appreciated historically the first transfer of toxic chemical samples from Czechia to Slovakia. The deployable SICA teams collected samples to be transferred to Ex Toxic Valley 2018 and analysed by the specialist CBRN labs at the CBRN Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostofany. Ex Coronat Mask 2018 saw troops from the participating countries verifying their capabilities in the field of CBRN Defence, as well as practising standard operating procedures in enhancement of interoperability.