



A new Standard for MI

(8 October) To mark 25 years of the Slovak Armed Forces and the centenary of Czechoslovakia, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš presented historically the first Standard to Director of Military Intelligence Gen Ján Balciar in a handover ceremony on 8 October. The Standard is one of the main symbols of Military Intelligence. In addition to being an expression of identity and a strong moral spirit, it is a symbol of moral ethos, one developing the traditions of Military Intelligence. During the ceremony, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš confirmed the historical solemnity of this moment by pinning the Slovak Armed Forces 25th Anniversary Commemorative Ribbon on to the Standard.

Cabinet approves new MOD statute

(10 October) The Ministry of Defence has a new statute. This comes in response to legislative changes across areas such as SVK Defence, Armed Forces, air traffic, conscription, and management of military districts and military forests. The statute valid thus far was previously updated in 2002. The new proposed statute, known as the Statute of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, was approved by the Cabinet on 10 October. The aim of the document is to update the statute of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic as per existing legislation and to delineate the relations between the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic and other departments and central state administration bodies in Slovakia. Also complemented in the Statute are the provisions on the use of the Slovak Armed Forces in accordance with applicable legislation.



MOD completes trials of 4x4s

(8 October) Trials of 4x4 combat armoured and multi-role tactical vehicles for the SVK Army were completed last week by the Military Technical and Testing Institute (VTSÚ) Záhorie. The results of the trials will be analysed by experts in the coming weeks. Once processed, they will be incorporated into a document which along with the proposed 4x4 platform solution will be submitted to the Security Council and the Cabinet for approval by the end of the year.

The VTSÚ Institute trialled a total of 7 vehicles, i.e. ALIGATOR MASTER 2, COBRA 2, EAGLE, EJDER YALCIN, GERLACH, PATRIOT and SHERPA Light APC. In addition, trials of the PERUN vehicle are currently being undertaken by the Army of the Czech Republic. On agreement with the manufacturer, the SVK MOD will accept the results of the trials from the CZE MOD. The procurement of 4x4 combat armoured/multi-role tactical vehicles is aligned to the 2030 Long-Term Defence Development Plan.

Overall, the MOD wants to procure 404 vehicles for a maximum of €782.7 million, VAT included. The vehicle will come into service in stages until 2024. As with the 8x8 platform, the MOD seeks the maximum possible involvement of the SVK defence industry in the programme.

Woodrow Wilson Award goes to SVK Armed Forces and IN National Guard

(10 October) Nearly 25 years of cooperation between the Slovak Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard were recognised by the Woodrow Wilson Award. On behalf of SVK Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko, DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian took over the Award along with Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard Maj Gen Courtney P. Carr. The Woodrow Wilson Award was presented to them by the US Ambassador to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Adam Sterling, at the US Ambassador's Residence. Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian said: "I see this Award as a recognition of work done by all Slovak Service Members, because the cooperation with the United States is not only about official talks, but it is above all else about joint exercises, training, and mutual exchange of lessons learned." The Awards have since 2001 been awarded annually to individuals and organizations by the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in 4 categories: Shared Values, Security, Prosperity, and Common Experiences. The SVK Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard were recognised in the Security category for their long-standing cooperation, training and exercises, and joint deployments on international crisis management operations.



- **Ex Air Shield 2018**, a command staff exercise with partial deployment of units onto a training area, sought to test the C2 system in conducting air operations, finished on 11 Oct 2018. Among the soldiers taking part in the exercise were members of the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM, Topographic Institute Banská Bystrica, Deployable CIS Base Ružomberok, and SVK General Staff. The exercise assembled 1,600 airmen, air defenders and soldiers, with the use of L-39s, MiG-29s, L-410s, Mi-17s and UH-60Ms and PLRK 2K12 KUB SBAD systems. Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, Officer Directing the Exercise (ODE), deemed the exercise successfully completed.

- Altogether 100 soldiers took turns **cleaning up in the aftermath of the whirlwind** that hit the village of Lékárovice last week. Backed by engineering equipment, teams consisting of 10 to 40 soldiers from the 22nd Mechanised Battalion Michalovce helped every day to bring life in the village back to normal. They removed broken trees, telephone posts and damaged roofs, transported saw wood and material, and carried out temporary repairs such as covering damaged roofs with roof foil.

- The Slovak Military Forests and Estates is reconstructing the **Borsó Hill Memorial** at the village of Hejce, Hungary. This is the second such reconstruction since the place of commemoration was built following the crash of the AN-24 military aircraft on top of Borsó Hill on 19 January 2006, as it was returning home from KFOR, Kosovo. In this context, the Defence Minister reminded that works on yet another Memorial dedicated to all Servicemen and women of the Slovak Armed Forces who have died on missions and operations abroad have entered their final stage on Háj-Nicovó Hill in Liptovský Mikuláš.

- The Multinational TISA Project Steering Committee/Working Group held a meeting in Ukraine's Lvov on 2-5 Oct, with the participation of DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian. Austria joining the Multinational Engineer Battalion project and the extension of the TISA project by incorporating the River Danube were high on the agenda. The 16th iteration of **Ex Blonde Avalanche 2018** took place over the same period, with the participation of Engineer Battalion Sered personnel from Slovakia.

- Members of the **Helicopter Wing Prešov** commemorated the 15th anniversary of the Mi-17 helicopter crash which occurred on 9 Oct 2003 within the cadastral boundary of the village of Pušovce. All four crew died in the crash. The act of remembrance at the Memorial in the grounds of HW Prešov opened with Commander of the Helicopter Wing Prešov Col Róbert Tóth, HW key leaders, soldiers, and family members observing a minute's silence and lighting candles before laying flowers at the site of the crash.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to be alert and drive with care as there will be **military road movements** across Slovakia in the period between 15 and 21 Oct 2018. They will mainly involve US and POL troops. SVK Army vehicles carrying oversized cargo will be en route from Michalovce via Rožňava to CV Lešť; Dubnica nad Váhom – Prievidza – Zvolen – CV Lešť; Prešov – Michalovce; Martin – Liptovský Mikuláš – Poprad – Prešov – Valaškovce; and Martin – Žilina – Bratislava – Turecký Vrch; and SVK Army vehicles will convoy from Michalovce via Rožňava to CV Lešť. There will also be a military railway movement from Prešov to Kamenica nad Cirochou.

L-39 jet trainer crash

(10 October) A SVK Air Force Aero L-39 Albatros jet trainer crashed between Sliac and Kováčová at approx. 14.15hrs local time. The crew, made up of experienced 1st class pilots, ejected out of the aircraft and survived the accident. They were hospitalised, released to home care still that day, and are out of life-threatening danger. The cause of the accident is being investigated. Based on the decision of the SVK Air Force Commander, the L-39 fleet has been grounded until the end of the investigation. This announcement was made at the site of the crash by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš, Chief of Defence Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko, and SVK Air Force Commander Maj Gen Lubomír Svoboda, who explained that engine failure was the cause of the accident. "Most importantly, they turned the aircraft to come down in an uninhabited area," he said.

General Staff reshuffle



(12 October) Personnel orders announcing changes in the leadership of the SVK General Staff with effect from 15 October were read out in front of members of the SVK General Staff. Maj Gen Josef Pokorný, the outgoing Director General of the Defence Management, Armed Forces Development, and Defence Planning Department in the MOD, assumed the appointment of 1st DCHOD. Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian, the outgoing 2nd DCHOD/COS, will be transferring to a Diplomatic Service appointment. He is succeeded as 2nd DCHOD/COS by Brig Gen Miroslav Lorinc, the outgoing Deputy Commander of the SVK Air Force. Col Peter Babiar took over as Chief of Staff for Strategic Planning. Speaking at the ceremony, CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "I consider next year to be a key one, therefore I trust we have found the right people who will help me run the Armed Forces."

8x8 IFV at Nitra Motor Show



(13 October) The SVK MOD showcased the 8x8 armoured IFV prototype at the Nitra Motor Show 2018. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "We want our citizens to have a realistic idea about the vehicle we want to equip the Army with. Needless to say, the production of the vehicle will boost employment in Slovakia, and I think the message we are trying to get across is clear – we have decided to go the way of manufacturing our own domestic product and giving jobs to our people." He underlined the advantage this solution brings, insofar as deliveries of spare parts will be secured by our firms even in the event of crisis.

It is important for pupils to know how to respond in emergencies

(12 October) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš opened the 1st 'Defence Olympiad' in the grounds of Primary School Trebečská in Topoľčany, organised for pupils of grades 8 and 9 of the local primary schools by the Topoľčany town authorities in collaboration with the SVK Army.

In a statement, the Minister welcomed defence-oriented training activities aimed at raising awareness of youth about various aspects of Homeland Defence: "If we fail to train our children and pupils how to respond in emergencies, how to administer first aid, or what to do when a chemical attack occurs, nobody else will do that for us. And that, in essence, is why I greatly welcome this type of activity, and with the help of soldiers, I believe, it will contribute to promoting patriotism amongst youth along with increasing their interest in Homeland Defence issues."

Peter Baláž, mayor of Topoľčany, said: "We wish to organise the 'Defence Olympiad' next year as well and encourage other schools across Slovakia to get their pupils moving and see firsthand the capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces."

Maroš Pavlovič, initiator of the project, thanked the town authorities and the MOD for backing the project. "If defence training skills are to be demonstrated and practised, it is very important that it is done by the SVK Armed Forces – the elements specially designed for that role."

Taking part in the 'Defence Olympiad' were 16 teams, consisting of pupils of grades 8 and 9 of the local primary schools in Topoľčany, whose physical fitness was put to the test. The event was supported by Topoľčany-based 1st Mechanised Brigade soldiers who were visited at their base by the Defence Minister and the CHOD prior to the event.

