



Minister in talks in Brussels

(29 June) In a Meeting of NATO Ministers of Defence in Brussels, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš reconfirmed the commitments the Slovak Republic made earlier at the May NATO minisummit in Brussels. This means SVK service personnel will be engaged in the Baltics as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). Most probably they will be under the command of the Canadian-led NATO Battlegroup in Latvia, which was a topic on the agenda of a multilateral meeting with the ministers of the involved countries. Moreover, he reiterated the interest in deploying a SVK training unit to Iraq, as well as stepping up defence spending with the aim of reaching 1.6 % of GDP on defence by 2020. Commenting on eFP, Head of the MOD said: "In connection with NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, today's meeting clearly attested to the unity and solidarity of the Alliance."

Also addressed by Defence Ministers was the fight against terrorism. Depending on NATO requirements, we cannot rule out an increase in the actual troop levels within the valid mandate for the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan. "Even in this case, it applies Together in, Together out," emphasised Peter Gajdoš.

Ministers also held discussions in the presence of the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini. They agreed on the need to continue deepening and advancing NATO-EU cooperation. However, in furtherance of their objectives it is crucial for NATO and the EU to clearly delineate their tasks and to complement one another to mutual convenience.

At a signing ceremony, 12 countries signed a Letter of Intent to launch a new international cooperation framework on delivering precision-guided munitions, known as land battle decision munitions, for weapon systems fielded with Land Forces.

On return from Latvia

(27 June) 149 members of the SVK Armed Forces successfully completed their execution of tasks as part of Task Group Štefánik's training mission in the Baltics. They were welcomed by State Secretary Róbert Ondrejcsák and Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim in a homecoming ceremony held at the 13th Mechanised Battalion Levice. In his remarks, Róbert Ondrejcsák said: "Our soldiers carried out an enormous amount of work in the Baltics. It was appreciated not only by our allies in Latvia but also by NATO service personnel." He went on to add that Slovakia has thus joined other reliable partners in taking security seriously.

For Slovakia, this training mission abroad was the first one to have seen a deployment of up to 150 SVK troops. On the engagement in the Baltics, Gen Maxim said: "Lessons learned from the preparation, deployment and training will be analysed in minute detail and elaborated on because our soldiers will deploy as early as next year to the Baltics, most probably to Latvia." He also thanked the military professionals, led by Maj Vladimír Moško, for the job well done.

During the training mission, our soldiers took part in two international exercises – Summer Shield 2017 and Saber Strike 2017 – aimed at reinforcing cooperation among NATO Allies. According to their commander, while on their mission the SVK soldiers completed an entire set of assigned tasks. "A huge thank you to all servicemen and servicewomen for their participation, commitment and stamina as well as for their exemplary representation of the SVK Armed Forces. Thanks to this, we have gained, among other things, international prestige," added Maj Vladimír Moško, Commander Task Force Štefánik.

First two Black Hawk helicopters are already in Slovakia

(26 June) Two UH-60M Black Hawk military utility helicopters touched down at Prešov Air Base, soon to be entered into service with the Slovak Air Force. Their transfer to Slovakia was delivered under the terms and conditions of the contract. The helicopters were shipped from the USA by sea to the port of Bremerhaven, Germany from where they were flown by combined SVK-US aircrews on Thursday (6 July 2017). As of today, 4 aircrews had been trained in the USA to fly the new rotary aircraft and the training of others is still underway. A total of 6 aircrews should be trained by the end of 2017. The contract covers initial logistics support through deliveries of ground support equipment, spare parts and consumable material. The contract includes an initial supply package of spare parts for 9 helicopters for a period of two years, as well as tools, control and measuring devices, and mobile workstations for individual military occupational specialties (MOSs) required for the operation of the helicopters. The options for the helicopters to be equipped with operational armament are currently being analysed as part of the "Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Development of SVK Armed Forces". The new UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters will be based at the "Colonel General Ján Ambruš" Helicopter Wing in Prešov. As part of the deal, the SVK Ministry of Defence will purchase a total of 9 utility rotorcraft worth some US\$261 million. The purchase is being made through the US Government's Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme.



- The SVK Armed Forces gave the members of the **SVK Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security**, led by its Chairman Anton Hrnko, a tour of the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina and of the Land Forces HQ Trenčín on 28 June. During the visit, the guests were accompanied by Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim and State Secretary Marián Saloň.

- Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim received the outgoing Defence Attaché of the Federal Republic of Germany, **Lt Col Rüdiger Heinrich**, in an office call on 26 June. He thanked him for his personal role in intensifying SVK-DUE bilateral defence engagement and awarded him with the Memorial Cross of the SVK Chief of Defence, 1st Grade (Gold). Along with DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian, he wished him the best of luck in his personal and professional life. Lt Col Heinrich was also received in an office call by DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko on Thursday (22 June).

- Gen Milan Maxim took part in an **act of commemoration** on 24 June in the village of Senice at Poděbrady (CZE), where, joined by Czech CHOD Gen Josef Bečvář and other guests, he paid tribute to the memory of the Silver A group. The three members of the group parachuted into an area adjacent to the village on the night of 28/29 Dec 1941 to prepare the ground for the Operation Anthropoid team's mission to assassinate the acting Reich Protector, Reinhard Heydrich.

- State Secretary Róbert Ondrejcsák made a **working trip to the USA** on 19-22 June. In Norfolk, he met with Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Admiral Manfred Nielson. During a series of his three meetings in Washington D.C., he introduced Slovak strategic defence and security policy documents and defence modernisation projects. Also, he took the stage at the Centre for European Policy Analysis, an independent public policy research institute. At the conclusion of his visit, he held a meeting with two UN Deputies Secretary General on potential scenarios for the future functioning of UNFICYP and UN missions in Africa and on securing national funding for them.

- An **international cooperative training of Military Working Dogs (MWD) and MWD handlers**, of the SVK Armed Corps and Military Police, was held on 26-30 June in Krpačov, Brezno and Osrblie. Taking part in the training activity were, alongside all the ministries using MWDs and MWD handlers in Slovakia, also representatives of the CZE Military Police and MWD handlers of the HUN Prison Guard. More than 60 MWD handlers and MWDs participated in the activity. Of the MWDs, more than 30 were patrol dogs.

- Air Base Sliach hosted a **working meeting for members of the Air Base Biological Protection Workstations and Veterinary Surgeons** on 27 June. It was aimed at an analysis of the ornithological situation across Slovak territory and bird control techniques used across air bases. As part of the meeting, a practical demonstration of ornithological support to Sliach Air Base was staged.

- Representatives of the SVK MOD, SVK General Staff, Interior Ministry, armed components, and the Slovak Aviation Agency gathered on 28 June at the SVK Air Force's HQ Air Command Zvolen to see a presentation on the intended arrangements to be put in place for the **International Air Fest SIAF 2017**. The airshow will be held on 26 and 27 Aug at Air Base Sliach as part of the nation-wide celebrations of the 72nd anniversary of the end of WWII, the 73rd anniversary of the SNP, the 13th anniversary of Slovakia's accession to the EU and NATO, and the 95th birthday anniversary of Maj Gen Otto Smik.

- The Bratislava Garrison Club would like to warmly invite you to an **exhibition titled Military Paratroopers**, which is being held on its premises at 6 Duloovo Square. The exhibition, which is open daily from 8am to 3pm except for Saturday and Sunday, will run until 26 July 2017.

- On 27-28 June, Duklianske Barracks (SVK MOD) hosted members of the **Prague Castle Guard**. The 11-member delegation was welcomed by the Commander of the Guard of Honour (GoH) of the President of the Slovak Republic, Col Miroslav Ištván. In addition to a SVK Presidential GoH's presentation, a tour of Bratislava, and a visit to the BS-8 WWII bunker in Petržalka, the members of the delegation were shown around the ceremonial premises of the Official Seat of the President of the Slovak Republic.

- Running from Apr to July, the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin hosted an **engineering systems operators' course** on PMS pontoon bridge sets, GSP-55 tracked self-propelled amphibious ferries, PTS-10 tracked amphibious transporters, ZODIAC rigid inflatable boats with outboard engines, UV-200 water treatment systems, and water pumps. The course was attended by 31 attendees, including 4 members of the Defence Fire and Rescue Corps.

- An annual traditional **meeting of elderly people with the Ordinary** of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps was held at the Cathedral of St Sebastian in Bratislava – Kráľovský on 28 June.

Delivery of C-27J Spartan delayed

(27 June) The SVK Armed Forces will receive delivery of their first C-27J Spartan transport aircraft later than originally planned. The MOD will claim compensation for the delay in the delivery of the aircraft in compliance with the contract. The form of sanctions will depend on the length of delay. Journalists were informed of the C-27J Spartan delivery backlog by SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš in an informal press session on defence modernisation projects. With other modernisation programmes, the MOD will proceed according to the "Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Development of SVK Armed Forces". In the coming months, an analysis of fighter aircraft procurement options should be made. Also, an international competitive bidding for 3D medium-range surveillance radars should be completed by the second half of 2017. On the announced purchase of 4x4 and 8x8 wheeled vehicles, the Minister of Defence reminded that a purchase proposal will not be submitted to the SVK Security Council and Government for consideration unless and until the Long-Term Defence Development Plan is finalised. The purchase of the wheeled Army vehicles is due to take place in stages planned over the years 2018-2029.

Input to cooperation recognised

(27 June) Chateaux Slavkov, located near Brno in the Czech Republic, hosted on its historical premises a graduation ceremony for the graduates of the Basic Czech Military Police Course. Alongside senior officials of the Czech Military Police (MP), taking part in the event were Marián Saloň, State Secretary of the SVK MOD, Col Michal Migát, Director MP (SVK), Col Franz Baumgartner, Commander MP Command (AUT), Brig Gen Udo Schnitker, Commander Bundeswehr MP Command and Provost Marshal (DEU), and Col Grzegorz Wasielewski, Director NATO MP COE (POL). During the ceremony, the Chief of the CZE Military Police awarded, among others, Marián Saloň, Col Michal Migát, and MSgt Patrik Štefko – an MP and K9 MOS-specific training instructor of Vikanová-Hronsek and the only serving SVK military policeman to have completed his studies (1992) at Military Police Training School in Moravská Třebová, Czechia –, for advancing cooperation with and for contributing to the development of the Czech Military Police.

Tank Days Laugarício



(1 July) In its 5th year, the Tank Days Laugarício event has, for the second time, been conducted in the spirit of a military festival with the SVK Armed Forces near Trenčianske Stankovce

on 30 June and 1 July. The event was held under the auspices of Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Trenčín Self-Governing Region Chairman Jaroslav Baška. The Deputy Chief of Defence and Chief of Staff (DCHOD/COS), Maj Gen Miroslav Kocian, underlined the fact that key historical developments may be well presented to the public in this captivating form. According to the Deputy Commander of SVK Land Forces for Support, Brig Gen Juraj Kríštofovič, SVK Land Forces units staged static displays and dynamic demonstrations in support of the event. In addition, SVK Military Police personnel demonstrated their equipment and capabilities in action, while Czech Army soldiers were involved with the demonstrations of a Pandur 8x8 wheeled armoured personnel carrier and an Iveco 4x4 light multirole vehicle. Also in attendance at the event was the former Chief of Defence, Lt Gen (Rtd) Peter Vojtek, who came along with other motorcyclists as part of a motorbike event, titled Ride in Memory of Fallen Heroes. The whole event went like clockwork and attracted thousands of visitors from across Slovakia and from nearby Moravia. Among them was the Commander of the Mechanised Brigade Prešov, Brig Gen Martin Stoklasa, Lt Gen (Rtd) Pavel Honzík, Maj Gen (Rtd) Svetozár Nađovič, and other guests. The event organisers from the Military History Club Laugarício, Ludovít Francl and Marián Simeon, did not try to conceal a huge sense of deserved achievement.