



NATO Ministers in Brussels

(26 June) NATO Defence Ministers met in Brussels for talks on current security challenges, with the development of new technologies, their use for joint defence purposes and the risk of their misuse topping the agenda.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Technological advances require that we not only seize opportunities, but also be ready to respond to the threats that are associated with the growing autonomy of new technologies." He welcomed the fact that the discussion on new technologies was taking place in an extended format, in the presence of High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and partners from Finland and Sweden. He added: "We had an opportunity to discuss unified moves to achieve a common goal, which is the security of our citizens."

On the margins of the ministerial, the NATO Defence Ministers of the countries contributing to enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the Baltics held a separate meeting. On this occasion, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš informed his partners about the decision of the Slovak Parliament to extend the deployment of up to 152 service personnel with the Canadian-led eFP Battlegroup on Ādaži Training Area in Latvia.



Delivering Allied commitments

(27 June) Slovakia is ready to continue delivering its obligations stemming from NATO membership not only by stepping up defence expenditure, but also by participating in international crisis management missions and operations. This announcement was made by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš after the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels on 27 June 2019.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "The Slovak defence budget is expected to rise to 1.74% of GDP on defence this year already, which is 50% more compared to 2018, whereas this increase is mainly connected with modernization, which has been badly needed by the Slovak Armed Forces for years. Of course, I am pleased to say that we are now delivering the most extensive modernization programmes in the history of the Slovak Armed Forces."

Alongside burden sharing in collective defence, Ministers addressed the current situation and future of NATO's defence and deterrence posture, as well as the readiness of Allied forces. In this connection, they reflected on the new Political Guidance and the NATO Military Strategy. Equally important, the NATO Space Policy received the backing from NATO Defence Ministers.

V4 EU Battlegroup to be on standby again

(29 June) The V4 EU Battlegroup will be on standby again from Monday, 1 July 2019.

The Slovak Republic has made available 229 members of the SVK Armed Forces to cater for the needs of the V4 EU BG. Its standby period will last until 31 December 2019.

"The V4 EU Battlegroup is designed to perform a wide spectrum of tasks as part of international crisis management within a range of 6,000km from Brussels. In this way, too, the Slovak Republic participates in resolving international security issues." He noted that the V4 EU BG is comprised of 2,250 personnel from participating countries. "Their readiness was validated during the COMMON CHALLENGE 19 certification exercise, which was held in May 2019 in the Republic of Poland," he added.

As part of the V4 EU BG, SVK Armed Forces personnel and military policemen are posted to the Command Element, Transport Company, Multifunctional CBRN Defence Platoon, EOD Platoon, Movement Control Team, and to other elements of the Battlegroup.

Any real deployment still needs the consent of the Slovak Parliament in accordance with applicable legislation. If a political decision is made to deploy the V4 EU BG, the Battlegroup is ready to commit its troops to the area of deployment within 10 days of notice. The Battlegroup can be sustained for 30 days and, after resupply, up to 120 days from the day of deployment. Based on mutual consent, Croatia, too, will join the V4 EU BG for the standby period.



■ **State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marián Saloň** and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, along with Slovak President Zuzana Čaputová, Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, Minister of Culture Ľubica Laššáková, officials of the state administration bodies, mayors of local villages, representatives of the Slovak Anti-Nazi Fighters Association and the public commemorated the burning down of Kalište by Nazis on 22 June 1945.

■ **The Slovak Air Force Commander's Military Council** (SVK AF COM MC) took place on 26 June 2019 at HQ AIRCOM Zvolen, in the presence of Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, leaders of the SVK Air Force, members of the SVK MOD's Military Council, commanders of units subordinate to HQ AIRCOM Zvolen, and members of the SVK AF COM MC.

■ **The Lookout Tower at Dukla** reopened to the public on 25 June 2019 with its usual opening hours from 09.00 to 17.00, Tuesday through Sunday.

■ As part of NATO's Capability Targets 2017, the units of the **Logistics Battalion Hlohovec** assigned to the Forces of Lower Readiness (FLR) pool went through the second phase of the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) process at the Tepličky military facility and on Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area on 24-28 June 2019.

■ Representing the SVK MOD at the **75th D-Day anniversary commemorations** in the French coastal town of Arromanches was SVK Defence Attaché to France Col Peter Kráňik. On this occasion, a Memorial Plaque dedicated to the Czechs and Slovaks who participated in Operation Overlord in 1944 was unveiled in Arromanches on the initiative of the Pilsen-based Military History Club.

■ As a follow-up to the **cooperation on logistics** with the CZE Army's Logistics Agency, a bilateral meeting between leaders of the SVK Army's HQ Combat Service Support (CSS) and members of the CZE Army was held at HQ CSS on 19 June 2019.

■ At the invitation of Chief of Staff of the French Air Force Gen Philippe Lavigne, Commander of the **Slovak Air Force Maj Gen Ľubomír Svoboda** participated in the 53rd International Paris Air Show at Paris's Le Bourget airport on 18-19 June 2019.

■ A graduation ceremony for graduates of the **OR-5 NCO Legacy** 2019 took place at the NCO Club at the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin on 21 June 2019. A member of 5th SOF Regt Žilina was named Best Student of the Course.

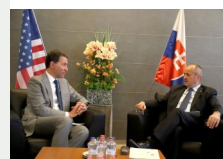
■ Slovakia was the first country participating in **Ex Tobruq Legacy** 2019 to have met the conditions of NATO's Federated Mission Networking (FMN) for connectivity to the Polish Mission Network (PMN) 2.0. For their achievements, members of the C2S Wing Zvolen, AAM Bde Nitra, HQ AIRCOM Zvolen were evaluated as Best CIS/C2 Team of TOLY19.

■ Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **16 Allied road movements** from 1-7 July 2019. They will mostly involve U.S. and POL troops. SVK Army convoys will also ferry oversized cargo on the following routes: Sliač – Kuchyňa, Sliač – MSM Trenčín, and Rožňava – Nemecká.

Laugaricio Tank Days

(29 June) Trenčianske Stankovce hosted the 'Laugaricio Tank Days – A Day with SVK Army' event under the aegis of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and Chairman of the Trenčín Self-Governing Region Jaroslav Baška. On static display were vehicles, armaments and equipment of the SVK Armed Forces as well as military assets from CZE, AUT, POL, HUN, GRB and UKR armed forces. The programme saw dynamic demonstrations, including those of the BPsV-I vehicle and the Sikorsky UH-60M Black Hawk multi-role helicopter.

Minister meets U.S. Ambassador



(24 June) SVK Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš met the U.S. Ambassador, HE Mr Adam H. Sterling, for a farewell meeting at the MOD, since his Diplomatic Service appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the Slovak Republic

nears its end. They together looked back on the bilateral Defence cooperation between the countries and their engagement in international crisis management operations. Also, they commended the active involvement of both armed forces in joint exercises and education and training activities. They described the Government-to-Government (G2G) Agreement on procurement of F-16 fighter jets as the most notable success of cooperation so far.

Minister Gajdoš said: "Thanks to exemplary cooperation in the field of modernization, we can provide new military equipment for our soldiers in the most transparent manner." During the meeting, Minister Gajdoš updated Ambassador Sterling on Slovakia's commitments to international crisis management and on the increases in defence spending, with the 2% benchmark to be reached by 2022, which was highly appreciated by Ambassador Sterling.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Minister Gajdoš thanked Ambassador Sterling for his role in advancing the Defence cooperation between Slovakia and the USA. In this respect, he praised the cooperation with the Indiana National Guard (INNG), including the INNG's support to the transformation process of the International Staff Officers Course (ISOC), delivered by the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš, and he also highlighted the participation of U.S. troops in international exercises organised by Slovakia, i.e. Ex TOXIC LANCE, Ex TOXIC VALLEY, and last year's Ex SLOVAK SHIELD.

Dispatch riders at Memorial

(28 June) As part of their Ride of Remembrance in tribute to fallen heroes, motorcyclists of the Dispatch Riders Association paid respects to fallen soldiers at the Reconciliation Memorial at Kutuzov Barracks, MOD, Bratislava. After the ceremony, representatives of the Association were received by CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko who thanked them for exemplary promotion of military traditions.

SVK Army corporal becomes winner of 14th Iron Man Competition

(27 June) Winner of the 14th Iron Man Competition, which was held at the Training Centre Lešť on 27 June 2019, is Corporal T. from the Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) Battalion Prešov, with members of the SVK Police Corps placing 2nd and 3rd.

Director of the Training Centre Lešť Anton Maštalský said smilingly: "A total of 22 members of the SVK



Armed Forces and the Police Corps competed in 10 disciplines. Compared to last year, I am pleased that the number of contestants has exactly doubled. Moreover, after a few years a serviceman has won this competition." The toughest disciplines included pulling the Aktis lorry, running

with a 60kg weight in the hands and with a 100kg weight fixed to a wooden frame pack, as well as crossing the CIZMA obstacle course. Head referee of the 14th Iron Man Competition Sgt Lukáš Filka, of the TC Lešť, said: "This year the record for 50 pull-ups was broken, but by far the most interesting was the last discipline." He went on to explain: "It started with a jump into the water from

the Jakub Koloseum helicopter simulator hovering 3m above the water, followed by an 80m swim in a natural lake while wearing field uniform and boots, and concluded with contestants climbing up the rope ladder back into the helicopter."