



Mi-17 for Afghanistan

(22 February) Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN) is ready to hand over another overhauled Mi-17V5 helicopter to the Afghan Air Force (AAF). This is already the second helicopter the company has repaired under the AAF Mi-17V-5 Helicopter Overhaul and Heavy Repair Contract awarded by NSPA. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš visited the state-run joint stock company in Trenčín, to see first-hand how the contract between LOTN and NSPA was being delivered.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "From this I can gather that the works being carried out are in full compliance with the contract. Therefore, I want to give prominence to the engineering craftsmanship and professionalism of all Aircraft Repair Company staff. They demonstrate that Slovakia has truly outstanding experts, thanks to whom our companies are competitive and capable of asserting themselves internationally." As well as meeting the managers, he also talked with local employees and was interested to hear their thoughts on their satisfaction, working conditions, and ideas to improve how the company works.

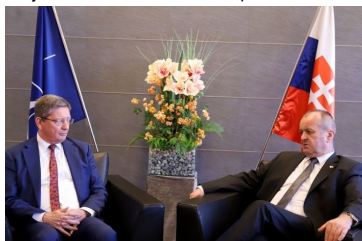
LOTN was awarded the AAF Mi-17V5 Helicopter Overhaul and Heavy Repair Contract by NSPA through open international competitive bidding (ICB) in 2016. The first overhauled AAF Mi-17V5 helicopter was handed over by the company in August 2018.

Support and procurement

(21 February) Defence Minister Gajdoš met with General Manager of the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) Peter Dohmen at MOD Main Building. On this occasion, Minister Gajdoš hailed the successful purchases of military materiel, munitions and equipment made so far for the SVK Armed Forces through NSPA.

At the meeting, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "NSPA-facilitated procurement represents one of the most transparent and effective methods for procuring equipment and armaments for the SVK Armed Forces. That is why I am very pleased that we can participate in such cooperation and that we have recently increased the number of purchases through the Agency."

During the meeting, Minister Gajdoš updated General Manager Dohmen on the SVK Armed Forces' ongoing modernization programmes aligned to the 2030 Long-Term Defence Development Plan, the performance of Slovakia's commitments vis-à-vis NATO, and the planned gradual increases in defence expenditure, with the intent of meeting the 2% NATO target for investment in defence by 2022.



Minister Gajdoš awards astronauts of 'Štefánik' Space Mission

(20 February) It was exactly 20 years ago that SVK Air Force pilot (then) Maj Ivan Bella boarded the Soyuz TM-29 spacecraft and took off into space, thus becoming Slovakia's first and only astronaut to date. To commemorate the 20th anniversary of his space mission, Col Ivan Bella was awarded the Slovak Armed Forces 25th Anniversary Commemorative Medal by Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš during a medal award ceremony.

In his remarks at the medal award ceremony, Minister Gajdoš said: "With the flight into space by the first Slovak astronaut Ivan Bella, the Slovak Republic joined in with other countries which were successfully involved in scientific space research. It was a unique opportunity, one which will, most probably, never be repeated again."

The Slovak Armed Forces 25th Anniversary Commemorative Medal was awarded to the astronauts of the 'Štefánik' Space Mission: Viktor Mikhailovich Afanasyev, Sergei Vasilyevich Avdeyev, Ivan Bella, Michal Fulier, Claudie Haigneré, Jean-Pierre Haigneré, Gennady Ivanovich Padalka, Salizhan Shakirovich Sharipov. Of them, only Padalka was not able to attend the ceremony.

In his remarks, Col Ivan Bella thanked his fellow astronauts for upholding the good name of Slovakia and all those who helped him organise the conference in Bratislava. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš lent his patronage to the event.



Cooperation with CZE



(21 February) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš met with the Czech Ambassador to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr. Tomáš Tuhy, at the MOD for talks on the Defence engagement

between SVK and CZE and their potential cooperation in the field of defence industry. They also talked about the stand-up of the joint V4 EU BG, training, and the preparations for the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Czech Republic's entry into NATO. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Ambassador Tuhy and I agree that our relations in the field of defence and security go well above and beyond what would normally be viewed as a standard scope of cooperation, which we have also acknowledged not only at our bilateral meetings but also at those in the V4, EU and NATO formats." The minister also highlighted the SVK-CZE cooperation being forged on enhancing the education, logistics and interoperability of SVK and CZE armed forces.

4x4 CA and MRT vehicles

(20 February) The SVK MOD set out to put the order for 4x4 Combat Armoured (CA) and Multi-Role Tactical (MRT) Vehicles for the SVK Armed Forces to international tender. The proposal for this tender procedure was approved by the Security Council and the Cabinet. Following analyses of procurement methods and an assessment of available vehicles and potential manufacturers based on a market survey, the 4x4 platform modernization programme going out to international tender was identified as the most advantageous method of procurement.

Until F-16s have landed



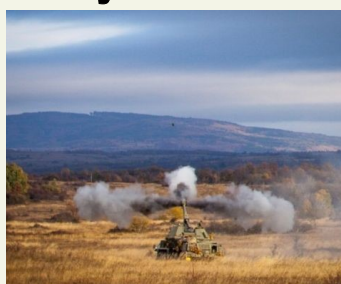
(20 February) The Security Council and the Cabinet took note of the MOD's proposal for securing SVK airspace with the use and operation of the SVK AF's MiG-29

fleet until such time as F-16s have been delivered. The MOD will conclude an Additional Agreement with Russian Aircraft Corporation MiG, to cover the period between 16 November 2019 and 31 December 2023, with a 1-year extension option.

SVK artillerymen on Ex Dynamic Front 2019 in POL and DEU

(24 February) Artillerymen of the Michalovce-based Self-propelled Field Artillery Battalion and Rožňava-based Multiple Launch Rocket System Battalion descended on Germany's Grafenwoehr Training Area (GTA) and Poland's Toruń Artillery and Armaments Training Centre (AATC), to take part in Ex Dynamic Front 2019. The international exercise series is scheduled to run from 25 February to 10 March 2019.

During the two-week exercise, 125 members of the SVK Armed Forces, deploying with 6 pcs of ZUZANA SpGHs and additional support equipment, will join in with other artillery troops from Allied nations, to practise fire support capabilities



in the formation of TSFC.

Speaking ahead of the exercise, Lt Col Roman Bobal, commander of the deploying unit and the Michalovce-based Self-propelled Field Artillery (FA) Battalion, said: "This opportunity to practise firing tasks in the formation of Allied troops is exceptionally beneficial."

The aim of the exercise is to prepare the artillery unit for its deployment on NATO's enhanced Forward Presence

(eFP) role, due in 2020. At the same time, it is an opportunity for members of its command staff to join in with their fellow colleagues at TSFC and cooperate in the fields of fire control, operational planning and intelligence.