



Ministers visit NFIU SVK

(19 May) The NATO Force Integration Unit Slovakia (NFIU SVK) is a vital contribution to SVK security and NATO's collective defence, Minister of Defence Jaroslav Nad' and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Ivan Korčok confirmed at press conference after visiting the NFIU in Bratislava. Also present at the meeting with COM NFIU SVK Col Peter Brauner was State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer. On this occasion, the Ministers committed to cooperating closely with the NFIU.

Minister Nad' said: "The Slovak Republic is a stable and responsible member of the Alliance. We are an active partner, not just a consumer of the membership benefits. That is why I am pleased that already we have found several areas where we can start cooperating more closely than ever before." The Minister underlined that the NFIU is no military base, nor does it serve to facilitate the deployment of NATO weapons and assets across Slovakia. "In the event of a threat of aggression, its mission is to make sure that Slovakia can manage the reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI) of Allied forces to strengthen our armed forces in defence," he explained.

Minister Korčok said: "The presence of the [NATO Force] Integration Unit in Slovakia proves that our Allies will come to help defend our State." He appreciated the active involvement of NFIU members in the education and communication activities aimed at promoting the importance of NATO membership for SVK security. He also expressed his interest in promoting intense cooperation with the NFIU.

The NFIU in Slovakia was officially activated on 1 September 2016 and attained its Full Operational Capability on 1 June 2017. It comes under the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin, Poland. The NFIU is staffed by 41 specialists, of whom 21 are SVK Armed Forces members. In peacetime, the NFIU aims to identify logistical and transport options and support infrastructure, as well as assisting in organising Allied exercises.

Jaroslav Nad' on a tour of units

(22 May) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' is continuing his meetings with the men and women of the Armed Forces directly at military units. Along with Deputy Parliamentary Chairman Milan Laurenčík, State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Marian Majer, and Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, he visited military installations in Žilina and Martin. Last week they visited the Slovak Special Operations Forces Command (SOCOM) Trenčín, which is the C2 structure for the 5th Special Forces Regiment. The Minister was updated on the current status of tasks — among those are reconnaissance missions, observations, raid actions, anti-terrorist operations, and the fight against chemical, biological and radiological weapons, and assistance tasks in support of the Ministry of Interior. His away day to Martin was a chance to see the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base, Supply Base II, 11th Mechanised Battalion, and the Repair Battalion.

With the tour of military installations in Slovakia, the MOD leaders want to get a real picture of the state and needs of military units. The aim is to pinpoint options and tasks thanks to which they can make the way they function more effective as well as better the Service conditions for active duty soldiers. That message was conveyed by Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' who, joined by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, paid a visit to military units in Prešov where they visited the Headquarters 2nd Mechanised Brigade, including ISTAR Battalion, and the Helicopter Wing. Also, the head of the MOD visited Military Forests and Estates Kamenica nad Cirochou Branch.

With UKR and DEU ambassadors on partnership and cooperation

(20 May) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' received the Ukrainian Ambassador to Slovakia, HE Mr Yuriy Mushka, at the MOD on 19 May, marking his first official meeting with the UKR Ambassador since taking office as Minister of Defence. They spoke about ways of deepening the bilateral cooperation in the field of security and defence and support for Ukraine's pro-European and pro-Atlantic orientation. According to his words, Slovakia is committed, actively and openly, to standing up in defence of values such as democracy, rule of law and international rules, including the protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Minister expressed his support for advancing the security and defence cooperation between the countries.

Germany is among Slovakia's most important strategic partners in the Euro-Atlantic area, whether that's in foreign policy and economic relations or in tackling common defence and security challenges, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' stated during his first official meeting with the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Slovakia, HE Mr Joachim Bleicker, at the MOD on 20 May (see the picture). During the meeting, the Minister updated the DEU Ambassador on the MOD priorities, including the military equipment modernisation goals, as well as on the Armed Forces' activities in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, they discussed how the pandemic will affect the defence budgets of both States. Minister Nad' assured Ambassador Bleicker that Slovakia sees to it that its international commitments, arising from its EU and NATO membership, are followed through on, including the stability and predictability of defence spending with the ambition to achieve 2% of GDP on defence until 2024.



■ Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko held a video conference call with the V4 Chiefs of Defence on 19 May.

■ The SVK Government has approved the extension of the mandate for the SVK armed forces deployment to Latvia. Once approved by Parliament, the mandate will be valid as long as the operation lasts.

■ The new MOD leadership has made the **Sikorsky UH-60M Black Hawk Contract** and the **F-16C/D Block 70 Contract** accessible to the public. According to legislation, the contracts should not have been classified.

■ Employees of state-run company **Military Forests and Estates (VLM SR)** Kežmarok Branch have recently restocked fish in the Levoča Hills watercourses. They have released 12,000 pieces of *Salmo trutta morpha fario* into local rivers and streams to replenish populations.

■ The permanent exhibition premises of the **Military History Museum Piešťany** will reopen to the public on 2 June 2020. Visits must be arranged in advance by phone on 0903 820 454. The Museum will be open from Tue to Fri from 9.00hrs to 17.00hrs for a maximum of 10 visitors (children included) at a time. The Museums and Galleries at Night Festival will take place on 14 Nov 2020.

■ To mark Victory over Nazism Day and recognise acts of service in developing Military Police, **Director of the SVK Military Police** Col Valentin Cebo presented Military Police Medals, 2nd and 3rd Grade, to selected personnel during a ceremony on 21 May. He promoted Lt Col Marián Kudláč to the rank of Colonel and appointed him Deputy Director SVK Military Police. Lt Col Roman Savka was appointed the new head of the Police Activities Sections, Police Activities Division. Maj Róbert Bajzik was appointed Senior Lead Officer/ Specialist.

■ The public study room of the **Military History Archives Bratislava** will reopen on 26 May. Reservations must be arranged by phone on 02 4820 7720 or by email at vha@vhu.sk.

■ The recreational facilities of MOD-owned company **HOREZZA** will reopen to the public in the High Tatras, the Great Fatra Mountains, and Piešťany on Mon 25 May. Apart from accommodation and catering services, high quality medical and treatment procedures will be provided to visitors.

■ The Military Social Welfare Office has issued a guidance on **children's summer recreational stays** in 2020. The document, which contains the application dates and forms for children's summer camps, is available at <https://vusz.mil.sk/data/files/5865.doc>.

■ 2 weeks on, the MOD Audio Visual Production Studio has released another **Azimuth 24/7** podcast which is available at <https://youtu.be/6l4w9P9ITjs>.

■ Live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat on Regina Radio's **Full Field Kit**, this week's radio show, featuring security and defence issues for all soldiers and fans, will be dedicated to UN Peacekeeping Day and SVK blue berets.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **SVK military road movements** from 25 to 31 May 2020. SVK Army round trip convoys will transport oversized cargo from Martin to Levice, from Martin to Nemecká, and from Trenčín via Záhorie to Michalovce.

How to help Slovakia's regions

(23 May) By ensuring adequate support to the domestic defence industry, the MOD can boost employment and economic growth in Slovakia's regions, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad' said on his visit to ZVS Holding, a Snina-based armaments producer where the Ministry of Defence is a stakeholder. On his away day, he also paid a visit to Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area (TA) and met with Mayor of Snina Daniela Galandová.

Minister Nad' said: "Today, once again I had an opportunity to meet representatives of an armaments producer to discuss how the MOD can contribute to its support. Because, even in this field, the aim of the MOD is to find such solutions that will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of defence companies and hence to restarting the economy of the State."



Pilots undertake live firing

(19 May) Airmen of the Tactical Wing Sliac began a live fire exercise on Kuchyňa Training Area, which is scheduled to run until 21 May. Pilots of the Air Combat Squadron fired live rounds from the MiG-29 cannon at ground targets. They underwent pre-flight preparation and operated out of their home airfield at Sliac. On Day 1 of the live fire exercise, pilots conducted 14 training and 16 live attacks and were rated "Excellent". They demonstrated their high professional readiness to execute tasks related to the defence of SVK airspace.

C-27J Spartan and repatriations

(20 May) Working closely with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, a C-27J Spartan transport aircraft repatriated SVK nationals from Ireland on 13, 15 and 19 May 2020. 107 SVK nationals from Dublin and 36 SVK nationals from other parts of Ireland were brought home.

So far, as part of Op Corona, aimed against the spread of Covid-19 in Slovakia, the Armed Forces have brought home 28,586 citizens and 1,622 tonnes of material, driven 317hrs, covered 1,084,380.90km, logged 271 flying hours, conducted 10,670 swab tests, and disinfected 1,246,071m² of spaces.



Signallers at a time of pandemic

(19 May) In response to COVID-19, signallers of the Deployable Communications and Information Systems Base have provided shortwave radio communications for the Joint Operations Centre (SOC). A command post communications vehicle and the Harris radio station, crewed by three personnel, have been set aside for this purpose. Members of the Base provide redundant and permanent shortwave radio communications between the Tactical Operational Centres (TOCs) in Žilina and in Krompachy.