



Visits to military units continue

(29 May) MOD and Armed Forces leaders are continuing their fact-finding mission at military installations in Western Slovakia. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, along with State Secretary Marian Majer and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, visited the Transport Wing in Kuchyňa, Military Forests and Estates in Malacky, and the Military Technical and Testing Institute in Záhorie.

Mr Naď said: "I am pleased that I had an opportunity to shake hands with personnel of the Transport Wing Kuchyňa and thank them in person for their work not only as part of standard operations, but also for their soulful commitment every time it is needed. Take the recent repatriations of SVK citizens or aerial firefighting missions, for example." He continued: "Our Service personnel are doing a truly amazing job and we want to do everything we can to make sure they work to the highest standards of professionalism. All things considered, after today's away day I can conclude that a lot of work and challenges await us in Western Slovakia too."

On his visit to Tpt Wg Kuchyňa, he also discussed the planned refurbishment of Kuchyňa airfield, as recently approved by the SVK Government. As part of the project, the airfield operating surfaces will be refurbished and extended to support the operations of the SVK Air Force. Additionally, aircraft from Sliac AFB, which is to be upgraded for the arrival of F-16 fighter jets, will move to Kuchyňa airfield.

As part of his away day, the head of the MOD was also interested in the real state of the Military Technical and Testing Institute Záhorie, specialised in R&D, testing, and scientific and technical services in respect of military materials for the Department and for domestic and international manufacturers and traders.

In the Záhorie Military District, the Minister visited Military Forests and Estates (VLM) Malacky. While in the Deep Puddle Game Reserve, the VLM Director General informed the Minister about the enforcement of forestry laws by the organisation, the damage caused by animals, the anti-flood projects along the Balázov and Malina Streams, the outbreak of tree borers, and the dryness in pine forests.

As part of his away day on 28 May, Minister Naď took a closer look at the real state of the military units based in Nitra and Sereď. Joined by CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, Mr Naď visited Eng Bn in Sereď as well as 12th Mech Bn and AAM Bde in Nitra.

Mr Naď said: "This day I have once and again dedicated to meeting with our service members and I can say that my respect for their profession and work is increasingly deepening with every such away day. At the same time, it makes me all the more sorry to see them confronted daily with the problems that have been left unsolved and neglected in the long run."

For the Minister, Sereď-based engineers delivered a presentation on their current goals, prospects of further development, international security activities and Active Reserves training. This year 121 reservists are supposed to undergo training in the Battalion, however, the training programme has been halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During his visit to AAM Bde Nitra, the Minister was provided a status update on SVK airspace defence, which is made more complicated by the fact that the radar systems are nearing the end of their life cycle. Aside their SBAD role, the Brigade members are deployed abroad, including postings to NATO structures and PSO HQs, or as international observers. While in Nitra, the Minister also met with soldiers of 12th Mech Bn. Subsequently, Minister Naď and State Secretary Marian Majer visited Turkish Hill Training Area.

V4 Senior Body discusses cooperation on COVID-19 pandemic

(28 May) State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer spoke with his colleagues from the Visegrad Group in a video conference call. This time, the main theme of the V4 Senior Body meeting was the response of the V4 countries to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to bolster regional defence cooperation. Mr Majer said: "The developing pandemic situation clearly demonstrates the importance of civil-military cooperation and the need to build tools for strengthening the resilience of our society, whereas it is desirable for the said processes to evolve concurrently at the national, regional as well as EU and NATO levels." He also expressed his conviction that "this trying experience can represent a solid basis for future strengthening of our readiness and competence in the field of handling crisis situations." Against this backdrop, Mr Majer underscored the SVK military's engagement and input in the battle against the pandemic, whilst highlighting their duties at hospitals, border crossings and quarantine centres. Alongside the coronavirus issue, the State Secretaries devoted their attention to assessing the main priorities of the current CZE V4 Presidency. They addressed the review of the V4 strategic documents, especially the Long Term Vision of V4 Countries on Deepening their Defence Cooperation. They also looked at the priorities of the V4 defence cooperation for the upcoming POL V4 Presidency in 2020/2021.



■ Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď received Interior Minister Roman Mikulec and Transport and Construction Minister Andrej Doležal at the MOD on 26 May. The reason for that was a seminar on the Renegade Concept regarding SVK airspace violations for members of the Cabinet.

■ Under the MOD Grants Programme, the Ministry of Defence has awarded 100,000 euros to projects of civic organisations and foundations supporting the Armed Forces. The grants will be used to refurbish military exhibition premises, promote sporting events and specialist discussions, and publish books.

■ Slovakia has announced it is to withdraw most of the 7 SVK soldiers currently deployed to Iraq as a result of the decision of Iraqi authorities to have all non-essential military personnel relocated out of the country due to the coronavirus outbreak.

■ CSM Martin Boháčik is succeeded by MStg Radoslav Žitník as the new CSEL for the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina. CSM Boháčik is to take up an appointment at SVK SOCOM Trenčín.

■ Thanks to the cooperation between the Defence Monthly Editorial Office and the SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office, the PhotoAttack and Gallery MIL 2020 Competitive Displays are open to service personnel, civilian employees in Defence, family members and ex-service personnel. The deadline for entries is 14 Oct. The results will be announced at the Trenčín Garrison Club on 12 Nov. This year's themes and application form are available at www.osveta.mil.sk and www.personal.mil.sk.

■ The Central Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service (ESP) is preparing a Christian camp for children of military, police, prison and justice guard personnel. The camp is intended for children aged 11-18 and will be held at Havranovo Cottage on 12-19 July. The application form, available at https://www.mosr.sk/data/files/4059_prihlaska-a-info-vkt-2020.docx, must be forwarded by post to the ESP Office or by email at david.vargaestok@mil.sk until 22 June 2020.

■ Given the favourable epidemiological situation and the consent of Director of the Military Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology/ SVK MOD Chief Hygienist Ivan Šavrdra MD, the MOD Club sports facilities reopened on 1 June, while safety and hygienic measures remain in place. For more information, see <http://web1.mil.sk>.

■ 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 the experiences gained by members of the CIMIC and PSYOPS Centre Martin in Žehra under quarantine.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be Allied military road movements, in particular they will involve HRV troops and vehicles from Croatia to Poland and from Poland to Croatia as part of a troop rotation on 2, 5 and 6 June. Between 1 and 7 June 2020, SVK Army round trip convoys will move from Martin to Sučany and from Prešov to Poprad.

Minister meets Austrian Ambassador

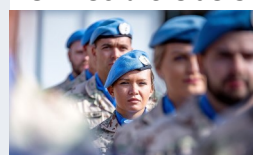


(26 May) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď welcomed the Austrian Ambassador to Slovakia, HE Mrs Margit Bruck-Friedrich, to the MOD. During his first meeting with the Ambassador, he introduced the MOD's priorities in the sphere of defence and security. They consulted on ways to develop cooperation, whether it be at the bilateral level, the regional level or as part of the EU. Mr Naď and Mrs Bruck-Friedrich also paid close attention to the developing COVID-19 situation and the international response to the pandemic. On her visit to the MOD, the Ambassador was accompanied by the AUT Defence Attaché accredited to the Slovak Republic, Col Karl Fitsch.

4x4 vehicle procurement cancelled

(27 May) The SVK Cabinet endorsed the Defence Minister's proposal to cancel the 4x4 Multirole Tactical Vehicle procurement programme. It also approved the start of procurement for essential restoration and refurbishment of Kuchyňa Air Base. "The vehicles, as they were configured, do not meet the requirements of the Armed Forces. Nor was the process in terms of preparation brought to an end," he emphasised. According to his words, there is no doubt soldiers need new equipment. Nevertheless, it must be procured transparently, systematically and purposefully. On the refurbishment of Kuchyňa Air Base, the Minister explained that the main reason for that is the need to create enough parking stands for C-27J Spartan airlifters and Let L-410 Turbolet transport aircraft. "We plan to go ahead with the renovation this year already," he said. The total costs associated with the design documentation for the construction permit procedure and the implementation of works are estimated at €5,042,118.66, VAT included.

SVK soldiers as UN peacekeepers



(29 May) Members of the SVK Armed Forces have participated in accomplishing UN tasks and goals since the emergence of the independent Slovak Republic in 1993, hence working towards peace and security in

the world. Currently, 243 SVK servicemen and women are deployed on peacekeeping missions under the UN umbrella. Defence Ministry Jaroslav Naď said: "Today, we commemorate together International Day of UN Peacekeepers. Through their resolve and commitment to their daily service duties to the benefit of peace and security for the past 27 years, our servicemen and women have demonstrated that they are a well-respected and inherent part of international teams." In connection with this year's theme of the international day – Women in Peacekeeping Forces, he appreciated that SVK servicewomen, too, are represented in the ranks of UN peacekeepers.

Memory of Jozef Gabčík commemorated in Žilina and Poluvsie

(27 May) To mark the 78th anniversary of the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, a commemoration in honour of Maj Gen (in memoriam) Jozef Gabčík was held in Poluvsie. On behalf of

the MOD, State Secretary of the SVK Ministry of Defence Marian Majer paid tribute to his memory and opened a symbolic run which took place instead of the cancelled 26th Jozef Gabčík Memorial Run. He acknowledged the significance of this landmark event thanks to which today's generations can learn more about his life and sacrifice. Along with CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, he participated in a ceremony marking the change of responsibility for 5th SOF Regt CSEL and the appointment of CSEL for SVK SOCOM.

On this occasion, the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina and the Dukla Banská Bystrica Military Sports Centre introduced a new collaborative project in which a team of Dukla specialists

help set the preparation of candidates for 5th SOF Regt. Additionally, Olympian Matej Tóth, of the Dukla Banská Bystrica Military Sports Centre, gave a lecture at the 5th Special Forces

Regiment and met with new candidates preparing for the SOF selection process. On the cooperation, Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "This reflects the cooperation between the Special Operations Forces and a top sports centre, because we expect of SOF personnel to have the abilities that are comparable to top performing athletes."

Commenting on the project, Matej Tóth said: "It is an honour for me and I am immensely pleased that the two elite SVK Armed Forces units are cooperating together and that we can share our experience." A selection of candidates for 5th SOF Regt from among the soldiers and the cadets of the SVK Armed Forces Academy will get underway from 17 August 2020.

