



We will improve infrastructure

(5 June) One of the main priorities of the MOD leadership is to improve the infrastructures of military units with a view to bettering the Service conditions for SVK Armed Forces members, including enabling more effective delivery of domestic crisis management tasks. This statement was made by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď who, joined by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, visited Headquarters 1st Mechanised Brigade Topoľčany (HQ 1st Mech Bde TO) and Logistic Support Battalion Hlohovec (Log Sup Bn HC).

Mr Naď said: "Over the past weeks we have witnessed how indispensable it is for our armed forces to have everything they need in accomplishing assigned tasks. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic they have played a crucial role in domestic crisis management and made a considerable contribution to the fight against the infection. Also for this reason, I would like to say "Thank You" to all servicemen and women for their dedication and for handling the whole situation so brilliantly." As one of many examples of military assistance, he explained that the Battalion members have transported medical supplies to the warehouses of the State Material Reserves Administration and ensured their subsequent distribution to hospitals across Slovakia.

The mission of 1st Mech Bde TO is to partake in executing duties in defence of the Slovak Republic, including in the delivery of commitments under international agreements. If required, the Brigade members participate in maintaining public order and national security. Log Sup Bn HC is tasked with providing complex logistical support across the whole of Slovakia, including the provision of support to the state administration bodies in leading non-military assistance operations.

Hybrid threats as challenge

(3 June) State Secretaries of eight SVK ministries and senior representatives of the national security bodies gathered at the SVK Ministry of Defence for a meeting to launch the process in preparation for the Action Plan For the Fight Against Hybrid Threats and Disinformation as one of the SVK Government Manifesto commitments. The working meeting, involving the State Secretaries of the Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Economy, Transport, Education and Health Ministries and representatives of the Office of Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Information, the Slovak Information Agency, the National Security Office, and the Office of the SVK Security Council, was initiated by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer. Central to the meeting was a discussion of possible ways to advance cooperation on hybrid threats and prevent the spread of disinformation.

State Secretary Marian Majer said: "The change of the security environment forces us to respond by searching for collaborative tools and forms across all ministries. Today, disinformation and other forms of hybrid threats are not just a problem for the security agencies and powerhouse ministries, but present a complex challenge to our State and our society as such. I strongly believe that today's meeting will launch a process enhancing the readiness of the State to react to a wide scale of challenges and thus be a clear added value to our security."



SVK soldiers' tour of duty in support of eFP in Baltics extended

(4 June) The SVK armed forces deployed on NATO's eFP in the Baltics were given a mandate extension by the SVK Parliament. 110 Members of Parliament (MPs) voted for the proposal, this means more votes than are required for a Constitutional bill to be passed. 152 SVK service members will remain deployed on Ādaži Training Area (ATA) in the Republic of Latvia for 6 months longer until 15 December 2020. This is because pre-deployment training has been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 situation and hence the rotation of troops cannot take place as planned until 30 June 2020. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "I am grateful to MPs for their impressive support for the proposal. This is a clear message that Slovakia knows who its Partners and Allies on security and defence are." He expressed hope that the decision will be received by the soldiers' families with understanding. The approved document contains a proposal to deploy up to 152 SVK Armed Forces members from 15 December 2020 well until the end of eFP. The structure of the SVK contribution to eFP will be changed too. Namely, the Mechanised Company will be replaced by a Task Force, comprising a contribution to the eFP BG HQ LVA and reconnaissance capabilities, while direct and indirect fire support elements will be reinforced.



■ SVK MOD State Secretary Marian Majer met the **Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Estonia**, HE Mr Toomas Kukk, on 2 June. They paid close attention to the priorities of the new MOD leadership and the drafting of new strategic documents. The State Secretary informed the Ambassador about the goal of framing Slovakia's new Defence Strategy and Security Strategy. The meeting offered a chance to share experience from the fight against coronavirus.

■ On 4 June, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď appeared with the **2019 Military Intelligence Activity Report** before the Special Control Parliamentary Committee for Inspection of Military Intelligence. "It was incredibly bizarre because while I was presenting their work, I was thinking about former Director Balciar's extra work when in 2019 he fabricated absurd charges against me and had an entire team of people work on me," said the Defence Minister, adding that he believes nothing close to this should happen again in the future in the activity of Military Intelligence.

■ With the easing of anti-coronavirus restrictions and measures coming into force, members of the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour, too, have begun rehearsing state protocol duties and all units of HQ Bratislava Garrison are gradually **returning to normalcy and business as usual**, though they are still performing tasks as part of the military response to COVID-19.

■ The Defence Minister, the Chief of Defence and the Defence Monthly Editorial Staff announced the results of the 19th MOD Drawing and Painting Contest, titled **Soldiers Through the Eyes of Children**, for primary school pupils, with Sára Miháľová of Bardejov as the winner of the Junior Pupils category and Matúš Jaroščiak of Žilina as the winner of the Senior Pupils category.

■ Live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat, Regina Radio's next **Full Field Kit Show**, covering security and defence issues, will be dedicated, inter alia, to the memory of the late Maj Gen (Rtd) Pavel Honzek.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **one Allied road movement** across Slovakia from 8-14 June. To be exact, HRV troops will move from Poland to Croatia as part of a troop rotation. Over the same period, there will be several SVK Army round trip convoys on the following routes: Hlohovec – Martin, Zemianske Kostolany – Nemecká, Martin – Sereď, Martin – Levice, and Levice – Moldava nad Bodvou. Additionally, there will be one SVK military railway movement from Zemianske Kostolany to Vlkánová.

President thanks soldiers



(5 June) President and Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces Zuzana Čaputová delivered her first State of the Republic Address in Parliament, where she was appreciative of the military's role in the battle against

COVID-19: "Fear and concern have not divided us, but have brought us closer together. For that, I want to say thank you once again. As Commander-in-Chief, I also want to extend my special thanks to the Armed Forces, which, albeit underfunded, have been a reliable pillar of assistance." In response to her address, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "I am proud of our President. I join with her in thanking you all, as you have demonstrated that you are not only responsible and well-prepared service members, but above all good people willing to help even in difficult or dangerous circumstances."

SIAF airshow cancelled

(2 June) The Slovak International Air Fest (SIAF) will not take place this year. The reason for cancelling the 10th jubilee edition of the SIAF airshow is the potential epidemiological risk presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Director of the Slovak Aviation Agency/SIAF Organiser Hubert Štoksa said at a press conference at the MOD. A six-hour programme as a replacement for the cancelled airshow will be streamed online on 29 August 2020, the airshow's opening day.

SVK-ISR defence cooperation



(3 June) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď met with the **Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Israel**, HE Mr Boaz Modai, at the MOD. During the meeting, they mainly discussed ways to further cultivate and accelerate

the politico-military cooperation between both countries, including supporting the SVK defence industry. On his visit to the MOD, Ambassador Modai was accompanied by ISR Defence Attaché to the Slovak Republic Col Itai Brin. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď stated: "By developing and deepening the SVK-ISR relationship at the level of our MODs, we confirm that we have close positions even on such issues as security and defence, which, of course, is bringing us together and creating a space for intensifying our cooperation." On this occasion, the Minister expressed the interest of SVK Special Operations Forces (SOF) experts in the offer to visit and consider the use of Israeli training facilities for training the SVK SOF units in the coming years.

Stand-up of SVK Special Operations Forces Training Base

(3 June) The SVK Special Operations Forces Training Base is a new military unit of the SVK Special Operations Forces

(SOF). The official stand-up of the unit was announced by SVK SOF Commander Col Branislav Benka during a ceremony at the 5th Special Forces Regiment in Žilina. "We are marking another phase in building the Special Operations Forces. The primary task of the training base is to deliver training for the SOF units – the 5th Special Forces Regiment, the civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and psychological operations (PSYOP) units, and the 23rd Motorised Battalion in tactical special operations skills and tactical special operations

support skills," said Col Benka.

On the stand-up of the new unit, CSEL of the Slovak Armed Forces Sgt Maj Marcel Kaniak said that the establishment of the SOF Training Base is an important step towards SOF capabilities development, whilst Col Benka underlined that the Special Operations Forces had become the third pillar of the SVK Armed Forces in 2019. "They are expected to have 1,500 personnel by 2025-26. The specialists will be ready, materially equipped and trained to defend the Slovak Republic. And, of course, conduct special operations abroad," concluded Col Benka.

