



Cooperation with Poland

(9 July) Speaking in Warsaw after signing the Agreement on Cooperation in Military Aviation with Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Poland Mariusz Blaszczak, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Identifying new opportunities and possibilities for the cooperation between Slovakia and the Republic of Poland as well as efforts to find joint solutions to challenges in the politico-military sphere can contribute to a more efficient delivery of common goals by both countries, be that part of the EU and NATO or at the regional and bilateral levels." During his first official visit to Poland, the Minister also met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz and Chairman of the Parliamentary National Defence Committee Michal Jach.

On the Agreement, the head of the SVK MOD said: "By signing the Agreement on Cooperation in Military Aviation, we have stimulated the development of cross-border cooperation in airspace protection between our countries. Poland has, since long, operated F-16 fighter jets and its experience from fielding the aircraft will be beneficial for Slovakia." The Minister noted that the aim of the Agreement is to create conditions for furthering cooperation on training, exercises and airspace protection under the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS).

The Polish V4 Presidency and defence industry cooperation, too, were on the agenda of the meetings between Minister Naď and his Polish partners. Minister Naď informed Minister Blaszczak about the SVK MOD's planned activities at the International Defence Exhibition Bratislava (IDEB) 2020, to be held at the end of this October in Bratislava.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď concluded his three-day visit to Poland by visiting the Krakow-based NATO Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence (NATO CI COE), where Slovakia and Poland are Framework Nations.

EU Military Committee meeting

(9 July) Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko participated in the regular meeting of the EU Military Committee (EUMC) at the level of EU CHODs in Brussels. The meeting was opened by HR/VP Josep Borrell's address on the contribution of EU armed forces to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a presentation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the Strategic Compass. The EU's ongoing CSDP missions and operations were at the core of the meeting. Slovakia declared its active interest in supporting Op EUNAVFOR MED Irini by posting a SVK Army officer to its command staff. Moreover, DEU CHOD Gen Eberhard Zorn confirmed the participation of the SVK Boarding Team in Op Irini on a German Navy frigate, to be deployed to the Mediterranean in the spring of 2021.

Chairman of the NATO Military Committee Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach emphasised the significance of EU-NATO cooperation on Op Althea, Military Mobility, and the fight against cyber and hybrid threats. Gen Zmeko declared support for Ukraine's initiative to participate in Op Althea.

The EU's training missions have been scaled back due to the epidemiological measures in place. Gen Zmeko briefed on the intention of the SVK Armed Forces to send, depending on the developing COVID-19 situation, SVK troops to EUTM Mali and EUTM RCA, starting from October 2020.

SVK Army Commander Maj Gen Jindřich Joch retires from active service

(7 July) A farewell ceremony for Commander of the SVK Army Maj Gen Jindřich Joch was held at the SVK Army HQ Trenčín, marking the end of Maj Gen Joch's 38 years of service in the SVK Armed Forces.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, State Secretary Marian Majer and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko said "Thank You" to him for his work well done and taking the Armed Forces to a higher level of excellence. Maj Gen Jindřich Joch is to be succeeded by his successor this autumn.

"As Commander of the SVK Army, Maj Gen Jindřich Joch has capitalised on his dedication to his profession and especially the expertise he has gained over the course of his rich professional career, thanks to which he has contributed to the development and advancement of the SVK Armed Forces," said Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď. CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "On the one hand, I sincerely regret that this experienced general is leaving our ranks. However, on the other hand, it is a natural process of restaffing the commanders corps. Therefore, I am firmly convinced that the new SVK Army leadership will continue to follow the set trend and deliver the assigned tasks with honour."

After a symbolic handover of command to Brig Gen Martin Michalko, Maj Gen Jindřich Joch said: "Every commander is only as good as his subordinates." He thanked all SVK Army members for their job well done. Maj Gen Jindřich Joch held the post from 1 April 2017 to 9 July 2020. Throughout his career, Maj Gen Jindřich Joch received numerous military awards and decorations, including: Medal for Service on Peace Observation Missions (3rd Grade), Medal for Loyalty to Armed Forces (1st Grade), NATO Medal ISAF, Military Police Medal (2nd Grade), and Humanitarian Assistance Medal.



■ Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď along with State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer received the **SVK Ambassador to Latvia and Lithuania**, HE Mr Ladislav Babčan, at MOD Main Building. Topics of discussion included NATO's eFP in Latvia where 152 SVK servicemen and women are currently deployed.

■ Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has approved the **MOD Anti-Corruption Programme No. SEKO-11-117/2020**. It contains new anti-corruption measures consistent with the SVK Anti-Corruption Policy for 2019-2023 and the MOD's priorities and goals. The MOD Anti-Corruption Programme is available to the public at web1.mil.sk under the heading of "Managing Corruption Risks".

■ Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď participated in a meeting of the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region Assembly where he elaborated on the processes required by the **refurbishment of Sliač Airport**. The aim is to preserve civilian flights.

■ 62 Bachelors of Science, ranked Private, and 53 Masters of Science and Masters of Science in Engineering, ranked Lieutenant, attended their **graduation ceremony** at the **General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS)** in Liptovský Mikuláš.

■ Working in close coordination with the Department of Tactics and Art of Operations, the International Courses Section (ICS) of the Armed Forces Academy is finishing the **transformation of its International Staff Officers Course** by aligning it with the newly approved NATO standards.

■ Director of the SNP Central Military Hospital Ružomberok Peter Vaněk MD has handed over an ambulance vehicle to the Chief of the MOD Outpatient Clinic, Ján Žilka MD. The **new ambulance vehicle** is equipped with state-of-the-art rescue and medical devices.

■ At the end of June, 15 pilots and flight technicians from the Helicopter Wing attended **joint survival and specialist PT training** in summer conditions. Led by Lt Col Marián Bošnár, the training took place in Ladomirov in Snina County.

■ Working with the civic associations UN Veteran Slovakia and Libetha, SVK service members prepared a **day full of adventures** for children from the Ľubietová Summer Camp. They were greeted by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marian Majer.

■ Levice Garrison's training ground hosted **intense training for drivers of tracked vehicles** on 30 June.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **7 road and 4 rail Allied movements** involving US, HUN, DEU and SWE soldiers across Slovakia from 13 to 19 July. Over the same period, there will be several SVK Army round trip convoys on the following routes: Hlohovec – Kuchyňa, Hlohovec – Nemecká and Michalovce – Moldava nad Bodvou.

Work on strategic documents

(8 July) The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs have set a goal of formulating the new strategic security and defence documents by the end of 2020. This follows from the joint proposal of the ministries to frame the SVK Security Strategy and the SVK Defence Strategy, which was approved by the Government. Both ministries want to lead intense discussions on the strategies with the public. They also want to see NGOs, professional experts, academia, and all political parties in Parliament wishing to do so involved in framing the strategies. The drafting of the documents should be transparent and systemic. Towards this end, an interdepartmental working group is to meet as early as the end of July 2020.

New military pilot at Kuchyňa



(9 July) Among the SVK Armed Forces cadets to have finished their studies at the Aviation Faculty of the Technical University of Košice is Lt Katarína Gombíková. She has been assigned to the Transport

Wing Kuchyňa. "When I was a second-year cadet at the Armed Forces Academy, I learned that the Aviation Faculty in Košice had opened the Aviation Programme. I completed practical training at the Flight School in Trenčín, where I flew the Diamond DA-20 Katana and logged 100 flying hours," said the 24-year pilot Katarína. Deputy Commander of the Transport Wing Kuchyňa Lt Col Peter Výrostek said Lt Gombíková is going to undergo the C-27J Spartan conversion training for 6-9 months.

Preparations for Slovak Shield 2020

(9 July) Representatives of all SVK Armed Forces components and our partners from the V4 and the USA met at the Training Centre (TC) Lešť on 6-8 July to discuss the preparations for Slovak Shield, this year's largest international exercise to be held in Slovakia. As part of the conference, UH-60M helicopters carried out reconnaissance flights over the TC Lešť training grounds. The exercise plan takes account of the hygienic and epidemiological measures, including the limited number of training audience at one location, the use of training grounds by armed forces, and the hygienic and epidemiological guidelines in place.

Full Field Kit this week

Regina Radio's next Full Field Kit, live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat, will focus on the preparations for the rotation of SVK UNFICYP personnel in Cyprus. Please, forward your suggestions and opinions to plnapolna@mod.gov.sk.

Successful restart of training at Training and Mobilisation Manning Base

(12 July) COVID-19 has left an adverse impact on the training scheme for members of the SVK Armed Forces. The suspended career courses have halted the progression of personnel in numerous units and facilities. Similarly, the suspended MOS-specific courses have resulted in soldiers not getting the necessary qualifications for their positions. Chief of Staff of the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin Lt Col Pavol Tabačár reminds that, except for one Basic Military Training Course, all other training courses have been halted or cancelled.

"In June, we gradually restarted our courses which were most sought after. Among them were especially the NCO Course – OR-5, the Combat Tracked Vehicle Driver Course, and military qualification courses. Specialist qualification enables soldiers to take a position or operate



military equipment. If they miss a regular two-day qualification course, they lose the qualification and must undertake several-weeks-long training. Besides this, we are preparing a course for gunners/operators," said Lt Col Tabačár.

He reminded that approx. 5,000 soldiers per year follow courses and seminars at the Martin-based Training Base. ¼ of all courses have been cancelled this year. The NCO Academy is now hosting the most sought-after NCO Course – OR-5, which will enable the course participants to be promoted to the rank of Sergeant and serve as Section Leaders and Specialists across military units and facilities. The new Commander of the NCO Academy, Sgt Maj Ján Čmelík, remarked that the course is being held with all hygiene standards and guidelines in place (a maximum 32 participants per course are permitted).