



Slovakia to gift military materiel to Ukraine

(13 March) Slovakia will gift an additional €2,155,052 worth of military materiel to Ukraine, the SVK Government has announced after its extraordinary online meeting on Sunday evening.

Slovakia has taken this move in the face of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and in response to the request for support from the Ukrainian side.

"The SVK Ministry of Defence will seek to have some of its expenses associated with the gifting of the military materiel to Ukraine refunded through the European Peace Instrument," an MOD document said.

The Government has announced its second shipment of military aid to Ukraine in the past week alone. On 9 March, the Cabinet approved gifting €9.99m in military aid to Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of Defense to visit Slovakia

(11 March) Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III has accepted an invitation from Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď to attend a bilateral meeting in Slovakia this week.

On the main themes on the agenda, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Secretary Austin and I will discuss ways to enhance defence cooperation and strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank, including the stand-up of the NATO eFP Battlegroup in Slovakia and we will also speak about other forms of assistance that could be provided to Ukraine."

Slovakia is the only country to host Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III for a bilateral meeting as part of his trip to Europe where he will attend the NATO Defence Ministerial in Brussels, Minister Naď said emphatically.

On 8 March, Minister Naď spoke with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III by phone. The underlying theme of their conversation was the current security situation greatly impacted by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and marked by efforts to strengthen cooperation on defending the Alliance and its Eastern Flank.

Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "The events in Ukraine underscore the need to scale up the security of NATO countries, including that of Allied airspace, especially on NATO's Eastern Flank. I want to reiterate the MOD's interest in getting rid of Russian-made MiG-29 fighter jets and Russian technicians based at Sliač Air Base in the shortest possible time. However, as the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic, my primary responsibility is to secure the protection of SVK airspace. For the time being, we have no replacement aircraft for the MiGs that would be readily available to us, but we are doing everything we can to accelerate the processes."

On Poland's intent to place the Polish-owned MiGs at the disposal of the Government of the United States in order to deliver them to Ukraine, which has attracted media attention, he pointed out that Slovakia communicates with Allies clearly and directly rather than through press releases or messages posted to social networking sites. "I want to repeat that we know exactly what we should and want to do. We know what our position is and we will inform media about all our steps once we have agreed on all arrangements," he emphasised. The head of the MOD confirmed the Slovak and U.S. determination to deploy forces and assets in sufficient strength and numbers in order to bolster collective security as well as to provide aid to Ukraine. "Understandably, the United States of America is the strongest link of the Alliance. But in negotiations, we are equal partners and we have agreed that both countries would provide all possible and available means to Ukraine, so that the Ukrainian people can proudly defend themselves against Russia's unprovoked aggression," Mr Naď noted.

According to Minister Naď, the talks laid out clear contours and brought concrete measures for strengthening the defences along Slovakia's and NATO's eastern border. "We talked about a reinforcement in the form of Allied troops and equipment which we could otherwise hardly afford from our budget. We are very much united in the same goal and resolve – to defend Allied territory against any military threats," he said. Minister Naď appreciated Secretary Austin's agreement that the USA would supply specific advanced capabilities to Slovakia as the NATO eFP Battlegroup Slovakia is being stood up.

Government gives green light to NATO's troop presence in Slovakia

(9 March) The SVK Government has given the green light to the proposal of Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď for NATO's troop presence in Slovakia in order to establish NATO's enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup Slovakia (NATO eFP BG SVK). This comes as Slovakia and NATO take action in response to Russia's unprovoked, massive invasion of Ukraine, which has added to the feeling of urgency to bolster the defences of NATO's eastern border, including those of Slovakia. The aim is to demonstrate the cohesion of Allies and declare their readiness to jointly defend against any threat. With this move, NATO member states make it clear that an armed attack against one Ally will be considered an attack against them all. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "I believe that the current reality Russia has created for the whole world with its aggression against a sovereign state without any pretext is a sufficient reason to stop seeking views from 'all cardinal points', because one of them has grossly violated international law and is attacking civilian targets – these are the facts. Therefore, I sincerely hope that the proposal to augment the security of our people and territory alongside the Allies will receive clear support from across Parliament." The proposal to stand up a multinational NATO battalion-size enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Slovakia relies on the presence of up to 2,100 NATO troops, to include up to 600 Czech, 200 Dutch, 100 Polish, 100 Slovenian, 400 American and 700 German soldiers, supported by military equipment and materiel. The total number of military personnel in the battlegroup is tied to the amount of military equipment which they will operate in defending Slovakia and which they need to complement due to the niche capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces. For example, consider the Patriot air defence systems or the potential employment of the Sentinel radar systems.

- On 10 Mar, the **SVK-HUN Mixed Commission** for Military and Other Security and Political Issues met in Budapest for talks on SVK-HUN bilateral defence cooperation and current security challenges – especially those in the face of Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and the refugee crisis. The SVK MOD was represented at the meeting by Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer.

- The **SNP Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital** Ružomberok has placed 2nd in the facility hospitals category of the latest Dôvera Health Insurer Patient Satisfaction Survey. The hospital has thus confirmed once again that it is one of the best medical facilities in Slovakia.

- In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. Department of Commerce has released a **sanctions list** with 91 entities supporting Russia's military activities. Incoff Aerospace s.r.o, based in Bratislava's Dúbravka, appears on the U.S. sanctions list.

- Referring to MOD Directive No. 54/2013 on the MIL Information System, Col Robert Danko, Deputy Chief of IPS&CIS Branch, SVK Defence Staff, has warned that the **users of defence information systems** are responsible for the content of information they process and that they should use the MIL Information System only for Service purposes up to the level of authorisation. The use of the MIL Information System for other than Service purposes may significantly disrupt the protection of information and the security of cyberspace across Defence, as well as limiting the availability of some services because such practices could lead to the capacity to connect to the public internet being overloaded.

- The validity of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence from the specialist training course for **drivers with the right of way** which expires during an emergency situation will be extended by another 6 months following the end of the emergency situation.

- 12 Mech Bn Nitra has collected **humanitarian aid** for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Among the donors were SVK military personnel, their family members and friends, and members of the wider public. The donated supplies were sorted out and packed before being loaded onto five trucks and distributed to Ukrainian refugees.

- Skier **Petra Vlhová**, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica, won the women's giant slalom at the FIS Ski Alpine World Cup in Åre, Sweden. The SVK mixed relay team – sisters Paulína and Ivona Fialková, Michal Šima (all of them from Dukla) and Tomáš Sklenář placed 6th at Sunday's Biathlon World Cup in Otepää, Estonia. Biathlete Paulína Fialková placed 12th in the women's 10km pursuit in Kontiolampi, Finland.

The latest Azimut 24/7 edition, available on YouTube, presents trainee soldiers as they undergo basic military training in Martin.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as 39 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 14 to 20 March 2022. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Sereď – Kuchyňa and back, Michalovce – Kamenica nad Cirochou, Sereď – Lešť and back, Kamenica nad Cirochou – Prešov, Váh – Sereď, Prešov – Dubnica nad Váhom, Hlohovec – Dubnica nad Váhom, Kuchyňa – Nemecká and back, Michalovce – Prešov, Dubnica nad Váhom – Michalovce, Nitra – Zvolen and back, Zemianske Kostolany – Trebišov and back, Sereď – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Mošiar – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Nováky – Bratislava, Martin – Zemianske Kostolany, Poprad – Ruskov, Nováky – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Prešov – Zemianske Kostolany, Zemianske Kostolany – Nitra and back, and within Nitra, Michalovce and Kamenica nad Cirochou. Also planned are SVK military rail movements from/to: Sása-Pliešovce – Michalovce, Michalovce – Kamenica nad Cirochou, Sása-Pliešovce – Trebišov, Zemianske Kostolany – Kuchyňa and back.

FULL FIELD KIT

The Full Field Kit radio programme, featured on **Radio Regina** live on **FRI at 21.05** with a rebroadcast at **00.30** on **Sat**, presents **NATO's eFP BGs on the Alliance's Eastern Flank**.

Ex Saber Strike 22 enters its tactical phase

(7 March) International Ex Saber Strike 22, which has been underway in Slovakia these days, has entered its tactical phase. The exercise, planned two years in advance, involves 2,200 troops, including 1,500 U.S. Armed Forces personnel with 600 pieces of combat equipment (CE) and combat support equipment (CSE). The exercise venues are located across Slovakia, to include the Training Centre Lešť, Levice Garrison's training ground, and Sliač and Kuchyňa air bases. A U.S. unmanned aerial systems unit has been deployed to Bolkovce airfield, however, the unit is not currently operating UASs due to the operational request of the Exercise Director. As part of Ex Saber Strike 22, soldiers are practising joint readiness missions aimed at conducting fast and efficient movements of Allied troops in winter conditions, defensive operations and their complex logistic support. The reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI) of an Allied unit within Slovak territory is very relevant in the given situation. Today, media have had the opportunity to

Tent town set up for refugees

(12 March) Members of 52 Airborne Battalion, part of the Slovak Special Operations Forces, and military personnel of the Czech Army have set up a humanitarian tent camp for Ukrainian refugees at the Mokrad base in County Liptovský Mikuláš. The tent camp with a capacity to accommodate 400 people was completed on Saturday 12 March 2022.

A complex of 20 heated tents, which offers accommodation, catering, health and social care services, is primarily intended for Ukrainian mothers and children as a temporary emergency shelter until such time as permanent accommodation is provided for them. They will be transported from the border crossings to the tent camp by the SVK Army's coaches. A total of 15 CZE Army personnel will remain in Slovakia in order to operate the tent camp. Depending on the actual situation and requirements, the operation of the camp will be reviewed every 30 days.

Change in public access to military districts

(11 March) The Ministry of Defence is alerting the public to a change in public access to military districts. As of 12 March 2022, there will be a temporary ban on public access to the Valaškovce Military District, while the Záhorie Military District remains open to the public. At the same time, the MOD calls on members of the public to abide by existing legislation whereby access to the military districts' closed or fenced-off areas is strictly prohibited, as is the production of sketches, maps, photos and videos of defence infrastructure sites.

The no access ban is also applicable to the buildings and facilities across the military districts under the remit of the Ministry of Defence and the Slovak Armed Forces, to include defence establishments, training facilities, command and control towers, checkpoints, logistics depots, warehouses, logistics infrastructure, on-site security systems, munitions depots, equipment storage depots, drinking water sources, water tanks, and other pieces of infrastructure. The SVK MOD has also suspended issuing approvals for those who want to take pictures or videos across Slovakia's military districts until further notice.

Ex Crystal Arrow in Latvia

(10 March) The SVK military personnel deployed on NATO's enhanced Forward Presence in Latvia took part in what has been their most difficult test so far – the Crystal Arrow certification exercise. The Allied troops that make up the Ajax Group in Latvia gathered on Ādaži training area. The exercise tested their ability to cooperate together and coordinate fire support as well as the interoperability of different types of weapons systems operated by the battlegroup. During the nine days of the exercise, SVK artillerymen supported manoeuvre units with all fire support, both planned and on request.