



A clear signal of friendship and alliance

(17 March) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad, Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer and CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko had the pleasure of welcoming Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III to the MOD. Topics of discussion included the reaffirmation of the SVK-U.S. bilateral relationship and the situation in Ukraine and its implications on the Alliance's security.

"This is the first in-person visit by a U.S. Secretary of Defense to Slovakia in 20 years. It is a clear signal of our friendship and alliance. This meeting has given us the opportunity to discuss a whole range of very important issues that are related to the defence of Slovakia as much as to the defence of the Alliance's Eastern Flank, and also to the situation in Ukraine," Minister Nad said.

"I wanted to be here in person as a sign of our unity, and as a strength of America's relationship with Slovakia, both bilaterally and as fellow NATO allies. As NATO allies, we stand united in support of Ukraine to defend itself against Russia's unjust and unprovoked invasion," Secretary Austin said.

Minister Nad also thanked Secretary Austin for his confirmation of the U.S. contribution to NATO's eFP BG to be stood up in Slovakia. "The capabilities they will provide us with are the niche we are currently lacking in the SVK Armed Forces, and that will strengthen our defence in a significant way. The eFP troops are a major step in reinforcing the defence of Slovakia in its history," he emphasised. The two leaders also addressed the need to deliver on the NATO Capability Targets. This means a particular focus on the SVK Army and development of a heavy mechanised brigade.

Also discussed was the obsolescence of our equipment, such as the Soviet-era and Russian-made S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems and MiG-29 fighter jets. "Provided that we decide to stop operating the MiG-29s, we also talked about the options open to us to fill the gap until the arrival of new F-16s from the USA," he said.

Secretary Austin also met with President Čaputová and Prime Minister Heger.



Czechia to command eFP BG SVK

(18 March) Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad welcomed Czech Defence Minister Jana Černochová to the MOD. In keeping up with the tradition, it marked her first official foreign visit and first visit to the SVK MOD since taking office. Both leaders talked about Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the humanitarian aid for Ukraine, NATO's uplift in Eastern Europe, and the collaboration between the SVK and CZE defence industries.

The head of the MOD extended his thanks to the Czech side for the Czech contribution to the stand-up of NATO's eFP BG in Slovakia, with the Czech Republic as the framework nation. Slovakia will host up to 600 Czech military personnel. Mr Nad said: "I'm pleased that the first CZE soldiers will be in Slovakia as early as the coming weeks, maybe even earlier. We are sending out not only a clear signal of good relations, but also that of a responsible alliance that the Czech Republic has shown towards Slovakia." He highlighted the CZE Armed Forces' very active humanitarian engagement in Slovakia, citing the deployment of CZE Army personnel to Slovakia to set up and operate a tent camp for Ukrainian refugees on the Mokrá base near Lipitovský Mikuláš. Both countries are committed to pursuing closer ties during the coming SVK V4 Presidency and the CZE Presidency of the Council of the European Union, as are to deepening their cooperation on modernisation and defence industries. As part of the programme, Minister Černochová attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the M. R. Štefánik Statue.

200 SVN troops to deploy to SVK

(17 March) Up to 200 Slovenian troops, twice the original strength target, are to be deployed to Slovakia as part of NATO's eFP, which the North Atlantic Alliance is standing up in Slovakia at our request. Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad confirmed after a bilateral meeting with his Slovenian counterpart Matej Tonin at the SVK MOD. Minister Nad said: "In the coming weeks, we will be taking steps to support the operational deployment of Slovenian troops to Slovakia. We are taking our bilateral relationship in the field of defence to a higher level." Minister Tonin said: "At the level of the Government, we have decided to deploy an entire company to Slovakia, or up to 200 soldiers to be exact." According to him, Europe is paying a high price for the war in Ukraine, adding that Slovenia is ready to send humanitarian aid to Slovakia to help alleviate the pressures and consequences of the high inflow of refugees.

Minister awards medals for safeguarding freedom and democracy

(15 March) At a medal presentation ceremony at the MOD, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad presented the personalities who made outstanding contributions to safeguarding the values of freedom and democracy with commemorative medals. Among the recipients were several personalities of the Slovak National Uprising and members of the SVK Military Renewal Association. In addition, Minister Nad awarded commemorative medals to selected individuals for writing and publishing military books, promoting military history, and raising awareness of the SNP fighters.

Mr Nad said: "Never ever should we forget the Slovak National Uprising heroes who, thanks to their courage, have given what is most precious to us – the opportunity to live in peace and freedom. The events of these days point to the fragility of these ideals which our predecessors defended, with some even making the ultimate sacrifice."

As far as the SVK Military Renewal Association is concerned, these are the ex-service personnel and civilian employees in Defence who were dismissed from Service or employment on political grounds during the Normalisation period. Minister Nad reminded before adding that "a parallel could be drawn between the Warsaw Pact's invasion of our territory and what our Ukrainian neighbours must be facing these days. All those who did not hesitate then, and do not now, to take firm personal and civil stances deserve our respect and recognition."



- Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad took part in the regular meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels on 16 Mar. In the face of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, they talked about current security issues, including NATO's uplift in Eastern Europe and the different forms of aid for Ukraine.

- Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad has awarded the SNP and End of WW2 75th Anniversary Commemorative Medal to WW2 veteran Ján Štefánik to mark his 100th birthday. On behalf of the minister, the medal was presented to him in his home town of Hušťa by Ľubica Fusková, Director of the MOD's Social Policy Division, and Richard Zimányi, Chief of the War Veterans and Military Retirees Section.

- Ex Saber Strike 2022 has concluded with an inspection day at TC Lešť, with the participation of Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer, DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda, Commander SVK Army Maj Gen Ivan Pach and other officials.

- Thanks to their excellent shooting in the pursuit race in Norway's Holmenkollen, both Dukla biathletes have gone up a lot in the rankings. Paulína and Ivona Fialková placed 3rd and 18th with the shooters' scores of 0,0,0,0 and 0,0,0,2, respectively.

- Based on its long-term international cooperation with the Czech Republic, the General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy hosted the Basic Air Traffic Controllers Course II. Cadets from the University of Defence in Brno undertook training in a synthetic environment, representing all the three capabilities for delivering ATC services. They practised delivering area control services, approach control services, and ATC tower services, including handling emergency and crisis situations in airspace.

- On 17 Mar, the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok closed its vaccination centre in Ružomberok's Považská Street, with 67,863 vaccine doses administered over the period of more than a year, as well as closing its vaccination centre at the MOD In-Patient Clinic Trenčín. The vaccination centre at the MOD Air Medical Centre Sliac is still operational. Vaccination without advance registration is available to the public every Friday.

- Military chaplain Lt Col Marek Ignaciak has left the Service after serving as Dean of the SVK AF HQ Zvolen for 20 years. Attending the farewell, Chaplain in Chief of the Central Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps Viktor Sabo thanked him for his dedicated service and presented him with the EPS Commemorative Plaque.

- Command and staff personnel of 53 Field Services Battalion Hlohovec have said farewell to its CSEL, Sgt Maj Richard Paraňa. Sgt Maj Jozef Letanovsky is taking over the role temporarily.

- The Armed Forces Academy (AOS)'s Physical Training and Sports (PTS) Department hosted the AOS Floorball Championships for its cadets and employees. The 3rd year cadets' team won the competition, followed by the Personnel Office & PTS Dept team in second place and the 5th year cadets' team in third place.

- The MOD has issued a traffic warning to motorists as 21 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 21 to 27 Mar 2022. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Lešť – Martin, Lešť – Prešov, Nitra – Aleksince and back, and Lešť – Hlohovec. Also planned are SVK military rail movements from/to: Prešov – Zemianske Kostoľany, Kuchyňa – Zemianske Kostoľany, and Nitra – Sása-Pilešovec.

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 the work of SVK Military Police personnel on the Slovak-Ukrainian border.

First NATO troops with Patriot systems start arriving in Slovakia

(20 March) The first NATO troops with the Patriot air defence systems have started arriving in Slovakia, tasked with the deployment of Patriots in the country. This process is to continue over the coming days. The system is also to be set up temporarily at Sliac Air Base, Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad made the announcement in a post on a social media network, noting that the Patriot system is an additional element in defence of SVK airspace, not a replacement for the old Russian-made S-300 system.

"The other operational sites are being consulted on with Patriot experts to make sure that the system's protective umbrella covers the largest possible part of SVK territory, including the priority sites we have designated for protection," Minister Nad said. He thanked Germany and the Netherlands for sending in Patriots. He went on to repeat that the Patriot system is not a replacement for Slovakia's S-300



system. "Due to the S-300's age, technical condition, inadequate capabilities and de facto dependence on the Russian Federation, which is, after Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, absolutely unacceptable for any military cooperation, we'll seek to replace it with another system, one which is fully compatible with our allies and capable of delivering better defence capabilities for the Slovak Republic," Minister Nad said. Germany and the Netherlands have provided Patriots to Slovakia as part of the Alliance's efforts to bolster NATO's eastern flank in the face of the Ukraine war. Slovakia will host up to 2,100 NATO troops as part of NATO's eFP.

Slovakia is willing to transfer its S-300s to Ukraine, once replacements are available to it, Defence Minister Nad confirmed, stressing that we need to get rid of our dependence on Russian equipment.

Meeting with residents of Kalište

(18 March) To commemorate the 77th anniversary of the burning down of Kalište by Nazi troops in WW2, Secretary General of the MOD's Service Office Peter Kozák met residents of Kalište at the SNP Museum in Banská Bystrica. He led a discussion about the legacy and immense courage of the people who did not hesitate to resist bloody oppression by the Nazis. Mr Kozák said: "The legacy of bravery Kalište's residents and many others have left behind by standing up face to face against the Nazi occupation of their country is an inspiration for us even today when a war is raging just a few kilometres from our border. Let's not forget the heroism of those who fought and those who are fighting for our freedom."

Petra Vihová ends skiing season

(20 March) Petra Vihová, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, has ended her skiing season successfully by placing 3rd in the giant slalom at the World Cup in France's Courchevel. For 26-year-old Vihová, this meant her 57th podium placement. In this discipline, she earned 5 podium placements this season alone, being the first-place finisher at Aare, the second-place finisher at Lienz and Kronplatz, and the third-place finisher at Courchevel. She was hopeful of triumph just before the World Cup finals, however, she placed 2nd in the overall rankings, and so the overall Crystal Globe went to Mikaela Shiffrin. Vihová picked up the small crystal globe in the Courchevel/Meribel ski resort – it was clear she would get it as early as January of this year.

Cadets help refugees

(17 March) 30 AOS cadets, led by instructor Maj Jaroslav Kompan from the Academy's Tactics and Operational Art of War Department, have been assisting at the Refugee Registration Centre in Michalovce, where Ukrainian

refugees arrive by car or bus to apply for the "status of a person with temporary refuge" in Slovakia. The cadets have been helping to regulate traffic and provide instructions to the refugees. The first 30 cadets arrived at the Centre on 14 March. From the end of last week, an additional 30 cadets have been deployed to the area close to the border.

Branch-specialised training

(16 March) Junior soldiers have moved on to branch-specialised training for mechanised trades at Martin Garrison's Sučany training ground and the Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin. 12 instructors from the SVK Army, including from the mechanised units in Trebišov, Martin, Nitra, Levice and the Tank Battalion Trebišov, have been involved in the training. The four-week courses for mechanised specialities will be concluded with graduation ceremonies on 25 March. But before that they must cope with specialist topics and pass tests, including the combat marksmanship test with firearms. The drill tasks of individual soldiers on the mechanised team include mounting and dismounting from vehicles, installing weapons onto the vehicles, and securing designated intersections and way points along the route.