



S-300 to be replaced with state-of-the-art Patriot system

(8 April) The SVK MOD confirms that Slovakia has provided its S-300 to Ukraine. This comes in reaction to Ukraine's request for assistance as an exercise of self-defence in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter as a direct consequence of Russia's armed aggression.

This is a responsible decision by which Slovakia, as a country that supports peace, freedom and the protection of human rights, is providing aid to Ukraine and its innocent citizens in the form of a purely defensive system, while we believe this system will help save as many innocent Ukrainians as possible from further aggression by Putin's regime.

Minister Naď said: "The security of the Slovak Republic and our citizens remains uppermost in our thoughts, which is why we took this step only at a time when we had an adequate replacement for the S-300 system confirmed, just as we had announced before. This will be the fourth battery from our Allies of one of the most advanced air defence systems – Patriot, with which the territory of the Slovak Republic will thus be covered. With the Soviet-era S-300 system's options for maintenance services reduced to a minimum and service life nearing its end, this is great news for Slovakia and, at the same time, big help for Ukraine."

The donation of the S-300 to Ukraine does not mean that Slovakia has become part of the conflict in Ukraine.

The defence capability of Slovakia continues to be secured and will be strengthened by the fourth Patriot battery, which is due to arrive next week and will be deployed on SVK territory for as long as necessary.



Minister meets ambassadors

(4 April) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď met EU ambassadors for talks centring on the EU's Strategic Compass (SC) and the current security situation in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The meeting was proposed by French Ambassador Pascal Le Deunff, as France holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Mr Naď said: "Slovakia welcomes EU Member States signing off on the EU's Strategic Compass. At a time when there is a war going on in our closest neighbourhood, this consensus is truly important." According to him, the adoption of the document sends out a clear signal that the EU is able and willing to beef up its security and defence. He noted that the measures outlined in the SC, the aim of which is to provide guidance for the further development of the CSDP for the coming years, will bring better possibilities for building and enhancing the EU's defence capabilities, and hence will reinforce NATO.

The SC encompasses the Hybrid Toolbox, an initiative to create a suite of EU instruments for combating hybrid threats. "Although these instruments for addressing hybrid threats fall under the remit of EU Member States, we cannot rely only on our own capacity due to the complex nature of these threats. Therefore, our membership in NATO and the EU helps us work more efficiently on the measures to be taken in the interest of bolstering our resilience against hybrid activity," he added.

Minister Naď provided an update to the ambassadors on the SVK military's ongoing modernisation programmes and delivery of assistance to Ukraine, concluding: "Our aid is effective, purposeful and aligned with the requirements of the Ukrainian side. We stand with Ukraine."

GBAD systems keep skies of eastern Slovakia protected

(6 April) SVK air defenders have moved their GBAD assets into firing positions so as to cover as much Slovakia's eastern territory as possible. Elsewhere, the SVK military's air surveillance systems, including a network of radar operational sites, are monitoring airspace over the SVK-UKR border on a 24/7 basis. Col Jozef Paňko, COM 11th SVK AF Brigade, said: "Air defenders from our Brigade are applying the experience they have gained in the field through the challenges of training. With the air defence systems now in firing positions, we are ready to provide the protection of eastern Slovakia." Due to the demands of eastern Slovakia's hilly terrain, the GBAD operational sites have been selected so as to make best use of the capabilities by maximising their range at all altitudes. We apologise to local residents for any restrictions that may have been caused by the deployment.



• Speaking on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of Bratislava's liberation on 4 Apr, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "We pledge not to forget the suffering, pain and courage of the soldiers who brought freedom to us and, with a clear stance, let us condemn the suffering of the civilians from whom the Nazi occupation forces and their Slovak collaborators took their homes, property and even lives away from them," adding "And let us take the same stance towards the injustices being committed in Ukraine as these cannot make us careless."

• The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier project, being implemented by the MOD and Bratislava Old Town Council, is due to be complete this September. The author of the winning design is sculptor Marek Kvetana. The memorial has the shape of a partially levitating circle, symbolising a shield falling or leaning towards the ground. "We are one of the few countries to miss out on a place of commemoration of the nation's war dead, where we can pay our respects to the fallen soldiers whose names will forever be associated with the cruelty of war. It's in keeping with good customs that we come and bow before the victims of war, and just as I pay my respects to their memory abroad, I am very pleased that our guests will be able to do the same in Slovakia in just a few months," Naď said.

• Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer met the mayor and council members of Dolná Krupá, home to the Slovak and European branch of the Russian Night Wolves Motorcycle Club. "We had an open and frank discussion with the village officials about the potential threat of the group with a private estate in the village. In the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the MOD has been monitoring the Russian Federation's hybrid and sub-threshold activities in Slovakia," Majer said, noting that it is the task of the State to monitor the behaviour of groups with a negative impact on national security so as to minimise the influence of other countries on what's going on in Slovakia.

• The SVK Army hosted the final coordination conference on Ex Slovak Shield 2022 on 5-7 Apr. The aim of the conference, attended by partners from Czechia, Hungary and the U.S., was to finalise the exercise's planning process.

• Commander SVK Army Maj Gen Ivan Pach presented a commemorative plaque to COM CSS Bde and COM RSOM SUP HQ Col Jozef Šefčík for his role in Op RSOM SUP HQ on Ex SABER STRIKE 2022. The exercise took place across TC Lešť, Sliach AFB and Levice GAR's training ground on 1-14 Mar.

• The April issue of the SVK MOD's DEFENCE monthly magazine is dedicated to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, with the foreword written by President Čaputová and an interview with Defence Minister Naď as the lead article. It contains an update on SVK military personnel dealing with the influx of Ukrainian refugees, as well as views on the Russian aggression through the eyes of analysts, historians, military equipment specialists, and psychologists. It also features a report on Ex Saber Strike 2022. For more information, go to: <https://www.mosr.sk/obrana-42022/>.

Better medical services

(4 April) Defence, Interior and Health Ministers Jaroslav Naď, Roman Mikulec and Vladimír Lengvarský, joined by Director of St Michael's Hospital Branislav Delej, opened a new specialist

medical centre in the hospital. By offering medical services to firefighters, police and soldiers, and other patients under one roof, the centre wants to streamline its medical services for security elements. The hospital's building in Bratislava's Cintorínska Street saw two of its floors with doctors' surgeries reconstructed. The building's spaces were redesigned as a new medical centre to provide outpatient health care. The doctors' surgeries will be open to patients on a daily basis to the extent required.

Modern and ready to engage

(4 April) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and President Zuzana Čaputová spoke about the current defence and security developments. He updated the Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces on the status of the Slovak Armed Forces' tasks, modernisation efforts, and planned activities. The minister also thanked the president for her interest in building Armed Forces that are modern, stable and ready to engage.

Working cooperatively with Italy

(7 April) Deputy Defence Minister Marian Majer received Italian Ambassador Catherine Flumiani at the MOD, for talks on the current security situation in Ukraine and ways to deepen SVK-ITA bilateral defence cooperation. Both

partners agreed on the extraordinary unity and solidarity of EU and NATO Member States towards Ukraine and on combating Russia's hybrid activity within Europe. They also discussed the Deputy Minister's upcoming visit to Italy in May 2022. Mr Majer said: "Slovak and Italian soldiers have served with NATO's Canadian-led enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Latvia. The aim of the deployment is to demonstrate our unity and strength. We consider the eFP concept to be of great relevance to the Alliance's defence and deterrence." To this end, NATO's eFP battlegroup in Slovakia is being stood up with NATO's eFP BGs in Poland and the Baltics serving as a model, he reminded.

CBRN forces successfully pass spring training for NATO's NRF

(4 April) The last week of March and the first week of April saw the Slovak CBRN unit earmarked for the NATO Re-

sponse Force (NRF) undergoing training at Rožňava Garrison's training ground in Gemerská Hôrka and at the Training and Testing Centre of the 905th Specialist Combat Support Centre Zemianske Kostolány. The unit's commander, 1Lt Martin Pavlík explained that the unit was composed of members of the CBRN Recce Platoon from 103rd CBRND Battalion Rožňava and was supplemented by chemical specialists from the SVK Air Force, saying: "The training at Rožňava Garrison's training ground in Gemerská Hôrka



went well for the unit and I'm pleased with it. All coordination tasks were accomplished. Driving effective alignment across the command and control (C2) system was the core task for us and our colleagues from the Slovak Air Force. And we did succeed in that. Recce teams underwent training on specific types of recce vehicles such as the Alligator and the BRDM, as well as on point detection. At TTC Zemianske Kostolány, we completed a range of tasks that tested the basic skillset of our CBRN specialists. This preparation phase culminated with real chemical warfare agents (CWA) training. For some soldiers, this was their first time."