



First four SVK MiG-29s delivered to Ukraine

(23 Mar) The first four SVK MiG-29 Fulcrum fighter jets were safely handed over to the Ukrainian Air Force and flown to Ukraine by Ukrainian Air Force pilots, with help from the Slovak Air Force, Ukrainian personnel, and other support staff.

Consistent with the SVK-UKR intergovernmental agreement on the donation of military equipment, approved by the SVK Government and signed by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď and Ambassador of Ukraine to Slovakia Myroslav Kastran in Bratislava on 17 Mar 2023, the remainder of the Slovak Air Force's MiG-29 fleet will be handed over to Ukraine in the coming weeks. A total of 13 MiG-29s and some of the SA-6 "Gainful" ("Kub") system's assets will be transferred to Ukraine under the deal.

12 new AH-1Z Vipers

(22 Mar) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď confirmed that one part of the announced compensation for transferring to Ukraine of thirteen retired Slovak Air Force MiG-29s and some of the SA-6 "Gainful" ("Kub") air defence system's assets is related to the U.S. offer to Slovakia of 12 new AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters along with associated accessories, training of pilots and technicians, and AGM-114 Hellfire II missiles.

"This offer is hugely advantageous and will significantly increase Slovakia's defence potential. Currently, we have no combat helicopters," Defence Minister Naď said. The value of this package is estimated at more than \$1bn. Of this, some \$660m will be provided to Slovakia from the U.S. FMF Programme. Under the deal, Slovakia will pay \$340m from the Defence budget over the next 3-4 years. The head of the MOD stressed that a number of countries were interested in the said equipment, whereas he took the U.S. offer to Slovakia very positively. He noted that the move could also be perceived as indirect compensation from the U.S. Government for the announced delay in the delivery of the F-16s to Slovakia.

Gen Emil Boček dies aged 100

(25 Mar) Czech veteran Gen Emil Boček, who served with Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) during WW2, died aged 100 in Brno. He was born on 25 Feb 1923 in Brno. He was training to be a mechanical fitter just at the time when he escaped Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939. As a 16-year-old boy, he joined the Czechoslovak Army in France. After being evacuated from France, he ended up in Britain. There, he completed a course for technicians and joined the RAF as one of the youngest airmen. From 1944 onwards, he served with Flight "B" of No 310 (Czechoslovak) Squadron RAF. In 2019, Emil Boček was promoted to the rank of General and was awarded the Order of the White Lion 1st Class, the highest Czech state honour. Among others, he received two Czechoslovak War Crosses. In a letter of condolences, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď paid tribute to the deceased general for his courage in the fight against the Nazis.



Our Allies value Slovakia's determination and activities

(24 Mar) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď met in person with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO Headquarters in Brussels on Fri 24 Mar 2023. Central themes of their conversation included the military assistance for Ukraine and the coordination of steps towards securing the defence of the Alliance's territory, including NATO's deployment of forces, capabilities and command structures to Slovakia.

In a statement following the meeting, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg appreciated Slovakia's clear position on the strengthening of the Alliance's eastern flank."

Minister Naď updated Secretary Stoltenberg on Slovakia's assistance to Ukraine thus far and readiness to scale up munitions manufacturing to replenish military stocks at home and deliver artillery shells to Ukraine. On the Defence Investment Pledge, Mr Naď emphasised that Slovakia will deliver on its commitment this year, taking its total defence spending, planned and approved, to 2.01% of GDP on defence. On this note, Minister Naď and Secretary Stoltenberg concurred that spending 2% on defence must be a floor, not a ceiling. The NATO Chief praised Slovakia for its activities in the field of defence and security and the Slovak Armed Forces for their intensive modernisation programmes.



► On behalf of the MOD, Secretary General of the Service Office Peter Kozák commemorated the 35th anniversary of the 25 March 1988 Candle Demonstration in Bratislava, a peaceful mass protest for religious and civic rights and freedoms, brutally suppressed by the Communist regime in 'socialist' Czechoslovakia.

► On 20 Mar, the MOD hosted a Council of Investors meeting of the newly established NATO Innovation Fund (NIF) for the first time in Slovakia, with participation from 22 participating NATO allies and a delegation from NATO along with NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges James Appathurai.

► Representing the MOD in a ceremony at the Poprad Central Train Station on 24 Mar, Secretary General of the MOD Service Office Peter Kozák commemorated the 81st anniversary of Jewish people being deported on the first transport out of Slovakia to the Auschwitz extermination camp during WW2.

► SVK Air Chief Maj Gen Róbert Tóth took part in the NATO Air Chiefs' Symposium (NACS) at Ramstein AB, Germany. They assessed the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the need for interoperability. Maj Gen Tóth along with the NLD, ROU, POL and BGR Air Chiefs discussed setting up an F-16 training centre for pilots and technicians in Romania. At the same time, Allied Air Forces' CSEs joined for a separate conference, with CSEL of the Slovak Air Force Sgt Maj Štefan Patassy in attendance.

► 1Lt Matúš Bartalšík has completed the Introduction to Fighter Fundamental (IFF) Course, receiving training on the T-38 Talon jet trainer at Columbus AFB in Mississippi. Thanks to graduating from the IFF course with better results than his U.S. fellow colleagues, he earned the Air-to-Air TOP GUN Award and the River Rat Warrior Award. He has now moved on to undertake F-16 pilot training at the Morris Air National Guard Base in Tucson, Ariz.

► Military policemen have undergone coordination training for C-27J SPARTAN crew and air marshals. The aim is to make a well-coordinated team out of the crew members and air marshals. As well as this, the Training and K9 Branch, MP Dept Vikanová-Hronek, has delivered the Glock 17 pistol training course.

► The SNP Museum Banská Bystrica has announced that its main exhibition galleries will be closed due to refurbishment works to the Museum on 3-30 Apr.

► The Director of the Military Social Welfare Office has released guidance on the provision of recreational stays abroad for military and civilian staff in Defence and on children's summer camps in 2023. The document is available on the internet.

► Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, and the editorial staff of the MOD's DEFENCE Magazine announced the 22nd MOD Drawing and Painting Competition open for entries from all primary school pupils. For more information, go to <https://www.mosr.sk/vojaci-ocami-deti-2023/>.

► Members of the Specialist Military Police Operations Branch underwent training on movement in avalanche prone locations in the Great Fatra Mountains on 21-23 Mar.

► On Sat 25 Mar, a new wellness centre opened inside the Granite Hotel Tatranské Zrubky, run by HOREZZA JSC, an MOD hotel agency. The renovation bill amounted to €680,000.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents a tribute to Gen Emil Boček live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Ex SLSD23 tests the ability of Allied troops to defend Slovakia

(21 Mar) Ex Slovak Shield 2023, one of Slovakia's largest international military exercises, is now culminating with the final tactical phase of the exercise (TACEX) at the TC Lešť. Today, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď joined Slovak Armed Forces top commanders for the Ex SLSD23 Distinguished Visitors' Day (DVD) to witness a tactical live-action demonstration. Nearly 2,000 troops, supported by approx. 400 pieces of combat



equipment, from the nations participating in the V4 and the NATO MN BG SVK are testing their ability as a task force to plan and conduct a defensive operation to stop the enemy's aggression against an Allied nation.

EU Commissioner in Dubnica

(22 Mar) Meeting at ZVS Holding's headquarters in Dubnica nad Váhom, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď along with members of the company's Executive Leadership Team met EU Commissioner for Internal Market Thierry Breton for talks on opportunities to ramp up munitions manufacturing for Ukraine. EU Commissioner Breton was briefed on the state of the SVK defence industry's armaments production capacities and the need to expand them. Following the talks, Defence Minister Naď said: "Slovakia fully supports the European initiative to speed up joint procurement and deliveries of munitions for Ukraine – this all comes as part and parcel of the measures to boost the output of the European defence industry. Whilst our defence industry is ready to contribute towards this effort, the EU has the tools to motivate the industry to scale up munitions production. And here we are talking about the need for considerable investment."

Trials of Leopard 2A4 tank



(20 Mar) Trials of the first Leopard 2A4 MBT, delivered to Slovakia from Germany in exchange for gifting its BVP-1 IFVs to Ukraine, are underway at the Záhorie Military Technical and Testing Institute, to verify some of the tank's technical specifications and performance parameters as the MBT along with ammunition enters service with the SVK Army. As part of the live-firing test, the 120mm Rh120 L/44 gun and the 7.62mm MG3 machine gun on the platform were test-fired from a static vehicle and while on the move. The smoke screen test showed how the smoke grenades would mask the tank. Test procedures to check for the tank's technical specifications, mobility, ammunition, and ergonomics are due over the next two weeks. So far, no problems have been reported. The trials are due to be complete on 31 Mar. 14 Leopard 2A4s will be delivered this year (one MBT was delivered in Dec 2022), whilst deliveries of tank ammunition, spares, logistics support and training of tank crews and technicians will continue in 2023-25.

Majer at FAC in Brussels

(20 Mar) State Secretary Marian Majer attended a joint session of the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) bringing together Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers in Brussels. The collaborative procurement of artillery munitions for Ukraine and the progress made in the first year of implementing the EU Strategic Compass which guides the work of the EU and its member states on security and defence topped the agenda of the meeting. While still in Brussels, Mr Majer attended the inaugural Schuman Security and Defence Forum and joined the discussion roundtable titled 'Building Our Collective Resilience'.

For the first time in the history of the exercise, SVK Active Reserves (AR) soldiers from 21 Mech Bn Trebišov and their colleagues from the V4 armed forces and the Indiana National Guard (USA) take on the role of the enemy, whilst the NATO MN BG SVK acts as the defending force.

In addition, Ex SLSD23 serves as a certification exercise for the Czech-led NATO Multinational Battlegroup

Slovakia and offers a training opportunity for selected units of the V4 EU BG to align their most current and relevant tactics, techniques and procedures ahead of their certification for the coming stand-by period.