



SVK MINDEF at NATO HQ

(13 Feb) The war on the Alliance's eastern flank and increased defence spending were addressed at the NATO Defence Ministerial in Brussels, with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák in attendance.

While at NATO HQ, Robert Kaliňák participated in the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (UDCG) meeting and in the North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting, where he also met the new U.S. Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, who clearly formulated key themes that only a few NATO countries had dared to open.

On his return from Brussels, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák said: "That new challenges are emerging and the current defence and security situation is changing and evolving has been confirmed by the Brussels meeting. Slovakia is ready to respond to them as much as we want to remain actively involved in the projects that will strengthen our Nation's defence capability through dual application technologies, to the benefit of all SVK citizens."

HQ MND-C declares FOC

(10 Feb) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák led a SVK MOD delegation to Hungary for the Headquarters Multinational Division Centre (HQ MND-C) Full Operational Capability (FOC) Ceremony in Székesfehérvár.

"Today's geopolitical environment is extremely unstable and unpredictable. That is why the key is fostering unity and solidarity among Allies. I am proud that Slovakia joined Hungary and Croatia in building the Headquarters and has ever since played its role in it. From the very beginning, our intention has been to contribute to NATO's joint capabilities, strengthen regional security, and demonstrate our readiness to secure NATO's effective deterrence and defence posture on the eastern flank," Robert Kaliňák said.

In partnership with the other two framework countries – Slovakia and Croatia, last year Hungary made strengthening HQ MND-C its priority – and that has been achieved also thanks to Slovakia's help, NATO Deputy Secretary General Radmila Shekerinska underscored in her remarks. The current commander of HQ MND-C is Maj Gen Tibor Králik (SVK A). A total of 17 SVK military personnel have been posted to NATO's Central European HQ MND-C. As part of his official programme there, DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák held a bilateral discussion with his Hungarian counterpart Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky.



Op Iron Stream: Safeguarding energy security

(11 Feb) In Slovakia, on Op Iron Stream, our soldiers have been involved in monitoring our critical national infrastructure (CNI) since 18 Dec 2024. Using the most advanced systems such as UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, drones and observation devices, they have been monitoring almost 100 physical assets of the oil and gas pipelines and other facilities to ensure maximum energy security for all SVK citizens.

Consistent with (Amendment) Act No. 321, our soldiers have the power to ban or expel individuals from certain designated areas, or order them to remain in place. "This operation is proof that we are ready to respond flexibly to challenges and protect assets of vital importance to every citizen. We also see it as a great opportunity to train and cooperate with local authorities and the public," CHOD Gen Zmeko said. Over the first 54 days of Op Iron Stream, 1,061 personnel carried out 1,530 patrols, drove a total distance of 90,000km, and completed 40 flying hours.



■ 40 soldiers, ranked 2nd Private (OR-2) to Major (OF-3), who had been recruited into the SVK military from other police and security forces completed pilot **Force Integration Training (FIT)**, conducted by instructors from 7 Trng Regt Martin and selected soldiers from other Armed Forces branches on the Martin base. The three-week training focused on developing basic soldiering skills and adapting to the military environment. The integration training culminated on Sučany Garrison's training ground with tactical and marksmanship drills and a two-day final exercise involving the live grenade throw.

■ By taking over the Colours from the hands of Comd 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany Brig Gen Štefan Acsai, **Lt Col Jozef Varchol has taken over command of 11 Mech Bn Martin**. Col Marián Golis, the outgoing commander, has served in various positions within 11 Mech Bn Martin since Dec 2005.

■ Working closely with the Slovak Hunting Chamber and Manna Factory that employs severely disabled and disadvantaged people, Military Forests and Estates, the MOD-run state-owned company, is trialling a **new recycling service for used ammunition cartridge cases** at its facility in Kamenica nad Cirochou. In addition to meeting the environmental protection standards, the project will add jobs to the region.

■ The **SVK Military Academy (AOS) will be hosting an Open Day** for potential officer candidates, starting at 09:00 at the AOS Main Hall on 21 Feb. After an introductory presentation, visitors will be able to meet with representatives of the Depts as well as officer cadets from AOS Liptovský Mikuláš, TUKE Košice (pilots and ATC controllers), UOD Brno (CBRN specialists) and its Faculty of Military Health Sciences of Hradec Králové (doctors).

■ At the **2025 Winter European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF)** in Georgia's Borjomi-Bakuriani, biathlete Michaela Straková of the Dukla Military Sports Centre triumphed in the Girls' 6km sprint race. Her fellow colleague, cross-country skier Yelisei Kuzmin took 8th place in the Boys' 7.5km classic in Bakuriani.

■ The **February issue of the Defence Magazine**, the official monthly of the SVK Ministry of Defence, brings an interview with MOD SEC GEN Peter Krajčirovič and reports on ice diving training for Army engineers and on the training of MI Spt Coy, part of 65 Recce Regt Prešov. In the main theme of this issue, the editorial team analyse cooperation between the Armed Forces and the Museum of Military History Piešťany. For more information, please go to www.mosr.sk/obrana-22025/.

20 years of service: 21 Self-propelled Artillery Battalion

(12 Feb) 21 Sp Arty Bn celebrated a happy 20th birthday with a ceremony at its base in Michalovce, in the presence of Comd 5 Arty Regt (DS) Col Ján Hric, Chf DS's JFS and AD Branch (DS) Col Roman Bobal, Mayor of Michalovce Miroslav Dufinec, former commanders, serving and ex-service soldiers and their families, and fans of SVK Forces. The history of the Battalion goes back to the 1950s. The Battalion has been commanded by Lt Col Michal Németh since 1 Jan 2024. As one of the few units in the Armed Forces, the Battalion has its Artillery Fire Battery assigned continuously to the Mechanised Battalion Group – Slovakia's NATO Capability Target. The Battalion's record of NATO exercises and operations has formed a vital part of the Unit's development. As well as being a regular participant in Ex-Slovak Shield, Ex Joint Fires and Ex Dynamic Front, the Battalion was responsible for selection of personnel, pre-deployment training, and execution of missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Golan Heights, and Lat-

Charity gala evening

(14 Feb) In Halič, at the 4th Slovak Armed Forces Charity Gala Evening, held under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák, a symbolically empty table was set with a burning candle and the full text of the Oath of Allegiance for the soldiers who laid down their lives in service to the Nation. Proceeds from this fundraiser will go to the Military Support Foundation to benefit children of the soldiers and civil servants who have lost a parent and their families need help. That those at the charity gala event had generous hearts is evidenced by the fact that the charity auction alone collected one third more contributions than last year and almost ten times more than the amount raised at the inaugural charity event.



RC Bishopric pilgrims in Rome

(11 Feb) The SVK RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps's six-day Jubilee Year Pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican coincided with the Holy See-organised 'Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel'. Among the 50,000 participants from all over the world were 90 SVK military, police and security personnel, led by Bishop of the Forces and Armed Corps František Rábek.



via. With technological advances in military capabilities, the biggest change has come with the fielding of the 155mm ZUZANA 2 SPHs to the Battalion.

