



B9 Defence Ministerial

(5 April) Meeting in Warsaw for two days (4-5 April 2019), the Bucharest 9 (B9) Defence Ministers concurred on the need to bolster security cooperation not only in the region but also as part of the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. Security threats in the cyber domain were one of the dominating issues on the meeting's agenda.

SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Slovakia is a responsible partner who delivers on the commitments of international organizations, and through its long-standing approach to performing tasks, it confirms that we are ready to bear our share of responsibility for building and sustaining the international security environment."

At the meeting, the Ministers focused attention on the implementation of EU projects. "I consider the implementation of PESCO projects, which are an effective tool for strengthening the European pillar of NATO, to be an excellent way to meet this goal," explained Head of the MOD. In this respect, Military Mobility and the V4 EU Battlegroup, to be on stand-by under Polish command from July 2019, will remain areas of priority.

The Defence Ministers of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia also discussed new security challenges with regard to the planned introduction of the 5G network.

A new memorial to be erected

(3 April) Slovakia will honour the heroism of all the Service members who have fallen in armed conflicts by creating a central point of remembrance. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Bratislava will be a dignified place of remembrance for National Acts of Remembrance. The SVK Government has given its approval to the project proposal.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "Through this step, Slovakia will join in with other modern democratic states, for which such central points of remembrance, the most honourable war graves, are the usual practice." He further emphasised that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will mainly serve for organising National Acts of Remembrance. Adding, "All the heroes who have fallen in the fight against injustice, oppression and totalitarianism in any of their forms deserve that their acts of service will never be forgotten."

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, with the dimensions of 30x50m at least, will be constructed in Bratislava's Old Town. It will be located between Leškova Street and the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic. A key element of the design specifications is a monument placed at the head of a war grave with the remains of an unknown war victim. The artistic depiction of the theme will be subject to a public urban and architectural design competition.

The proposed arrangements reckon on conducting earthworks around the monument, building a new access road and a parade square for participants of remembrance ceremonies and members of the Guard of Honour and the Armed Forces Band, and setting up flag posts. New benches and lighting will be fitted at the site as well, and the entire park will be monitored continuously by CCTV cameras.

The construction of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will be funded from the SVK Government's Reserve Fund.

Visit of Chief of Joint Staff of BIH Armed Forces to Slovakia

(5 April) Chief of Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina Lt Gen Senad Mašović and his delegation paid a visit to Slovakia on 3-5 April 2019. After the welcome ceremony with full military honours at the MOD and GS, SVK and BIH CHODs Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko and Lt Gen Senad Mašović held talks at the Training Centre Lešť, to discuss the cooperation between the SVK and BIH Armed Forces, which will be further elaborated on during the planned staff-to-staff talks at the level of military experts. Lt Gen Mašović was keen to learn more about the training and operation of the SVK AF helicopter fleet, as helicopter aviation is among the priorities of BIH Command. CHOD Lt Gen Zmeko stated: "Stability in so close a region is among our priorities. Apart from our direct engagement in Op EUFOR ALTHEA, our armed forces can offer our training facilities and training for specialists in different trades, depending on the needs of our partner. Through this cooperation, we can contribute to building modern BIH armed forces and help fulfil the country's ambition to gain NATO and EU membership." During his tour of the Training Centre Lešť, Lt Gen Mašović used the opportunity to see a number of live capability demonstrations, including the training of a Special Operations Forces (SOF) unit, a mechanised unit operating in an eFP role prior to its deployment to the Baltics, a certification exercise of a mechanised battalion group with a view to meeting the NATO Capability Targets, and CBRN specialists exercising at Toxic Lance 2019.



- A two-level **complex staff rehearsal** for Main Command and Joint Operational Command took place at the SVK Army HQ on 2-5 April 2019. SVK CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko inspected the rehearsal to see for himself that it was conducted thoroughly and properly.

- On 2-3 Apr 2019, the **Military Police Director's Military Council** convened at the Granit Mountain Hotel in Tatranské Zruby, with the participation of MP key leaders. On this occasion, Director of Military Police Col Michal Migát handed over the Challenge Cup to the best-performing MP unit. This year, which counts as the 0 year, the Challenge Cup went to the MP Ops Section Prešov and was picked up by Maj Martin Jonek, Chief of the Section.

- The National Centre EOD and CBRN Nováky is hosting the theory phase of the **Military Ammunition Technician Course**, organised for members of the SVK MOD and Armed Forces and the Ministry of Interior. On 17 Apr 2019, a board, formed of Ministry of Interior instructors and members, will appraise the course attendees and decide on who is to attend the field phase of the course inside a blast pit at the Munitions Depot in Sklené.

- 35 members of the SVK Army HQ's Com Sup Bn Trenčín and members of the Regional Directorate of the SVK Police Corps took part in a **training event to strengthen the SVK Police Corps** held on 2 Apr 2019 at the DUKLA Trenčín Sports Union (TJ DUKLA Trenčín), with a member of the Directorate acting as the Officer commanding the training. If needed, those active duty soldiers who have passed through the training may now be called upon to respond to an incident alongside policemen of the SVK Police Corps.

- The 74th anniversary celebrations of the **liberation of Partizánske and Topoľčany** in WWII were supported on 26 Mar and 1 Apr by members of 1st Mech Bde Topoľčany, Log Bn Topoľčany, CSS Bde Trenčín, and Military Bands Banská Bystrica and Bratislava, in the presence of local government authorities, members of the SVK Anti-Nazi Fighters Union, and WWII veterans. The celebrations of the liberation of Hlohovec and Trnava were supported by personnel of Log Bn Hlohovec.

- A graduation ceremony for graduates of the **Non-Commissioned Officers OR-5 Course** was held on 29 Mar 2019 at the Training and Mobilization Manning Base in Martin. Cpl Gustáv Durec, of 12th Mech Bn Nitra was named Best Graduate of the NCO OR-5 Course.

- Drivers are asked by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 35 **Allied road movements**, scheduled for 8-14 Apr 2019. This week SVK Army convoys will ferry oversized cargo on the routes: Nitra – Koliňanský Vrch, Kuchyňa – Prešov, Sliach – Kuchyňa, Kuchyňa – Moldava n. Bodvou, Hlohovec – Turecký Vrch – Sereď, Martin – Tepličky, Martin – CV Lešť, Martin – Koliňanský Vrch – CV Lešť, Martin – Trenčín MSM, and in Michalovce. There will also be SVK Army round trip convoys on the routes: Vrbovec – Biela Hora and CV Lešť – Zemianske Kostofany.

Soldiers of Active Reserves start training in Trebišov

(1 April) This year's first training for soldiers of the Active Reserves (AR) has got underway at the 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion base in Trebišov. Over the next two weeks they are undergoing training in mechanised trades, with particular focus on tactical training. As well as exercising at Trebišov Garrison, active reservists will undertake training at the Training Centre Lešť. This year additional trade-specific training activities for active reservists are scheduled for 20-31 May 2019 at the CBRN Defence Battalion Rožňava, 10-21 June 2019 at the Engineer Battalion Sereď, and 10-21 June at the Military Police Department Vlková-Hronek. Those active reservists who undertake at least 75 percent



Minister meets ROK Ambassador

(2 April) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to Slovakia, His Excellency Mr Chung Byung Hwa, at MOD Main Building. During the Ambassador's first visit to the MOD, they discussed current security and political issues as well as the prospective areas of cooperation on education and training between the SVK and ROK Armed Forces.

Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Despite the geographical distance, the prospective areas of mutual cooperation between Slovakia and the Republic of Korea present an opportunity to cooperate not only in the field of education and training at our state-of-the-art training facilities, but also, for example, when it comes to supporting the products of the Slovak defence industry." Minister Gajdoš informed Ambassador Hwa about the SVK deployments to UNTSO and UNFICYP and appreciated the ROK's active engagement with the United Nations. Minister Gajdoš also introduced the priorities of the SVK defence department and the modernization programmes for the SVK Air Force and Army and the commitments that arise for Slovakia out of its membership in international organizations.

Liberation of Bratislava marked



(4 April) On the occasion of the 74th anniversary of the liberation of Bratislava on 4 April, commemorative ceremonies in tribute to the soldiers and civilians who died in liberating our capital city in WWII were held at the Slavin

Memorial at Slavin and at the Victory Memorial in Eugen Suchoň Square. Representing the SVK MOD and Armed Forces at the ceremonies were State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marián Saloň and military leaders.

The operation to free Nazi-occupied Bratislava was launched by Soviet and Romanian divisions on 2 April 1945, with clashes with the enemy taking place directly in the city centre already on Day 2 of the operation. Between 2 and 4 April 1945, the fighting claimed 742 Soviet, 470 German and Hungarian, and 121 civilian lives.

DCA to be made available to MPs

(2 April) Based on a request by members of the SVK Parliament's Committee on European Affairs, the MOD is to ask the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs for permission to make the draft Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) between the Slovak Republic and the United States of America available to members of the Committee for familiarization. They wish to visit the MOD in the coming days. As a result, the MOD is to approach the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, as the chief negotiator of the Agreement in line with the Coalition Agreement, with this request. The official position of the SVK Ministry of Defence on the matter remains unchanged, MOD officials will abstain from participating in talks on the draft Agreement.

of the annual training programme are eligible for a payment of €600, and provided that they are civilian employees, they are also eligible for a commensurate part of rank-based pay

for the period of time spent on training or exercise. Moreover, they are entitled to free military clothing, reimbursement for travel costs incurred to and from the place of regular training or exercise or to and from the place of temporary assignment, as well as to compensation of salary as detailed in the Labour Code, which will be refunded to them via their employers.

The same applies to the self-employed who will receive compensation for their business income. In both cases, the Ministry of Defence will refund social and health insurance premiums.