



New Minister of Defence

(24 March) On 23 March 2016, Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim received in audience 1st Deputy CHOD Lt Gen Peter Gajdoš, on the occasion of the end of his term as 1st Deputy CHOD. He officially announced the personnel order on his release from service as a professional soldier and expressed his acknowledgement for the job done in said position and awarded him with the Commemorative Cross of Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, 1st Grade.

On 24 March, President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska handed over the credentials to lead the Defence Department to Peter Gajdoš. "I am distinctly familiar with the defence environment. I view my service in a capacity as Minister of Defence as a challenge and I accept the same with deep respect, humility and determination. Although the position of Minister has primarily a political dimension, I would very much like to draw on my long-term experience of control and management in the armed forces. It is my ambition to introduce a streamlined system of planning, performance, control and review and cause the same to be implemented on all levels of control and management in the Department of Defence. Such system shall clearly define individual tasks and competencies, as well as individual responsibility," said new Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. According to him, the qualities like determination, professionalism and personal integrity will be the main pillars of the effort to vigorously pursue the goals and objectives as stipulated in the endorsed programme priorities, which will become the basis for the Declaration of Intent of the Government of the Slovak Republic.



First steps taken by P. Gajdoš

(24 March) Peter Gajdoš started his first day in his capacity as new Minister of Defence by attending the morning briefing at the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, introducing the new State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marián Sadloň on this occasion.

After introduction he was informed of the current situation and, together with the State Secretary, CHOD Gen Milan Maxim and other representatives of the Defence Department and the Armed Forces, the Minister of Defence had a telephone communication with commanders operating in the missions abroad, with the purpose to be informed of the current security situation. On this occasion, the Head of the Defence Department extended his best wishes for Easter to the troops. He communicated with the commanders of the Resolute Support operation in Afghanistan, EUFOR ALTHEA operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNFICYP mission in Cyprus and the observer mission UNTSO in Israel and Syria, and for the first time he had a telephone communication with the mission commander in Mali. He evinced interest in how the force protection and personal security of the troops is ensured and enquired about what he could possibly do for them.

All the commanders concurred that currently they perceive no significant problems in the operations. The newly appointed Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš declared his ambition to intensify communicate with the troops serving abroad also in the future.

Assembly of Surgeon General Office experts

In the premises of the Armed Forces Academy based in Liptovský Mikuláš, the assembly of the SVK Armed Forces' Surgeon General Office experts was held on 16 - 17 March, in the presence of Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces Gen Milan Maxim, Director of the Military Medical Service Agency of the Army of the Czech Republic (ACR MMSA) Col GS Zoltán Bubeník, Staff Nurse of the ACR MMSA Maj Jana Kodoušková and General Secretary of the SVK Chamber of Medical Rescuers Ing Michal Weinčiller. Director - Surgeon General of the SVK Armed Forces Col Vladimír Lengvarský evaluated performance of the main tasks in the training year 2015 and identified the tasks for 2016. The Chief of the General Staff and the Surgeon General, respectively, awarded the Badges of SVK CHOD and Surgeon General's Commemorative Badges and Letters of Acknowledgement to the selected members of the Departments of Defence and Interior. Gen Maxim awarded Col GS Zoltán Bubeník with the Commemorative Cross of the SVK CHOD, 3rd Grade, for his significant contribution to cooperation with the SVK Armed Forces in the field of military medical service. Conversely, the Director of the ACR MMSA awarded the Commemorative Badge of the Military Medical Service of the Army of the Czech Republic to Lt Col Ladislav Neubert, Head of Reception and Triage Department of the Field Mobile Medical Unit ROLE 2E, and to Command Sergeant Major Viliam Machara, Commanding NCO - Senior Medical Officer of the SVK Armed Forces.



- The MAN HX 8x8 driver conversion course has been in progress between 14 and 30 March at the Mobile Communications and Information Systems Base (MCISB) Ružomberok. The aim of the course is to retrain the MCISB drivers serving in the driver military occupational speciality (MOS) and to broaden the scope of their knowledge in the use of the vehicle, as well as familiarizing them with the main component parts and operation of the vehicle's chassis. The two-week-long training is divided into a theoretical module, a practical module, and hands-on driving sessions. The training is set to be concluded with a knowledge-based test, an oral examination with a practical demonstration, and a drive test outside the military unit's grounds along special purpose roads.

- Between 15-17 March, the command staff members of the Combat Support Brigade, supplemented by selected members of the Logistic Battalion Topoľčany, practised the capabilities of the command staff to conduct the planning process of providing support to Allies during the **National Support 2016 command staff rehearsal**.

- The pilots of the Air Combat Squadron (Tactical Wing Sliach), flying MiG-29 aircraft, carried out **live aerial firing** on ground targets at the Záhorie Air Force firing range. The combat aircraft's preparations and take-offs took place from their home base at Sliach Airport. In spite of the not-always-favourable weather conditions, the pilots executed live fire missions with the overall rating "excellent". Supported by technicians and ground support personnel in cooperation with forward air controllers (FACs) from the 5th Special Forces Regiment, the pilots of the L-39 aircraft fleet (Training Squadron) completed practice firing on ground targets over the grounds of the Transport Wing Kuchyňa. Their performance, too, was rated as "excellent". Both squadrons of the Tactical Wing Sliach conducted a total of 73 sorties with more than 43 flying hours spent in the air.

- One of the 12th Mechanized Battalion's main priorities in 2016 is to enhance its readiness to execute the tasks of defending the territory of the Slovak Republic. Acting on this priority, the **complex LITTLE SHIELD 2016 command staff rehearsal** took place at Nitra Barracks on 21-24 March. The aim of the rehearsal, built around the theme of "Mechanized Battalion Group in Planning Operations in Defence and Protection of Territorial Integrity of SVK REP", was to improve the command staff's planning and decision-making processes, while simultaneously securing its own force protection.

- At the request of the city mayor of Liptovský Mikuláš, the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General Office Ružomberok had lent a tent SER 65, including its interior equipment, to the city for the winter period, thus allowing for accommodation of up to 20 people at a time. Equipped with its own heating system, the tent was set up at a Liptovský Mikuláš community centre and provides **temporary accommodation to homeless people**. Over a period of 39 nights, a total of 468 people have so far stayed overnight in the tent.

Air Force medicine course



(23 March) The Chief of the SVK Air Force Medical Service, Maj Ivana Gutzelning, organized a specialized Air Force medicine course for first aid station medics from across the SVK

Air Force. The course was held on 21-23 March at Sliach Airport in Zvolen. Under the training scheme, SVK Air Force subject matter specialists and chiefs provided information to the medical staff, including on flight security, air traffic control, the basics of flying in relation to its impact on human body systems, aviation psychology, the legislative standards, guidelines and directives of the European Commission, the European Resuscitation Council (ERC), and the Air Force medical training programme, as well as outlining NATO standardization agreements.



Homecoming from Cyprus

(23 March) On Wednesday, 23 March, 55 SVK Armed Forces service personnel, the remaining members of the 76-strong rotation force, flew into Sliach Airport upon completion of their tour of duty with the UNFICYP peacekeeping mission in Cyprus. On behalf of the Commander of the SVK Air Force, Brig Gen Miroslav Korba, they were greeted by the Chief of the SVK Air Force Utilisation and Development Planning Division, Col Slavomír Milde, together with the Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the SVK Armed Forces, Command Sergeant Major Vladimír Beluší, and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Command Sergeant Major Peter Kuk. Col Milde thanked them for their work in favour of the UNFICYP mission and for their exemplary representation of the SVK Armed Forces abroad, as well as wishing them much success and an enjoyable Easter holiday.

Preparation of the Slovak personnel for EUFOR ALTHEA

Although more than twenty years have passed since the armed encounters in Bosnia and Herzegovina came to an end, the current situation still requires the

presence of the EU peacekeeping forces - EUFOR. Since the very beginning, the members of the SVK Armed Forces have been a part of the operation. The Slovak Republic is currently the Lead Nation in the LOT Coordination Centre (LCC), which supervises the monitoring of the situation on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina through 17 liaison and observation teams (LOT). Since 2011, the SVK Armed Forces have taken over responsibility for the three LOT - houses, together with their areas of responsibility in the towns of Sarajevo, Foca and Višegrad. On 8 February, the Slovak military personnel of 51 started their preparation for the operation in the military missions training unit - the Training Battalion in Martin. Throughout the five-week training, they gained and broadened their knowledge in the field of Personnel



Recovery, underwent recurrent drivers training and practised the first aid procedures. The trainees were briefed on the

particularities of the operation and were in detail introduced to the historical background of the conflict. Preparation for the operation in a multicultural environment comprises also the aspects like cooperation with interpreters, negotiating skills, the gathering and processing of information in accordance with the mission goal, so that the EU can properly respond to the changed security situation in the country, should such change occur. The preparation culminated in a final exercise dubbed Flaming Collector 2016, with the National Support Element (NSE) taking part in the exercise. The role of the

NSE is to provide support to the other elements of the SVK contingent. Preparedness of the members of the SVK Armed Forces to perform the operational tasks was confirmed by the Board of Commissioners from the Land Forces HQs and the Crisis Management Strategic Centre of the SVK Armed Forces.