



Premier introduces new minister

(29 March) The new Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic wishes to perform the duties and responsibilities of the post with commitment, professionalism and honesty. Mr Peter Gajdoš said so after a change-of-responsibility ceremony led by SVK Prime Minister Róbert Fico. The new Defence Minister assured the attendees that the direction of the SVK MOD's foreign policy is unambiguously pro-European and pro-Transatlantic, subscribing to the commitments made at the Wales Summit.

"Increasing the defence budget up to the year 2020 is a challenge for us, one that must be fulfilled unconditionally. Similarly, there are other new tasks awaiting us at this year's Warsaw Summit," said the new Defence Minister. While emphasizing that the citizens of the Slovak Republic need the SVK Armed Forces to be prepared responsibly, he also noted: "This will be my priority."

Another priority is to use the MOD's resources effectively. "Short-term, mid-term and long-term plans must be accomplishable and functional," emphasized Mr Gajdoš. According to him, among the priorities is also the construction and modernization plan, which serves as a groundwork for formulating the public procurement plan; as well as the analysis of the document entitled White Paper on Defence of the Slovak Republic. Mr Gajdoš does not even cast aside the idea of a new defence review.

The SVK MOD will cooperate with the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs in drafting a new defence strategy. According to the Defence Minister, supporting the national defence industry, aimed at re-arming of the SVK Armed Forces, is exceptionally important; as well as intensifying training activities oriented towards the defence of the Slovak Republic, and assisting citizens in crisis situations occurring on our territory.

The Minister of Defence reminded that last week he linked up with the Slovak soldiers serving on operations and missions abroad, noting that: "Their performance reflects great credit up on the Slovak Republic, for which we are justly proud of them."

During the following assembly of the MOD's representatives, Mr Gajdoš remarked that, in carrying out orders, the duty and responsibility of every commander is to create commensurate conditions in terms of materiel, personnel, and finances. He is to continue to put emphasis on preserving the direction of our security policy towards the Euro-Atlantic structures, as well as on following up on the trend of organizing training activities directed at the defence of the Slovak Republic, alongside our allies.

SVK Armed Forces welcome new deputy CHODs

(1 April) Chief of the SVK General Staff Gen Milan Maxim appointed two new Deputy CHODs. The change-of-responsibility ceremony took place at the SVK MOD Club in the presence of the MOD leadership, and principal officials of the SVK General Staff and the SVK Armed Forces upon issuance of the appointment orders for appointments of Maj Gen Pavel Macko and Brig Gen Jindřich Joch as 1st and 2nd Deputy CHODs, respectively. In his speech, Gen Maxim said: "Promotion to crucial posts is based on trust put in professional soldiers – candidates by their superiors. Trust is the basis for further and successful cooperation, and leadership and control of subordinates." At the end of the ceremony, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš, too, made a speech in which he introduced one of the two newly appointed State Secretaries of the SVK MOD, Ivan Mačovský, under whose office comes the Secretariat for Slovakia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



- Prior to the Easter holiday period, members of **Helicopter Wing Prešov** gave their helping hand to the residents of Hrabovec nad Laborcom, a village in eastern Slovakia. After torrential rains on the night of 21 March and the morning of 22 March debris-flow deposits came to obstruct the main access road in and out of the village. During their 12-hour-long incident response, soldiers removed mud with hand-held tools and woody debris, clearing a nearly 5-km-long stretch of the road. Having accomplished this mission, members of Prešov-based Helicopter Wing proved again that, besides providing for national defence, they are also able to perform domestic crisis management missions.

- On 23-24 March, organized under the auspices of the SVK Air Force Commander and the Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the SVK Armed Forces, a **working meeting** was held at the premises of the Training Battalion (TRN BN) Martin, focusing on optimisation of specialized training and advanced specialized training for active duty soldiers serving in the junior enlisted and NCO ranks. The meeting was attended by subject matter specialists – guarantors of specific military occupational specialties (MOS), the command staff of TRN BN Martin, and command sergeant majors of SVK Armed Forces formations, units and facilities.

- On 14-16 March, members of the Reconnaissance Platoon, Combat Support Company, 21st Combined Mechanized Battalion Trebišov, underwent **military practical climbing skills development training** on Komenský Elementary School premises. The recon platoon members were instructed in using climbing equipment; applying a variety of knot-binding techniques; and creating improvised climbing means. The main objective was to train the recon platoon for realistic overcoming of natural obstacles via climbing techniques drills.

- On 24 March, a **graduation ceremony for the graduates of the OR-5 Non-Commissioned Officers' Course** was held in the Hall of Honour and Fame, of the Training Battalion Martin. A total of 30 professional soldiers joined the course on 8 February. The final four-day exercise tested their theoretical knowledge and practical skills, covering the basics of military leadership, communications, tactics, control and management of smallest military units at the level of teams and that of sections by junior commanders. Cpl Vladimír Pastucha, of Military Unit 1201 Kuchyňa, turned out to be the best graduate of the OR-5 Non-Commissioned Officers' Course.

- On 7-24 March, the Training, Education and Specialized Preparation Section, Specialized Medical and Veterinary Activities Division, Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General Ružomberok with Workstation in Liptovský Mikuláš, organized an **initial specialized training for service personnel of medical MOS specialties OR-2** (specialist module). The training was aimed at providing first aid as part of provision of medical support to military units, as well as executing medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) missions, moving the sick and injured to other locations.

- On 22-23 March, a **disaster medicine course** was held under the specialist guidance of Cpt MUDr Rastislav Jurkovič at the Training, Education and Specialized Preparation Section, Specialized Medical and Veterinary Activities Division, Office of the SVK Armed Forces Surgeon General Ružomberok with Workstation in Liptovský Mikuláš. The course was aimed at rehearsing medical staff drills for exceptional emergency events and mass catastrophes.

10 years of CCS Brigade



(1 April) A decade has passed since the day when, under the SVK Air Force's reorganization scheme, four subordinate units were amalgamated to form the Command, Control and Surveillance Brigade (CCS BDE) Zvolen. It was not until recently that the name of the brigade changed to the Command, Control and Surveillance Wing (CCS WNG) Zvolen. The CCS WNG members marked the anniversary of the brigade's foundation in a festive commemoration ceremony in the grounds of SNU (Slovak National Uprising) Barracks.

In his statement made in the presence of nearly all of his predecessors, the Commander of CCS WNG, Col Vladimír Jaklovský, pointed to specific amalgamations of military units based on the decisive restructuring task, driving changes not only across the SVK Air Force but also the SVK Armed Forces as a whole.

Brig Gen Lubomír Svoboda, who, serving as Colonel a decade ago, had been building the foundations of this newly emerging component, one that would become firmly embedded in the SVK Air Force's structure, was not able to attend the ceremony. Nevertheless, his message came to form the core of the ceremonial address by Col Jaklovský.

In his speech, Col Stanislav Hurčík, of the SVK Air Force Headquarters, made an assessment of the successes the unit had accomplished on domestic soil and abroad. He referred to the reorganization changes that CCS BDE and later CCS WNG had had to come to terms with. He emphasized the necessity of mutual cooperation in execution of tasks and, on behalf of the Commander of the SVK Air Force, he thanked the current and former members of CCS WNG for their excellent results.

The city mayor of Zvolen, Ms Lenka Balkovičová, highlighted the cooperation between the city and the Armed Forces. She extended her thanks to professional soldiers for their active role in supporting city events.

Among the prominent guests in attendance were also representatives of the SVK MOD Military Aviation Office, the Air Force Support Division at the SVK Armed Forces General Staff, the Military Police, the top command echelon of the SVK Air Force Headquarters, and the commanders of the SVK Air Force subordinate units based in Prešov, Nitra, Sliac and Kuchyňa.



SVK president visits 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina



(30 March) State Secretary of the SVK MOD Marián Saloň, Chief of the SVK General Staff Gen Milan Maxim, and SVK President and Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces H.E. Andrej Kiska visited the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina. During their visit, the elite military unit convinced them of their readiness to perform even the most demanding tasks. Col Lubomír Sebo, 5th Special Forces Regiment Commander, familiarized the visitors with the regiment's history and current tasks; and the regiment's specialists showed their skills in dynamic demonstrations. A parachute jump from a helicopter was also included in the official programme. "Today, the 5th Special Forces Regiment Žilina demonstrated that it is prepared to deploy on anti-terrorist operations at home, as well

as on international crisis management operations," remarked the State Secretary of the SVK MOD. "We can be more than proud of these people," said SVK President H.E. Andrej Kiska, adding that we must think about security not only when we feel endangered.