



Minister at Lešť

(7 September) Before the government's away-day meeting in Poltár and Veľký Krtíš, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš visited the Training Centre Lešť. There, he was updated on the current usability of the unique training facility by exercising troops from home and abroad and on its modernisation by the director of the Centre, Peter Čokina.

"Our largest training centre provides excellent training conditions for soldiers as well as personnel from other security and rescue components. At the same time, it has been in high demand from foreign partners in the long term, which is, of course, to the benefit of Defence as a whole," said Minister Peter Gajdoš. He emphasised that it is essential that the Training Centre Lešť provide as best training conditions in support of the components for the territorial defence of the Slovak Republic as possible. While in visit to the training area, he also met with soldiers of 5th Special Forces Regiment from Žilina and their Polish counterparts, just as they were practising marksmanship on a firing range at Lešť.

During his meeting with the Training Centre Lešť leadership, the head of the MOD acknowledged that he supports the annual gatherings of natives and fellow-countrymen from the abolished village of Lešť. The last one was held on Lešť Military District Training Area on 3 September, bringing together 130 people.



Talks in South Korea

(8 September) The State Secretaries at the Visegrad Four (V4) Ministries of Defence and the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Korea held talks in Seoul, South Korea. A key theme on the agenda was the security situation. During discussions, the Visegrad Group introduced their activities in the field of force generation, defence planning, and the defence industry, while at the same time identifying the potential areas of co-operation with the Republic of Korea. "I am pleased that the talks between the V4 and the Republic of Korea continue, with topics covering the security issues in both Europe and East Asia. The world's individual parts are closely interconnected today, that is why there is a need for us to react quickly and adequately to the new challenges and eventualities, not only on the home continent, but also in far-away regions," said the State Secretary at the SVK MOD, Ivan Mačovský, who also held a bilateral meeting with the Vice Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Korea, Mr Hwang Inmo.

Promotions and appointments of generals

(8 September) During a promotion ceremony at the Presidential Palace, President of the Slovak Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces Andrej Kiska promoted the 1st Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, Maj Gen Pavel Macko, into the rank of Lieutenant General, the 2nd Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the SVK Armed Forces, Brig Gen Jindřich Joch, into the rank of Major General, and the Deputy Commander of the SVK Air Force, Col Miroslav Lorinc, into the rank of Brigadier General. "It is a recognition for your previous work. Now, however, a lot more will be expected from you. Being on active duty service with the Armed Forces is not just a profession or job, but rather a mission. Indeed, it is a mission when in the event of necessity you need to be ready to lay down your lives. It is a mission on which you carry out one of the most critical tasks of the State – the defence and security of our citizens," said SVK President Andrej Kiska. Addressing the generals, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "I am convinced that all of you deserve this recognition. At the same time, please, take it as a challenge and motivation for your next work." Earlier, the Minister himself had submitted the proposal for the promotion of the generals to the government. "Personally speaking, consider that to be a mark of my appreciation for your work which you've been doing to the benefit of our Armed Forces and hence for all citizens of the Slovak Republic," emphasised the Minister.



- SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš opened the **10th Pyrotechnic Conference** in Bratislava on 5 September. The conference comes part of a series of events that the SVK MOD prepared under the SVK Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The conference's main themes were decided on to reflect the SVK Armed Forces' tasks and commitments, giving the specialists the opportunity to discuss the disposal of cluster and other munitions, safety verification procedures, as well as the latest products of the defence industry in this field.

- On 5 September, the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany held an international exercise involving Sampling and Identification of Chemical Agents (SICA) teams, dubbed **Exercise Toxic Valley 2016**. The exercise is attended by members of the Armed Forces from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the USA, and of the National Crime Agency of the SVK Ministry of the Interior.

- The official **flag handover-takeover ceremony** was held on the premises of the SVK NATO Force Integration Unit (SVK NFUI) in Bratislava on 6 September, with 1st DCHOD Maj Gen Pavel Macko (now Lt Gen) passing the SVK NFUI flag on to the commander of the SVK NFUI, Col Jozef Zekucia. Also in attendance at the ceremony was Brig Gen Krzysztof Krol, Deputy Commander of Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE), based in Szczecin, as the SVK NFUI is subordinate to the MNC NE. Brig Gen Krol was also received by SVK Chief of Defence Gen Milan Maxim.

- On Friday, 9 September, Garrison Nitra hosted a pre-deployment ceremony, overseen by 2nd DCHOD Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, for the 90 SVK Armed Forces personnel who will rotate their colleagues in the service of the **UNFICYP mission in Cyprus**. A total of 199 SVK troops serve with UNFICYP.

- In the late evening hours on 7 September 2016, the **Search and Rescue (SAR) Service** was alerted at Helicopter Wing Prešov and a Mil Mi-17 commander received orders to take off, heading in the direction of Banská Bystrica. The objective of the aircrew was to conduct a SAR mission for a missing Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) helicopter. After more than an hour of searching over difficult terrain, the crew identified the scene of the crash and immediately reported that to the Firefighting and Rescue Corps, and a SVK Ministry of the Interior helicopter flew in to inspect and confirm the location of the crash site.

- On Friday, 9 September, 1st DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko received the incoming **Defence Attaché of Serbia**, Lt Col Slobodanko Lazic. During the meeting, Lt Gen Pavel Macko underscored the high level of co-operation between the SVK and SRB Armed Forces especially in the field of personnel instruction and training, and wished Lt Col Lazic much success in his diplomatic mission.

- A **synod gathering of the Ordinariate**, led by Mons František Rábek, the Ordinary of the SVK Armed Forces and Armed Corps, was held on 5-9 September on the premises of St. Francis Xavier Priests' Seminary in Badin near Banská Bystrica. The Ordinariate has gained 14 years of expertise and wants to evaluate it. Based on the results, it will seek ways to better and more efficiently live up to its mission.

SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour to be part of plenary sessions in Parliament

(6 September) The SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour is to be part of the plenary sessions and high profile events at the National Council of the Slovak Republic. The request for a presence of the Guard of Honour was submitted to Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš by the Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Andrej Danko. The first official ceremony took place on the occasion of holding an exhibition of new historic insignia as well as Slovakia's presidency of the Council of the European Union.

"I really appreciate the National Council of the Slovak Republic attaining a ceremonial character even thanks to the new historic documents, recording a very significant part of our history, which may be symbolically guarded by soldiers of the SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour," said Parliamentary



Demonstrations and Trials



(6 September) The State Secretary at the SVK Ministry of Defence, Marián Saloň, opened the 4th NATO EOD Demonstrations and Trials 2016, an exhibition of the most advanced EOD and

C-IED technologies. A total of 45 exhibitors from 14 countries showcased their products as part of static and dynamic displays. The event provided a space for specialists to speak to each other, exchange views, and seek solutions in the field of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and measures to fend off the threat of counter-improvised explosive devices (C-IED). "The motto of this two-day event is: Protection as a complicated and complex reaction to the terrorist threat. We all are aware that today terrorism presents one of the greatest threats to the security of all," said the State Secretary, Marián Saloň.



Tribute to victims

(10 September) As part of Miners' Day, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš paid tribute to the memory of the victims who died in mining disasters at the Miners' Memorial in Handlová's town cemetery. The head of the MOD addressed the crowds during a remembrance ceremony on behalf of SVK Prime Minister Robert Fico. "This is the first time I have attended this remembrance ceremony, yet I will definitely keep it among those I cherish in my heart," said the head of the MOD, while noting that there is a link between the work of miners and professional soldiers. "In doing their work, they are putting their lives in harm's way, and in both cases it is not a job, it is a mission."

Chairman Andrej Danko, speaking at the first ceremony involving the Guard of Honour, while noting that he wishes the place housing the state symbols to be the heart of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš is convinced that this, too, is one of the forms how soldiers may represent the SVK Armed Forces during the SVK presidency.

"At the same time, this is a way to pay homage to the Slovak nation's history since that must be respected and protected by us. An added value is that it will be done so directly inside our constitutional institution," he emphasised. Two soldiers will stand guard at a time, whereas the changing of the guard will take place every hour. The guards will change their places every 20 minutes. They will be armed with weapons, but they won't have any ammunition.