



New Czech Minister

(5 January) Slovak Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Czech Minister of Defence Karla Šlechtová today met to sign the Implementation Agreement to the Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic for Cooperation on Mutual Protection of Airspace at MOD Main Building. The signing of the Implementation Agreement took place on the occasion of the first official visit of the newly appointed Czech Minister of Defence to Slovakia. During their bilateral meeting, they discussed cooperation in the field of defence and arms industry.

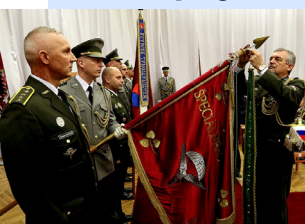
On defence industry cooperation, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "I am delighted that both sides expressed their interest in making their maximum efforts to revive our cooperation in the field of defence industry and armaments companies. As I have stated several times before and I wish to reiterate it again today, the Slovak National Party cares about supporting the development of our domestic defence industry to a maximum extent possible, and it will also be greatly facilitated by the cooperation with the Czech Republic."

On the Implementation Agreement, he said that it marks a historic moment. "In practice, this means the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic can deliver the protection of their airspace reciprocally, if needed. A temporary loss of this capability is a case in point," he explained.

In the bilateral meeting, the Ministers devoted their attention to security topics of current relevance, international crisis management operations, and the options to take this cooperation forward. "Apart from bilateral cooperation, exemplified by reciprocal protection of airspace, we are connected through a set of other projects as part of NATO, the EU and the V4," summarised CZE Minister of Defence Karla Šlechtová, adding that she sees Slovakia as a key partner.

Among topics of discussion was the SVK-initiated EuroArtillery project, which has made it onto the list of the first collaborative PESCO projects. In this connection, Head of the SVK MOD thanked his counterpart for the Czech Republic's participation in the project as an observer and said he would welcome the Czech Republic's interest in joining the project as a member in the future.

The delegations today addressed organising this year's joint 100th anniversary commemorations of the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the common state of Czechs and Slovaks. They also remembered the 25th anniversary of the breakup of Czecho-Slovakia. In the afternoon, Minister Gajdoš and Minister Šlechtová attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the M. R. Štefánik and T. G. Masaryk Memorials.



Chief of Defence General Milan Maxim awarded the service members and employees who have played a key role in the development of the SVK MOD and Armed Forces over the past years. Nearly 1,100 employees and active duty soldiers have been awarded the Memorial Medal marking the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Slovak Armed Forces. Addressing the gathered audience at the MOD Club, Minister

The result of negotiations with Spartan airlifter manufacturer is a discount

(2 January) The price for the first of the two C-27 J Spartan airlifters will be lower by almost 900,000 euros. This is the outcome of the negotiations between the SVK MOD and the manufacturer for the delay in delivery of the aircraft. The amount of the financial penalty may still go up, because the MOD has been in negotiations on a penalty for non-performance of a contractual obligation in the logistics support contract. Speaking at a press conference at the MOD on Tuesday (2 January), SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "I am proud that our ministry under the leadership of the Slovak National Party has saved our taxpayers the amount of 879,000 euros, which has already been paid to us by the Italian side. This comes as a result of intense negotiations. I am pleased we have fulfilled our pledge to negotiate a substantial price discount for the delay." As he went on to explain, under the budgetary measures in place the MOD has already transferred one part of the returned sum, over 400,000 euros, to the state treasury. In line with the valid budgetary rules, the remaining sum has been transferred to the MOD Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, to be reinvested for modernisation purposes as set out in the Long-Term Defence Development Plan with Emphasis on Building and Developing the SVK Armed Forces with an Outlook to 2030. The second C-27 J Spartan aircraft is expected to be delivered in the first half of 2018. As of today, the MOD has not been notified of any delay in its delivery.



- Following a ceremony at the Hall of Honour and Fame on 4 Jan, the SVK Chief of Defence presented SVK Armed Forces leaders with the **Chief of Defence Medal** in observance of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak Republic and its Armed Forces. General Maxim praised the working ethos of the key leaders of the SVK Armed Forces and reminded the audience that outstanding and sustainable results cannot be achieved without subordinates putting in quality work.

- Commander **SVK Land Forces** Maj Gen Jindřich Joch convened a gathering of SVK LF HQ soldiers and employees on 2 Jan to mark Slovak Republic Establishment Day. In connection with the latest senior staff appointments at SVK LF HQ with effect from 1 Jan 2018, he ushered in new HQ members, including a new Chief of Logistics Branch, Col Maroš Murárik, and a new Chief of All Arms Training and Exercises Section, of Combat Training Branch, Lt Col Vladimír Sedlák.

- Members of the **SVK Air Force** gathered for a ceremony on 4 Jan to mark the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Slovak Republic. At the ceremony, Deputy Commander SVK Air Force Brig Miroslav Lorinc introduced the newly appointed Chief of Staff of HQ AIRCOM Zvolen, Col Pavol Tökölly. Previously, he served as Chief of General Staff Office, Chief of Staff of Combined Wing Sliac, and Chief of Materiel Management Centre of the SVK Air Force's HQ AIRCOM Zvolen.

- Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš and his delegation arrived for an official visit to the Slovak Republic on 5 Jan. The Czech Prime Minister received full military honours from the **SVK Armed Forces Guard of Honour**, led by Maj Ján Polák, in the courtyard of the SVK Government Office. National anthems for the ceremony were played by the Military Band Banská Bystrica under the direction of Bandmaster Capt Ján Goliaš.

- Institute of Military History (VHÚ)** supports dual education. Students from Private Secondary Technical School, located in Bratislava's Exnárova Street, have a unique opportunity to participate in maintaining and reprocessing historic assets as part of their practical training. The activity is supervised by experienced VHÚ employees and conducted directly at the Museum of Military History (VHM) Piešťany. They have so far assisted in repairing the fuselages of an L-410MA and an L-410FG, maintaining and preparing the interior of an Mi-4A helicopter for renovation, and cleaning the airframe and wings of an MiG-15 aircraft. In addition, they have played a role in maintaining and cleaning undercarriages, airframes and wings of MiG-21, MiG-23, Su-22 and Su-25 aircraft.

- The SVK MOD releases this traffic alert to inform the inhabitants of Slovakia of the upcoming **Allied military movements**, scheduled from 8-14 Jan 2018. A total of 7 Allied road moves will take place across Slovakia over the period. They will mainly involve British and American troops transporting materiel. Special attention should be paid to a SVK Armed Forces convoy with oversized vehicles moving along the route from Martin to Sučany and back.

University studies on offer

(2 January) The SVK MOD offers secondary school graduates free study at a college and two universities, with the aim of educating and training its officer cadre for the SVK Armed Forces. In the Academic Year 2018/2019 secondary school leavers can apply for study at the General Milan Rastislav Štefánik Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš, the Aviation Faculty of the Technical University in Košice, and the Faculty of Military Medicine of the University of Defence Brno, based in Hradec Králové. An attractive incentive is full scholarship, monthly pay in the amount of the minimum wage over the duration of the studies, free catering, accommodation and military clothing and equipment.

The SVK Armed Forces Academy is ready to accept 124 cadets. Level 1 (BSc) Undergraduate Study is on offer in four programmes of management and technical specialisation. For the third consecutive year, the MOD plans to send 6 service members to attend Level 1 Undergraduate Study and 12 service members to attend Level 2 (MSc) Graduate Study at the Aviation Faculty of the Technical University in Košice. The Faculty of Military Medicine of the University of Defence Brno, based in Hradec Králové, in collaboration with the Medical Faculty of Charles University can offer military medicinal specialisations to 10 service members.

Maj Gen (Rtd) Schwarz dies



(4 January) Major General (Rtd) Ivan Otto Schwarz passed away aged 94 in London on Thursday (4 January). A native of Bratislava, who grew up in Bytča, was the last surviving Slovakian living in the UK to have served with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the Second World War. Flying with No. 311 Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron RAF, he logged 1,200 operational flying hours on combat operations. On 27 December 1943,

as the upper gunner on the Liberator Bomber captained by P/O Oldřich Doležal he participated in the greatest success of the Squadron – the sinking of the German blockade runner Alsterufer, which was transporting strategic supplies of wolfram from Japan to Nazi Germany. Major General (Rtd) Ivan Schwarz was the President of the Free Czechoslovak Air Force Association, based in London. Until few years ago he travelled to Slovakia regularly and was welcomed as a distinguished guest to the Slovak Ministry of Defence on several occasions. As well as receiving numerous domestic and foreign military awards and decorations, he was the recipient of the Order of the White Double Cross, 3rd Class.

MOD employees and soldiers mark the 25th anniversary of the Slovak Republic and SVK Armed Forces

(4 January) MOD civil servants, civilian employees and service personnel today came together for a ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic and Slovak Armed Forces. On this occasion, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and

Gajdoš said: "When on 1 January 1993 the independent Slovak Republic came into existence along with our Armed Forces in parallel, we entered an entirely unexplored environment. Against all the odds, our desire to have our own country and to prove to ourselves and to the world at large that we deserve it as a nation was stronger and triumphed above everything else." He went on to praise the efforts of all those who have been involved in building the Armed Forces since the formation of the independent Slovak Republic.

In his speech, Chief of Defence General Milan Maxim underlined the high levels of confidence the Slovak military has enjoyed in the public eye in the long run. "The last 25 years of our existence have been filled with hard working ethos, with the result that we have retained high levels of public confidence in the long term. For this, we owe our gratitude and recognition to all serving and former personnel from across the SVK Armed Forces and the MOD," he said.

The award of commemorative medals depicting important anniversaries related to the SVK Armed Forces has been a well-established tradition in Defence. For example, official memorial medals were instituted to mark the 15th and 20th anniversary of the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic and Slovak Armed Forces, and to mark the 10th anniversary of Slovakia's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Among the more notable recipients at the ceremony were both State Secretaries, Directors General of the MOD Departments, Chief of Defence (CHOD), Deputy Chiefs of Defence (DCHODs), senior commanders, and regular employees and service members based on the recommendations of their superiors. At specific commemorative events throughout 2018, the MOD will present the Memorial Medal as a form of moral recognition to people in Defence.

The design of the military commemorative medal was discussed in detail and approved by the Military Symbols Council.