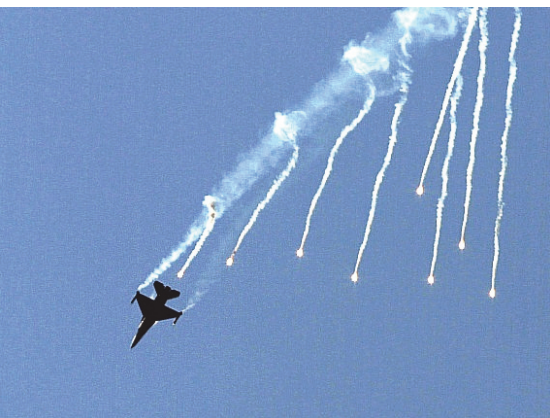




U.S. Congress approving offer

(4 April) Acting on the request from the SVK MOD, a proposed Foreign Military Sale to Slovakia has reached the Congressional notification process, whereby U.S. Congress is in the process of approving the potential sale of F-16 supersonic fighter aircraft for a framework price of US\$2.91 billion. Once approved, the Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) will be officially provided to Slovakia. The framework price already includes an additional US\$1 billion, to cater for the customer's future requirements without the need to undergo the approval process again. In terms of using the possibilities of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, this procedure is normal and necessary, and was also used in purchasing the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters, when a further €130 million was added to the framework price.

At the same time, the MOD makes it clear that even if U.S. Congress approves the FMS purchase, it does not mean that the MOD has made the decision to purchase this type of supersonic fighter aircraft. After considering the U.S. and Swedish offers, the SVK Minister of Defence will submit the most efficient solution to the SVK Cabinet for approval no later than 29 June 2018.

More information on the U.S. offer, which is currently subject to approval by U.S. Congress, will be made public on the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)'s website. The U.S. offer for the Slovak Republic will include a schedule of payment for the aircraft and armament, training and logistic support. As a whole, the MOD will compare it with the offer of the Swedish side for the purchase of the JAS 39 Gripen. Slovakia is interested in buying a total of 14 aircraft.



Liberation of Bratislava marked

(4 April) Officials of the MOD and SVK Armed Forces commemorated the 73rd anniversary of the end of the Battle of Bratislava. The commemorative event at the Victory Memorial in Bratislava's Eugen Suchoň Square was attended by DCHOD Lt Gen Pavel Macko. Representing the department at the commemorative event at the Slavín Memorial was State Secretary Róbert Ondrejcsák. Both officials paid tribute to the memory of the 1,333 soldiers and civilians who died in the liberation of the capital city.

The liberation of Bratislava was part of Operation Bratislava-Brho and took place in two stages. While Stage I saw 28 Soviet and 14 Romanian divisions engaged in fighting with 11 enemy divisions between 25 March and 5 May 1945, Stage II involved direct engagements within the capital city between 2-4 April 1945 and claimed the lives of 742 Soviet soldiers and 470 German and Hungarian troops, and 121 civilians.

Minister Gajdoš skies with Veronika Velez-Zuzulová as a goodbye to her

(7 April) Veronika Velez Zuzulová, member of the Military Sports Club Dukla Banská Bystrica, bid farewell to her fans and her active skiing career in Jasná in the Low Tatras. To say his goodbye to the sportswoman, SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš and Veronika Velez Zuzulová skied side-by-side down two parallel slalom courses. "Veronika is one of the jewels of our Dukla and entire Slovak representation. She deserves recognition and a Big Thank You for all her achievements and successes that have represented Slovakia in the world. It was an honour for me to have skied with her today, I wanted to say goodbye to her in this way," said the Minister. He appreciated the fact that, despite the injuries she has sustained and the conditions that have not always been so easy, she has never given up. Veronika Velez Zuzulová is one of the most successful sportswomen of the Military Sports Centre Dukla Banská Bystrica and representatives of the Slovak Republic. She said goodbye to her career almost after 18 years of active skiing.



- Members of 23rd Motorised Battalion Trebišov attended the Change of Command (COC) ceremony on 3 Apr, with Deputy Commander 2nd Mech Bde Prešov Col Norbert Hrib handing over the command to Lt Col Jozef Molčan. His previous posting was Chief of Logistics at CSS Bde Trenčín.

- Members of 12th Mechanised Battalion underwent rail operations training on 3-4 Apr. The field phase took place at a railway station in Nitra and covered force protection at the railway station, practical drills for sentries, and security measures during rail movements.

- Members of Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) Unit, 1st Mech Bde Rožňava, formed up for a ceremony to mark the 13th anniversary of the Unit's establishment. In his remarks, Lt Col Ľubomír Bodnár, MLRS Unit Commander, reviewed the key milestones in the history of the Unit and thanked its members for their work. The gathered audience was also addressed by Chief of Artillery Col Pavol Barančík.

- Helicopter Wing (HW) Prešov hosted a specialist Air Incidents Investigation Course, focusing on legislation, investigation methodology, air incident investigation report design and development. Taking part in the course were flight safety inspectors from the Military Aviation State Authority (MOD), SVK AF HQ, Tactical, Transport, and Helicopter Wings, C2S Wing Zvolen, OAT, 5th SOF Regt, and ISTAR Bn.

- Tactical Wing Sliač hosted the COLPRO 300 HTN 6 Collective Protection System Operator Course, with the training audience drawn from 5th SOF Regt Žilina, Helicopter Wing Prešov, C2S Wing Zvolen, Transport Wing Kuchyňa and Tactical Wing Sliač. They practised setting up and using the system for collective defence against the effects of CBRN contamination.

- Exercise Cooperative Effort 2018, a multinational training activity, was held at the HUN-SRB border village of Kelebia, to align the cooperation between military and police units on responding to the violations of the state borders. 31 members of 23rd Motorised Battalion Trebišov, led by 1st Lt Zuzana Buryánková, took part in the exercise. The exercise culminated with a demonstration which was witnessed by the CHODs of both countries.

- The SVK MOD wants to alert the drivers in Slovakia to take caution, as there will be 18 Allied military movements across Slovakia over the period from 9-15 Apr 2018. They will mainly involve U.S., BEL and POL troops. Drivers should also pay attention to the SVK Armed Forces convoys along the routes: Martin – Training Centre Lešť; Sered – Training Centre Lešť; Sliač – Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area; Prešov – Valaškovce; Sered – Turecký vrch; Hlohovec – TC Lešť; Prešov – Ruská Nová Ves. There will also be SVK Armed Forces rail movements along the routes: Martin – Sása – Pliešovce; Sása – Pliešovce – Trebišov.

The Tatras host survival training and special physical preparation for pilots

(4 April) A joint training in survival skills and special physical preparation for pilots took place in natural winter conditions on the southern side of the Low Tatras. Every pilot must undergo this type of training every two years. Pilots of TW Sliač's 1st and 2nd Tactical Squadron took part in the regular training activity to practise survival skills in a mountainous environment following an emergency exit from aircraft. The exercising pilots tried out starting and maintaining a fire and constructing a makeshift shelter in harsh weather conditions. They also rehearsed first aid, casualty evacuation on makeshift stretchers, water treatment, and cooking with natural food sources. The training activity included a 10km day march and 7km night march across the weather-exposed



terrain of the Low Tatras.

Part II of the training focused on specialist physical training, including fast ski marches, combined with crossing natural

obstacles. During their long-distance movements on Alpine skis the pilots reached the peaks of Dereše, Dumbier and Chopok, which were accessible through the valleys leading up from the southern and northern sides of the Low Tatras. Instructed by MSgt Miroslav Štubňa, a ski instructor of HW Prešov, the pilots were exercised in basic downhill techniques; manoeuvring on skis across natural slopes uneven with obstacles; moving on skis in deep snow; skiing down icy slopes; solving unforeseeable situations on slopes and over open terrain; and skiing as a team.

Lt Col Peter Labudík concluded that all training targets were met.

General Maxim in Prešov

(3 April) CHOD Gen Milan Maxim paid a visit to Garrison Prešov. On the grounds of Mechanised Brigade Prešov, accompanied by Commander SVK Land Forces Maj Gen Jindřich Joch, the CHOD familiarised himself with the performance of the main Training Year (TY) 2018 tasks thus far and presented the Commemorative Plaque marking the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the SVK Armed Forces to Military Unit 1018 Prešov (2nd Mech Bde HQ), Military Unit 1008 (ISTAR Bn Prešov) and Military Unit 1007 (CSS Bn Prešov). The official programme continued at Helicopter Wing Prešov.

A meeting at the borders



(6 April) Delegations of the SVK and CZE General Staffs met for a traditional meeting in Žilina and Čadca on 5-6 April. Before the meeting in Žilina, Gen Milan Maxim and Gen Josef Bečvář laid wreaths at the SOF Operations Memorial on the grounds of 5th Special Forces Regiment, where the opening session of the meeting took place. In Čadca, Day II saw the CHODs addressing the activities and historical milestones of Czechoslovak togetherness. In light of the end of their mandate, Gen Maxim and Gen Bečvář gave their assessments of the SVK-CZE cooperation over their tenures as CHODs.

BMT gets underway

(5 April) This is the second time this year that Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base (TMRB) Martin has launched basic military training (BMT) for Preparatory State Service candidates (soldier trainees). Among the 54 candidates are 6 women. After the in-processing procedures and drawing stores, the newcomers were assigned to the Training Platoons. BMT focuses on developing the soldier trainees' basic military skills, which they will practise on Garrison Martin's Sučany Training Ground and at the TMRB training facilities. On successful completion of BMT, they will have a graduation ceremony in May 2018.

A meeting of arty specialists

(5 April) Members of Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Michalovce organised a meeting of Fire Support (FS) specialists from across the SVK Armed Forces at the Zemplínska Šírava training facility on 4-5 April. Fire Support Coordinator/Chief of Artillery Col Barančík chaired the meeting. In attendance at the meeting were 59 specialists from the SVK General Staff, SVK Land Forces HQ, 1st and 2nd Mech Bde, Topographical Institute, Training and Mobilisation Replenishment Base Martin, SVK Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, 5th Special Forces Regiment, and 13th Artillery Regiment (CZE). They assessed the results of Training Year (TY) 2017, the status of artillery projects, the ongoing work on the Fire Support Concept; received information on meteorological and topographical support; and exchanged their expertise.