



New SVK Chief of Defence

(4 May) Maj Gen Daniel Zmeko (to be promoted Lieutenant General with effect from 7 May) has today taken over the appointment of Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (Chief of Defence) from Gen Milan Maxim, as his tenure as CHOD comes to an end. Maj Gen Zmeko will officially take up his duties on 7 May 2018. In attendance at the formal CHOD Change of Command ceremony was Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko.

SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš expressed his gratitude to Gen Maxim for his service not only at the top of the hierarchy of the SVK Armed Forces Command but also for his lifelong – more than 40-year military career in favour of the SVK Armed Forces. "General, I appreciate having cooperated with you," he said. At the same time, he wished a lot of strength to the incoming CHOD Maj Gen Daniel Zmeko. "It is essential for you to win respect from all Servicemen and women, because that is the alpha and omega of commanding the Armed Forces. I have no doubt you will manage to do so, otherwise I would not have placed my trust in you," said Head of the MOD.

Speaking in front of the gathered audience, Gen Milan Maxim said: "I can say that the past 43 years of my service have not been easy, especially the last four years. They have brought challenges and I have had to be ready to resolve the seemingly unresolvable problems." He also wished the Armed Forces well for the future, hoping that no tragedies would befall them.



As the newly appointed SVK Chief of Defence Maj Gen Daniel Zmeko said, he will go out of his way to fulfil the expectations: "I will do my best to harmonise the processes associated with the building of armed forces so that personnel, training and modernisation go hand in hand with each other, and will make sure that our Armed Forces develop smoothly."

President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska, the Commander-in-Chief of the SVK Armed Forces, announced the appointment of Maj Gen Daniel Zmeko to the SVK Armed Forces' most senior post on 26 April 2018. Over the duration of his more than 30-year-long military career in the SVK Armed Forces, Maj Gen Daniel Zmeko held a number of command appointments with mechanised units from platoon through to brigade levels, and whilst posted to the SVK General Staff and deployed on international crisis management missions and operations.

99th anniversary of General Štefánik's tragic death remembered

(5 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš commemorated the 99th anniversary of the tragic death of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik at a national commemoration held on top of Bradlo Hill. Among those who came to pay their respects to one of the most prominent personalities of Slovak history were Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko, Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Security Anton Hrnko. With this year marking the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks – Czechoslovakia, the ceremony symbolically began with a flypast of SVK and CZE Air Force aircraft. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Every nation should be familiar with its history, and that is why we should remember the man who did so much for the establishment of an independent state of Czechs and Slovaks." As he reminded, General Štefánik's message is now memorialized in the names of streets, squares and institutions that bear his name. "I am proud that one of them is also our Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš, which is tasked with educating and training officers for the SVK Armed Forces." The anniversary of Štefánik's death was also remembered by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejčák and SVK Armed Forces officials at the symbolic Tomb of M. R. Štefánik in Ivanka pri Dunaji on 3 May and in Bratislava on 4 May.



- On 3-4 May, airmen of Helicopter Wing (HW) Prešov were called in to contain a **forest fire** in the location called Kežmarské Žľaby in the High Tatras Mountains. Following a request from the Firefighting and Rescue Corps for firefighting assistance, the SVK Armed Forces deployed an Mi-17 helicopter equipped with the Bambi bucket to help put out the fire and provided a tanker as a refuelling asset.

- On 1 May, Katarína Krajčová became the new **Chairman of the Slovak Workers' Union in Defence** in succession to Mária Huszliczková, who resigned on family grounds. She was elected in secret ballot by the plenary of the Slovak Workers' Union in Defence on 12 Apr at the Trenčín Garrison Club.

- On 30 Apr, Deployable CIS Base Ružomberok hosted a ceremony to bid farewell to the outgoing Deputy Base Commander, **Lt Col Miroslav Miškovič**.

- Logistics Battalion Topoľčany hosted a ceremony on 27 Apr, to bid farewell to the outgoing Chief of Staff, **Maj Branislav Chrenko**.

- On 3 May, soldiers of National Centre EOD and CBRN formed up for a Change of Command ceremony for Commander NC EOD and CBRN, as **Maj Jozef Kasla** takes up the appointment, at Training and Testing Centre Zemianske Kostolany.

- On 3 May, the Historic SVK Parliament Building in Bratislava hosted the **5th International War Veterans Forum Conference** under the aegis of Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko and Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš. In attendance were President of the UN Peacekeeping Forces Association Laurent Attar-Bayrou (FRA), Secretary General of the World Veterans Federation Tom Asplund (FIN), and representatives of veterans organisations from CZE, POL, BEL, UKR and SVK.

- An MOD delegation, led by Col Vladimír Kavický, participated in the international defence exhibitions **DEFEXPO (Defence Expo) 2018** in Chennai, India and in **DSA (Defence Services Asia) 2018** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The aim was to support Slovak industry companies in their attempt to break into new markets in Asia. At the defence exhibitions, the SVK delegation held talks with representatives of the region's state institutions and defence manufacturers.

- Sliač Air Base has repeatedly reported cases of the **pilots being distracted by light** from an unknown device, manufactured in the civil sector. For this reason, Military Police and National Police patrols will step up their activity in the area, to track down the culprit who is faced with charges on the grounds of general endangerment and may be given a 4-10 year prison sentence.

- The SVK General Staff is looking into a case of potentially missing components of an older variant of the **Russian-made smoke munitions** that were supplied to a munitions depot during the era of the Czechoslovak People's Army. Soldiers have established the potential irregularities during a regular inspection when verifying the functionality of the long-term stored munitions. The case is being investigated by law enforcement agencies.

- A **specialist tactical exercise involving 2nd Fire Battery**, part of Self-Propelled Artillery Unit Michalovce, was held on 2-3 May on Michalovce Garrison's Training Ground, with Lt Col Roman Bobal as the Officer in Command of the exercise. The theme of the exercise was "A battery in conduct of fire support to 12th Mech Bn Gp on a defensive operation". The Unit Commander concluded that the goals of the exercise were accomplished and thanked the exercising troops for their professional commitment.

General Milan Maxim's tenure as Chief of Defence comes to an end

(3 May) At a meeting of members of the SVK General Staff on 2 May, the outgoing CHOD General Milan Maxim bid his farewell to all GS members. He awarded the nominated personnel with medals, badges, disciplinary rewards, to thank them for their cooperation and responsible performance of tasks. On 2 May, General Maxim visited the SVK Armed Forces' selected units and facilities across Bratislava Garrison. One of them was HQ Bratislava Garrison, where the CHOD awarded the nominated soldiers with badges and signed the Unit chronicle as a Thank You for their exemplary performance of duties. Elsewhere at the Hall of Honour and Fame at MOD Main Building on 3 May, the outgoing CHOD met with the Military Diplomatic Corps. He decorated military



diplomats with medals for their role in taking the cooperation with the SVK Armed Forces to a higher level. In the afternoon,

General Maxim phoned the Commanders of the SVK Contingents serving on tours of duty outside of the Slovak Republic to thank them for the job well done.

On Thursday 3 May, CHOD Gen Milan Maxim read out a personnel order to DCHOD Lt Gen Macko, who is to be transferred to the reserve on grounds of voluntary termination of service at his own request with effect from 14 May. He has served in the SVK Armed Forces for almost 35 years. Lt Gen Macko thanked the GS leaders for cooperation and Gen

Maxim awarded him with the Commemorative Cross, 2nd Grade.

Successful ties with INNG



(2 May) SVK Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš met the Adjutant General of the Indiana National Guard, Maj. Gen. Courtney P. Carr, to discuss bilateral cooperation with him. The meeting took place as part of Maj. Gen. Carr's visit to

Slovakia, to attend the CHOD Change of Command ceremony, as General Maxim retired at the end of his tenure as CHOD on 4 May. Head of the MOD updated Maj. Gen. Carr on the SVK contribution to Iraq, where SVK soldiers are training ISF personnel in the fields of mechanical demining and maintenance & repairs of Soviet-era military equipment, with the consent of Iraq as part of NATO's training and capability building in Iraq (NTCB-I), and on the SVK Government-approved eFP deployment of 152 soldiers to Latvia this year. The Minister confirmed the continuity of our engagement in NATO's RSM in Afghanistan. Both partners were in agreement that cyber defence is a potential area of cooperation in the future.

UNPROFOR – 25 years on

(4 May) Engineer Battalion Sereď hosted a ceremony to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first SVK unit deployment to UNPROFOR. The Slovak Engineer Battalion served with UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia in 1993-1996. The Battalion conducted demining, repaired roads, constructed and restored bridges. It assisted local populations in restoring the destroyed infrastructure.

Defence ministerial in Sofia

(5 May) Slovakia gives its support to the Action Plan on Military Mobility, which aims to simplify military movements across the EU. This announcement was made by Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš after the informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Sofia, Bulgaria. Ministers discussed further steps to implement the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects and to streamline international crisis management activities. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Implementation of the PESCO projects is among our priorities in the sense that it follows through with action to fulfil the EU GS."

