



Defence is a matter for SVK military

(3 August) The SVK MOD will adopt all possible legislative measures to prevent service personnel from participating in the activities of such groups as the 'Slovak Recruits'. "If needed, we will adopt effective personnel measures, including dismissal from the Service of the soldiers participating in such activities," said Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš in a press statement at the MOD.

According to the Minister, it is alarming that this group presents itself publicly through its military hierarchy, standard terminology, training with military elements whilst using military clothing and different weaponry. "I see it as a serious problem that the 'Slovak Recruits' has publicly voiced doubts on the tasks and functions of the State security entities in protecting State interests," stressed the Minister. In his own words, through its activities the group is striving to replace the State functions in the field of defence and security, which it has not only presented in public on several occasions but also demonstrated in practice. "We are taking the situation seriously, we are active and we act. Our expert teams are already working on legislative amendments to relevant Acts that fall within the scope of the MOD," emphasised Head of the MOD.

CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko gave his full support to the measures being taken by the MOD leadership. "It is absolutely naive to believe that the tasks performed by the Armed Forces on the basis of legislation may be just taken over by any private entity without the support of the State. Such activities presuppose unity of effort in the defence of the Slovak Republic and at the same time may be easily misused against our national interest and security. Bearing in mind that the existing risk of service personnel getting actively involved in such activities may grow to become a threat very quickly, both to the Armed Forces and the Slovak Republic, we are currently taking a whole range of measures at the level of SVK Armed Forces Command and are cooperating on introducing legislative amendments." Lt Gen Zmeko further noted that the measures will apply to personnel work, compliance with the Code of Ethics and Obligations of Service Personnel, as well as to the Classified Information Protection Act. "Therefore, it is exceptionally important that every serviceman must be aware that overt or covert support to such activities may have very serious societal and personal consequences," added CHOD Lt Gen Zmeko.

Minister Gajdoš also emphasised that in performing their Service duties as per valid legislation, service personnel must conduct themselves so as not to undermine or threaten the public confidence in the Armed Forces, thereby casting no doubt on the tasks of the Armed Forces and their mission. "And we will not let our Armed Forces lose the public confidence they have enjoyed due to personal failures of individuals," he said. In line with the SNS Manifesto and specific strategic documents, the MOD is open to cooperation with the non-government sector and civic associations that have a professional relationship with the Armed Forces. But this must be done in close cooperation with the State so that there is no element of wilful action without getting the support of law enforcement agencies and the military that are responsible for executing such functions.

Last week Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš filed a motion with the Office of the Prosecutor General to initiate an inquiry into the legality of the 'Slovak Recruits' paramilitary organization. He did so because it provides training to citizens with an unclear mission, and may have misused the phased-out combat equipment, military clothing and insignia of the Armed Forces. The MOD has passed specific intelligence of concern to the Slovak Ministry of Interior on to Interior Minister Denisa Saková.

Visit of INNG State Command Sergeant Major CSM Gordon to Slovakia

(31 July) At the invitation of Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) of the SVK Armed Forces SGM Vladimir Beluš, Indiana National Guard (INNG) State Command Sergeant Major/Senior Enlisted Leader CSM James R. Gordon with a delegation arrived in Slovakia. The aim of the visit was to assess the cooperation between the SVK Armed Forces and the Indiana National Guard, to discuss further options of joint training and exercises for NCOs and other ranks and the training for personnel to operate the assets being phased in with the SVK Armed Forces, especially the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters. CSM Gordon then met for an office call with CHOD Lt Gen Daniel Zmeko. They assessed the cooperation between the SVK NCO Corps and the U.S. NCO Corps, addressed future joint activities, pointed out new challenges to the modernization of the SVK Armed Forces and the training activities that will culminate with Ex Slovak Shield 2018. Lt Gen Zmeko praised the initiative of SVK Armed Forces CSEL SGM Vladimir Beluš in the field of joint courses, including the NCO Operational Planning Course.



- Commander SVK Land Forces Maj Gen Jindřich Joch received German Defence Attaché Lt Col Joachim Schmidt on 2 Aug 2018 at HQ Land Forces. He briefed him on the history, structure and current tasks of the SVK Land Forces.

- Soldiers from the Command Support Battalion, of the SVK Land Forces, participated in the **Afternoon for Children** event held in the soccer field in Nemšová on 28 Jul 2018. They prepared a static display of military equipment and clothing, an obstacle course, and a mock grenade throw. Volunteers could have their faces painted with military camouflage face paint sticks. The event was concluded with a demonstration of close combat.

- On 27 Jul 2018, members of Prešov-based Helicopter Wing paid tribute to the memory of their departed colleague – **pilot Capt Richard Šepi** – who died after his Mi-17M helicopter crashed on 28 Jul 2015. The commemoration ceremony began at the Airmen Memorial in the grounds of the Helicopter Wing base, continued with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Lubotice village cemetery where he is buried, and culminated with an act of commemoration at the memorial stone installed at the crash site within the cadastral boundary of the village of Hradisko.

- Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Cyprus/UNFICYP Head of Mission Ms Elizabeth Spehar and Force Commander Maj Gen Mohammad Humayun Kabir presented the **UN Medals in the Service of Peace** to Sector 4 peacekeepers on 24 Jul 2018. They were also greeted by Slovak Ambassador to Cyprus Ján Škoka and Czech Ambassador to Cyprus Helena Bambasová. Commander of Sector 4 Lt Col Jaroslav Marko praised the work results of the soldiers. The ceremony concluded with the peacekeepers marching off the parade square.

- Commander of the NATO Special Operations Forces Headquarters **Vice Admiral Colin J. Kilrain** paid a visit to Žilina-based 5th Special Forces Regiment on 27 Jul 2018, to be briefed on current developments in the Slovak Special Operations Forces (SOF).

- Between 31 Jul and 3 Aug 2018, **Nitra-based Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade** hosted a complex command staff rehearsal as part of preparations for Ex AIR SHIELD 2018. The rehearsal saw the exercising troops verify the correctness of the standard operating procedures and improve the activity of HQ AAM Bde and Staffs of the AAM Bde units in preparing operational documents. The outcome of the rehearsal was the Order of Battle of Commander AAM Bde Nitra.

- The SVK MOD urges drivers to take caution as there will be 15 **Allied military movements** across Slovakia over the period between 6 and 12 Aug 2018. They will mainly involve US and POL troops. SVK Army convoys will transport oversized cargo along the routes: Martin – Prešov; Michalovce – Nové Mesto nad Váhom; Sľač – Martin – Kremnica and back; Martin – Nové Mesto nad Váhom. There will also be a military rail transport along the rail route Nové Mesto nad Váhom – Prešov.

Hospital has a new director

(1 August) MUDr Peter Vaněk was appointed the new director of the SNP Central Military Hospital – Faculty Hospital (CMH – FH) Ružomberok at the start of August. He will be entrusted with running the hospital until a regular competitive selection is concluded. MUDr Vaněk has worked in the hospital for several years, most recently as Chief of Radiological Oncology and as a medical professional he is familiar with the facility and knows what it takes to bring the quality of medical care to a higher level. Placing in the list of top medical professionals based on patients' assessment reports is instrumental to the MOD and the Hospital choosing key hospital leaders and this approach fits well into the Military Medicare Concept, which is now being drafted. The MOD wants to see a new systemic solution to military medicine, because this area has been neglected for years and there is a need to improve medical care for servicemen and women to their benefit. The regular competitive selection of medical professionals for the post of Director of CMH – FH Ružomberok will take place within the period prescribed by law.



First AAF helicopter repaired

(28 July) Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN, a.s.) completed the general overhaul of the first Afghan Air Force (AAF) Mi-17V-5 helicopter. The helicopter was then picked up and flown from M. R. Štefánik Airport, Bratislava back to Afghanistan on Saturday 28 July. LOTN, a.s. was awarded the Afghan Air Force Mi-17V-5 Helicopter Overhaul and Heavy Repair Contract by the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) through full and open international competitive bidding (ICB) in 2016. As Chairman of the Board of Directors and Director General of LOTN, a.s. Martin Dušančí said, this was the first ever overhaul of the Mi-17V-5 rotary wing platform across the EU and NATO. "Therefore, I want to sincerely praise the precise and expert work done by the LOTN staff. The outcome of their work testifies to the fact that in its area of specialization our company has an irreplaceable place in the market and that we are capable of succeeding amidst international competition," emphasised Dušančí. Following the general overhaul, the helicopter made its first test flight in Slovakia as part of Stage 1 of the handover process. Stage 2 of the process was completed in Afghanistan. LOTN, a.s. will continue delivering on the contract, the performance of which is regularly inspected by the NSPA agency. Further deliveries of the overhauled helicopters of this type to Afghanistan are scheduled for next year.

International Ex MACE XIX draws to a close

(30 July) Ex MACE XIX involving Allied Air Forces was concluded with an evening briefing on 27 July. The exercise was aimed at operators of the S-300 SBAD systems, which are in service with the SVK Air Force, using different types of electronic jamming as well as at pilots employing tactics for breaking the air defences in place. The exercising troops and equipment moved back home on 28-30 July.

For three weeks SVK Air Force personnel executed tasks according to an exercise plan designed by NATO ACG3/SG2. The exercise required a thorough preparation of crews and SBAD systems, technicians and air traffic controllers, the participation of aircraft from different countries, and last but not least quality logistics support. While on exercise, crews and SBAD systems were exposed to intense combat activity and to extreme changes of weather conditions.

Thanks to the meticulous preparation of operators and the expertise of S-300 technicians, all malfunctions were quickly identified and removed so that the tasks of the exercise could be accomplished continuously. Soldiers took a huge amount away from the exercise. Of the greatest benefit was the experience gained by SBAD systems operators, the data from individual jamming devices, and the analyses of jamming effectiveness. The exercise was evaluated positively by our foreign partners. Employees of the Training Centre Lešť, too, played a role in the success of the exercise.

