



President visits tankies

(15 October) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and President Andrej Kiska, who concurrently acts as Commander-in-Chief of the Slovak Armed Forces, visited Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area. On this occasion, the Minister showed the President the capabilities of the Tank Company, 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion Trebišov. The programme involved tankies conducting a live fire demonstration.

On the need to provide the SVK Army with an uplift in capability, Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "The SVK Army has not been modernised for decades and this fact is well reflected in its current condition. For this reason, we are pushing ahead with modernization systemically and systematically." He went on to highlight the work of 21st Combined Mechanised Battalion personnel in securing the defence of the Slovak Republic. "As we have top-class professionals in the Army, they deserve to work with equipment that is reliable and of high quality. And, of course, it holds true that we want to see the maximum involvement of the SVK defence industry in the modernization of our Armed Forces," he added.

Kamenica nad Cirochou Training Area forms part of Military District Valaškovce and serves as training grounds for the SVK Armed Forces, offering unique conditions for practising small arms, tank and helicopter gunnery live fire training and training IFV drivers and gunners. 62 military professionals with 13 assets were involved in today's demonstration.

MOD selects Vydra 8x8 IFV

(19 October) The MOD will propose the Cabinet approve the procurement of the Vydra ('Otter') 8x8 armoured IFV. Up to 16 SVK firms could become involved in the production of the IFV. Next week the MOD will initiate interdepartmental consultations on the proposal. In addition to technical company trials, verification trials and military trials, the IFV prototype has successfully undergone additional verification and military trials in order to test the proposed adjustments to the vehicle. As General Secretary of the MOD's Service Office Ján Holko added, SVK defence companies will be selected for serial production of the vehicle in compliance with the Public Procurement Act.

Speaking at a press conference at the MOD, Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "The vehicle is the result of international Slovak-Finnish development and most of it will be produced in Slovakia. The price of a single vehicle in the serial production, including all components, will not exceed €3.33 million, VAT excluded, in other words, the vehicle will cost up to €4 million, VAT included. According to analysis, up to 16 Slovak and 1 Czech defence companies can participate in its production. Thanks to this historically largest modernization, and I count the production of the Zuzana 2 SpGH in, up to 800 jobs may be created."

The MOD plans to procure up to 81 Vydra vehicles by 2024, whereas the overall price will not exceed €417 million, VAT included. This includes logistical support (€17 million), munitions (€65 million), infrastructure (€5 million), and the purchase of the prototype (€5.8 million). The reason why the designation of the vehicle is 'Otter' is that, just like the animal, it has a swimming capability and is very dynamic, fast, agile, resistant and easily manoeuvrable in spite of its size.

More competences approved for Military Police

(17 October) Members of the SVK Military Police will have more competences. This ensues from the Military Police Amendment Act, which was approved by the Security Council and the Cabinet. The Amendment Act introduces a number of changes, including sanction measures for unauthorised use of MP uniforms, badges and insignia. Minister of Defence Peter Gajdoš said: "Under the new arrangements, military policemen will have more competences when, for example, detaining persons who have illegally entered military facilities. In such cases, they will be empowered to proceed according to the Offences Act and initiate offence proceedings, as do policemen of the Slovak Police Corps, and to sanction persons in the ticket proceedings, which is not possible now. Today when policemen detain an unauthorised person in a military facility, all they can do is to escort him out of the military facility." Director of the SVK Military Police Col Michal Migát said: "I am convinced that the legislative amendments, which have been made in response to MP-related lessons learned from operations and incorporated into the Military Police Amendment Act, will create better conditions for the SVK Military Police, to protect MOD facilities and to perform the tasks arising out of international agreements." The new legislation sets out the competences of MP personnel in escorting foreign military convoys transiting our territory in support of military exercises. It also empowers military policemen to detain the operator of an unmanned aerial system (drone) who has breached the perimeter security of a military installation and to terminate the flight of the drone. Once approved by Parliament, the Amendment Act is due to come into force on 1 April 2019.



■ As part of a **crime prevention operation**, members of the SVK Military Police detained two servicemen while they were selling Defence fuel to two civilians. During the response, military policemen seized 2,520l of fuel and thus prevented it from being sold illegally. Criminal proceedings were initiated on the grounds of theft.

■ Sgt 1st Class Ján Kalmár, member of the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin – Turecký Vrch Training Area, received the **Prof MUDr Ján Janský Diamond Plaque** from the Red Cross Branch Bratislava – Malacky for his 80 blood and platelets donations. Ján Kalmár began to donate blood while serving as a conscript with the SVK Presidential Guard of Honour. He also donated blood during his tours of duty with UNFICYP, Cyprus and EUFOR ALTHEA, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

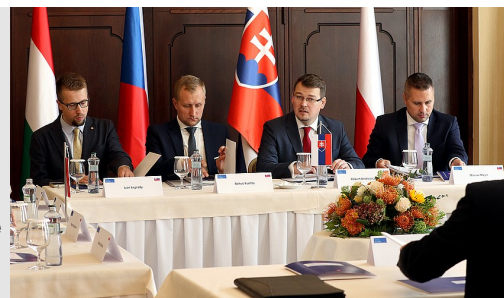
■ The Lešť Training Centre hosted the field phase of the 2nd Mech Bde's **Artillery Forward Observers Training Course** on 17-18 Oct. Members of the Artillery Unit practised G-20 specialist firing tasks and members of the 2nd Battery practised coordinating live fire, fired shells with time fuses, and used the 122mm D30 howitzer and the 155mm Zuzana SpGH to fire artillery shells at night targets.

■ Members of HQ 1st Mechanised Brigade and its Command Support Company carried out **railway movement training** on 17-18 Oct. The theory phase was followed by the field phase, focused on the provision of railway movements, railway security measures, loading, fastening and unloading procedures for different types of vehicles, as well as erecting a universal steel loading ramp and guiding vehicles onto flat wagons.

■ The **Martin City Medics Run** took place on 17 Oct in Martin, with the participation of 86 soldier trainees and 3 members of the Basic Military Training Platoon from the Training and Mobilization Manning Base Martin. The aim of the run was to improve the physical performance of runners and raise money from the entry fees for the Children's Surgery Clinic in Martin.

■ 15 years have passed since the **formation of the Radar Surveillance Battalion** on 1 Oct 2003. Members of the Battalion commemorated the anniversary during a ceremony at the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Theatre in Zvolen on 16 Oct.

■ Drivers are asked by the MOD to be alert and drive with care as there will be **14 military road movements** across Slovakia in the period between 22 and 28 Oct 2018. They will mainly involve US and POL troops. In addition, SVK Army vehicles will convoy from Rožňava via Brzotín to Gemerská Hôrka and there will also be SVK Army vehicles carrying oversized cargo en route from: Prešov – Vranov nad Topľou – Michalovce; Martin – Zvolen – CV Lešť; Trebišov – Košice – Prešov – Poprad – Martin; Martin – Žilina – Dubnica nad Váhom; plus one military railway movement from Levice via Sása to Pliešovce.



Meeting of V4 State Secretaries

(18 October) State Secretaries of the V4 Ministries of Defence met in Senior Body format in Tatranská Lomnica on 17-18 October. Among the most resonating issues were capabilities development, force readiness, NATO's adapted Command Structure, PESCO, including the review of joint projects, and the stand-up of the joint V4 EU Battlegroup in 2019. The V4 State Secretaries agreed they will submit a proposal for another battlegroup to be stood up in 2023, whilst at the same time looking for joint solutions to military mobility by strengthening infrastructure.

Ex Trident Juncture 2018

(16 October) Members of the Slovak Armed Forces will join in with 31 Allied and partner countries, to exercise their capabilities on NATO's Ex Trident Juncture 2018 from 25 October through 23 November 2018. This is the largest exercise of the North Atlantic Alliance since the end of the Cold War, involving up to 45,000 troops. The exercise will be divided into two parts – CPX and LIVEX. As part of TRJ18 CPX, SVK soldiers will be posted to Italy, to participate in planning and coordinating intelligence activities and logistics of air operations, designating targets, and exercising control of air defence systems and indirect fire support. As part of TRJ18 LIVEX, SVK personnel will deploy to Norway, to perform specific tasks such as planning and controlling land and air operations, CBRN operations, force protection, and medical support.



Overhaul of Mi-17s for NSPA

(17 October) Leading the MOD delegation, Minister Gajdoš met with Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Russian Federation Denis Manturov on 15 October. Also in attendance at the meeting were representatives of Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN), led by Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors Martin Dušančí. The overhaul of the Mi-17 helicopters for the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA), being conducted by the state-run LOTN company, topped the agenda.

SVK Army soldiers and Military Police personnel to be engaged in Iraq

(17 October) Slovak Army soldiers and Military Police personnel will be engaged in Iraq as part of the non-combat

NATO Mission Iraq, while cooperating with the US and ITA Armed Forces. The Security Council and the Cabinet approved the mandate to deploy 42 personnel to Iraq in stages this year and next year. Their task will be to train and advise Iraqi military personnel and to reform the local defence and security institutions. The deployment proposal still needs to get the go-ahead from Parliament. The mandate for the deployment of 42 Army and MP personnel will enable Slovakia to dispatch 10 Army professionals and 2 military policemen this year, with the rest deploying to Iraq in 2019. While the task of our military policemen, to be stationed at the



bases in Bagdad and Erbil, will be to participate in training the police elements of the Iraqi defence and security forces, SVK Army personnel will operate in training and advisory roles for the security components of the Republic of Iraq, including support to the fight against ISIL.

The NATO Mission Iraq was established following the transformation of the NATO Training and Capacity Building in Iraq (NTCB-I). Taking place at the invitation of the Republic of Iraq, the SVK Army and MP deployment to the Republic of Iraq will be implemented as per NATO's decision on the mission, the approved mandate and international law. Separate agreements will govern the cooperation between the SVK Armed Forces with the US and ITA Armed Forces in Iraq.