

2017 DISTRICT - RADIO SPEAKING SCRIPT ^a ROUND 3



INTERNATIONAL

Russian Defense Minister Says His Military Has Tested 162 Weapons In Syria

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu made his way to the Duma, the lower house of parliament, on the eve of Defender of the Fatherland Day. The Feb. 23 national holiday was once known as Soviet Army and Navy Day, and Shoigu, dressed in the uniform of a general, came to boast about the Russian military's latest achievements. "We tested 162 types of contemporary and modernized weapons in Syria, which showed a high level of effectiveness," Shoigu said. Only 10 weapons systems performed below expectations, he added. The Kremlin has never made a secret that its intervention on behalf of the Syrian government has been an excellent opportunity to show off its new military prowess. Shortly after Russia entered the conflict in September 2015, the country's navy fired cruise missiles at Syrian targets 900 miles away – an event that coincided with President Vladimir Putin's 63rd birthday. The air force sent long-range Bear and Backfire bombers on round-trip missions from bases in Russia. And the country's only aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, traveled all the way from the Arctic Ocean to the Syrian coast to launch airstrikes. Of course, testing weapons was not the primary reason for Russia's war in Syria. "There were two main goals: to force the West to talk with Russia and break the isolation from the Ukrainian crisis, and secondly, to support Syrian President Bashar Assad," said [Aleksandr Golts](#), a fellow at the Kennan Institute in Washington. Trying out new arms was just a bonus. As cynical as it may sound, Golts said, combat is the best way for any military to test the condition of its weaponry.

France Warns Russia To Stay Out Of Its Presidential Election

The French government warned the Kremlin not to interfere in its presidential vote after signs of a disinformation and hacking campaign against a rising candidate who is not sympathetic to Russia. When it comes to allegations of Russian meddling in politics, the United States might have something in common with France. French police yesterday raided the offices of ultranationalist leader Marine Le Pen over alleged misuse of European Union funds. Le Pen is pro-Russian and that raid at her offices came as another rising French presidential candidate says his campaign is being targeted by Kremlin-supported media and hackers. Until a few weeks ago, the two front-runners in the French presidential race were both pro-Russian. Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen has made no secret of her admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin. Her rival, mainstream conservative Francois Fillon, has said Western sanctions against Russia are pointless. But now Fillon's campaign is tanking over a fake job scandal. And young, independent outsider Emmanuel Macron is surging and now in second place just behind Le Pen. Macron's campaign headquarters in Paris is buzzing with volunteers manning the phones and computers. Mounir Mahjoubi heads up the digital campaign. He says the hacking began as Macron's fortunes began to rise.

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Kuwait Celebration At Trump Hotel Raises Conflict Of Interest Questions

For more than a decade, Kuwait's ambassador to the U.S., Salem al-Sabah, has held a gala event every year to celebrate the tiny Gulf state's independence from British rule in 1961. Traditionally, the event has been held at the Four Seasons Hotel, in the heart of Washington, D.C. But Sabah says he feels his guests have wanted a change. Last year, he held the celebration at the Newseum. For this year, he and his wife, Rima, looked into the newly opened Trump International Hotel as another possibility. Sabah says he has taken heat for moving the location, including suggestions that Kuwait is trying to curry favor with the new U.S. president, something he rejects. "That is honestly absurd," he says. "If people think that for us to rent a ballroom for two hours in a hotel is going to swing open the doors to the White House for us, it's an absurd line of thinking." Sabah says he was under no pressure by the Trump administration to use the hotel. He says people should look at what Kuwait is doing for the U.S., rather than the other way around. Ryan Crocker, a former U.S. ambassador to Middle Eastern countries including Kuwait, says that country is the linchpin in the U.S. Gulf security strategy. "There are thousands of U.S. forces in that country," he says. "We operate on two Kuwaiti air bases, and the headquarters for the entire anti-Islamic State campaign is in Kuwait." Crocker says the problem isn't Kuwait's national day celebration — instead, it's that there are properties all over the world bearing President Trump's name. And any time a foreign government holds a reception or rents rooms at a Trump hotel, it opens speculation about conflicts of interest. Norm Eisen, an ethics expert at the Brookings Institution, says Trump is also violating the Constitution — which says a president cannot accept gifts or benefits by a foreign country. "That's what the framers put in the Constitution in the emoluments clause, because they were so worried about swag, any kind of swag, coming to an American president just for the reasons ... that it would distort presidential decision-making to benefit himself," Eisen says. Trump's attorney, Sheri Dillon, said at a press conference last month that the president has a way around that. "He is going to voluntarily donate all profits from foreign government payments made to his hotels to the United States Treasury," she said.

Banned In Germany: Kids' Doll Is Labeled An Espionage Device

It's nice to have a friend who's a good listener, but a doll called My Friend Cayla listens a little too well, according to German regulators who say the toy is essentially a stealthy espionage device that shares what it hears and is also vulnerable to takeover by third parties. "*Cayla ist verboten in Deutschland*," says Jochen Homann, the president of Germany's Federal Network Agency, announcing a ban on the doll in Germany on Friday. His agency oversees electronic privacy as part of its telecommunications mandate; Homann also cites a special obligation to protect the privacy of children, calling them the most vulnerable members of society. The heart of the problem, Homann says, is that Cayla looks like an everyday doll and gives no notice that it collects and transmits everything it hears — in this case, to a voice-recognition company in the U.S. whose other customers include intelligence agencies.



NATIONAL

FCC Chairman Goes After His Predecessor's Internet Privacy Rules

The newly appointed Republican chairman of the Federal Communications Commission is moving to scale back the implementation of sweeping privacy rules for Internet providers passed last year. Chairman Ajit Pai on Friday asked the FCC to hit pause on the rollout of one part of those rules that was scheduled to go into effect next week. This marks the latest in his efforts to roll back his predecessor's regulatory moves. Overall, the privacy rules would regulate how ISPs have to disclose to their customers what information is collected on them and how it's used or shared with other companies — including guidance on getting consumers' consent in some cases. Pai's move on Friday does not target those data-collection regulations, but goes after one element of the rules related to security protocols and other measures ISPs have to take to protect the collected data. While the rest of the FCC's privacy regulations are still winding through required government reviews, the data security rules were set to go into effect on March 2. "This is the first robin of spring," says Andrew Jay Schwartzman, veteran telecom lawyer now at the Georgetown University Law Center. "These rules are about to go into effect so (Pai) has got to act on them now. ... He's got more time to act on the other rules." A group of telecom associations and companies, including Comcast, Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile, has filed a petition asking the FCC to halt broader privacy rules, which were passed in part on the basis of the broader authority the agency claimed over the industry through its landmark "net neutrality" overhaul.

GOP Health Bill Draft Would Cut Medicaid, Emphasize Tax Credits

In recent days, several Republican lawmakers have faced crowds of constituents at town hall meetings around the country who are angry that they may be in danger of losing their health coverage. A GOP draft bill, recently obtained by Politico, would likely do little to assuage these concerns. The Feb. 10 document follows the broad policy outline released by Republicans last week just before they went home for a Congressional recess. It proposes cuts to federal payments to states that have expanded Medicaid and offers tax credits for people to buy health insurance. "This would mean fewer people could afford health insurance and that the health insurance would likely cover less," says Larry Levitt, senior vice president at the Kaiser Family Foundation. Under the plan, states that expanded eligibility for Medicaid would see their supplemental federal funding rolled back. The program would also be converted from a federal-state program that pays for all the health care beneficiaries get, to one where Washington sends a fixed amount of money to each state for each Medicaid enrollee. To help people who don't get insurance through their employer buy coverage, the bill offers age-based tax credits that start at \$2,000 for individuals under age 30. It would rise to \$4,000 for those over 60. Those credits are unlikely to cover the full cost of a plan that pays for routine health care, but could potentially pay for insurance that protects against a catastrophic health event. Levitt says those credits are less generous than the subsidies offered under Obamacare. The draft bill is consistent with what Republicans have been saying they want to see in place of Obamacare, says Rodney Whitlock, vice president of health policy at ML Strategies.

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French historian Henry Rousso nearly deported from US

A French historian on his way to a conference in Texas was detained for 10 hours by US border officials and threatened with deportation. Officials at Texas A&M University said Henry Rousso was going to be returned to Paris as an illegal alien "due to a visa misunderstanding". The university stopped the deportation with help from a law professor. President Trump has pledged to tighten US border controls. "I have been detained 10 hours at Houston International Airport about to be deported," Mr Rousso, 62, confirmed. "The officer who arrested me was 'inexperienced'," he added. The Egyptian-born Jewish scholar, a senior researcher at the French National Center for Scientific Research, is a specialist on French World War II history. Texas A&M University had announced to the conference on Friday that Mr Rousso had been detained upon arriving at Houston airport on Wednesday. Senior official Richard Golsan said there had been a misunderstanding regarding the parameters of his visa, The Eagle reported. "When he called me with this news two nights ago, he was waiting for customs officials to send him back to Paris as an illegal alien on the first flight out," Mr Golsan told the meeting. He said the university enlisted the help of law school professor and immigrant rights expert Fatma Marouf. "Due to her prompt and timely intervention, Rousso was released," Mr Golsan said. Ms Marouf described the behaviour of customs officials as an "extreme response". "It seems like there's much more rigidity and rigour in enforcing these immigration requirements and the technicalities of every visa," she said, quoted by The Eagle. Mr Rousso went on to attend the conference and thanked his supporters in a post on Twitter. "Thank you so much for your reactions. My situation was nothing compared to some of the people I saw who couldn't be defended as I was," he said. Last month, President Trump issued an executive order imposing a temporary entry ban for citizens of seven Muslim majority countries, although the list did not include Egypt.

Primary for Virginia Governor Tests Power of an Anti-Trump Campaign

Ask Lt. Gov. Ralph S. Northam, a Democrat, what defines this year's race for governor in Virginia, and he does not mention President Trump. Ask the same question of former Representative Tom Perriello, Mr. Northam's rival for the Democratic nomination, and he invokes the president in the first sentence. "I think it's fierce resistance to the kind of hateful politics Trump has represented and putting forward a better vision of how we're going to build an inclusive economy," Mr. Perriello said in an interview here last week, speaking after a town hall-style meeting that showed just how immersed he is in the administration's mounting controversies and the swelling opposition movement. The campaign for Virginia governor was already expected to offer insights about the political landscape: the first statewide election of the Trump era set in a state that both major parties' presidential nominees contested last year. But by trying to nationalize the race and make it a referendum on the depth of opposition to Mr. Trump, Mr. Perriello has transformed the primary race into a test of whether the boiling liberal rage toward the new president can be harnessed to win a state campaign. And if he is successful in bending an election that usually revolves around taxes, transportation and education toward the divisive occupant of the White House, he will have sketched out a new strategy for Democrats during the Trump administration that is sure to be mimicked in the party's primary races in next year's midterm elections.



STATE

Fitzgerald Introduces Bill Loosening High-Capacity Well Regulations

A bill has been introduced by State Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald that would make it easier to rebuild and repair high-capacity wells. The bill would allow existing wells to be repaired, replaced or reconstructed without a new permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The proposed legislation provides farmers much needed security, said Tamas Houlihan, executive director of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association. "A grower can lose a crop within 24 hours if a well fails and cannot be quickly repaired or replaced," Houlihan said. "I could not overstate the importance of the use of irrigation and water in growing potato and vegetable crops. We absolutely have to have it in order to remain one of the preeminent areas in the world for producing potatoes and vegetables." But environmentalists say the bill could make it harder to solve groundwater problems in sensitive parts of the state, like the Golden Sands region, where lakes and streams have dried up. Rep. Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point, accused the Republican sponsors of trying to grant permanent water rights to some at the expense of others. "Any private well owner whose well has run dry will tell you that there is much more at stake," Shankland said. The bill does not allow the drilling of new high-capacity wells without a permit. But Shankland said it would keep existing wells from being reassessed when they need to be repaired or replaced. "The DNR is failing to take into account the cumulative impact of water usage when permitting high-capacity wells, and this bill exacerbates the problem," Shankland said. High-capacity wells can pump more than 70 gallons of water per minute, or 100,000 gallons of water per day.

Potential Teacher License Changes In Wisconsin Cause Concern Among Educators

University of Wisconsin System deans and directors of education are concerned college programs wouldn't be able to easily adapt to new teacher licenses that are being developed by the Leadership Group on School Staffing Challenges. The group of Wisconsin educators released preliminary licensing recommendations last month. One of the proposals is to consolidate the state's five developmental licenses down to two. Teachers would be licensed to teach preschool through ninth grade with an emphasis on a grade level or would receive a subject license – such as math or science – to teach preschool through twelfth grade. Katy Heyning, dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies at UW-Whitewater, said the university already has programs approved by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction that lead to specific licenses, and it would be difficult for the school to adapt to the possible licensing changes. "We would necessarily have to change all of our programs from top to bottom. Not only would this take a lot of time, we were really concerned about how we were going to do that and not make the cost of a teaching license or a degree leading to a license outrageously expensive," Heyning said. The deans and directors [released a statement Monday morning](#) to State Superintendent Tony Evers suggesting licenses for three developmental levels: birth through third grade, which is currently offered as teacher license in Wisconsin; kindergarten through ninth grade; and fourth grade through twelfth grade for subject areas.

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Study: Hate Groups Increase In US, Wisconsin

A study from the Southern Poverty Law Center shows the number of hate groups in the nation increased for the second straight year to 917 in 2016. There were 892 hate groups in 2015. Of the new groups, nine were in Wisconsin, compared to eight in 2015. The majority of the hate groups in the state were listed as neo-Nazi, white nationalist, black separatist and anti-LGBT. Pamela Oliver, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor, said divisive political speech has a trickle-down effect, and the 2016 presidential campaign could have contributed to the uptick. "Most of the research tends to say that you get more attacks on immigrants or attacks on minorities when political leaders are making anti minority or anti-immigrant statements," Oliver said. She said tough talk about tightening the country's borders during the presidential campaign may have emboldened hate groups and allowed them to become more visible. She said divisive political speech can strengthen hate groups making them more visible. Oliver said hate groups should continue to have the right to promote their speech but a line should be drawn somewhere. "People should be able to express a general advocacy of ideas versus specifically attacking individuals and urging attacks on individuals," she said. "The Supreme Court has regularly said that if you're urging attacks on other people, that is definitely not protected speech." The 917 is about 100 fewer than the 1,018 in 2011, an all-time high in some 30 years of the Southern Poverty Law Center counts.

Schimel Files Appeal With SCOTUS Over Redistricting Ruling

Wisconsin's Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel has filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court challenging a ruling striking down GOP-drawn legislative boundaries as unconstitutional. Schimel filed the appeal with the nation's highest court Friday. Schimel had said he would appeal since a panel of judges last month struck down the maps and ordered the Republican-controlled Legislature to draw new boundaries. The judges ordered new maps be drawn by November so they would be in place for the 2018 election. Democrats who challenged the maps are calling on the Legislature to move quickly to draw new ones. But Schimel and Republicans don't want to do that unless the Supreme Court requires it.

Veterans Urge Walker, GOP To Abandon Prevailing Wage Repeal

Veterans are calling on Gov. Scott Walker and GOP lawmakers to abandon their proposals to repeal prevailing wage laws in Wisconsin. Wisconsin American Legion representatives said Wednesday veteran jobs could be lost if state lawmakers move ahead with repealing the prevailing wage. The group says a large number of veterans work in construction after returning from service. During the last legislative session, lawmakers removed prevailing wage, which sets minimum salaries for workers, on local construction projects. Now they want to end the prevailing wage for state projects. "Why is it that always the budget is balanced on the backs of veterans," said Daniel Seehafer, department commander with the Wisconsin American Legion. Seehafer and his colleagues cited a 2016 Midwest Economic Policy Institute study that contends 2,000 veteran jobs would be lost if the wage repeal becomes law.



SPORTS

WATCH: 2 Table Tennis Titleholders Have Epic, 766-Shot Rally

Today, two table tennis pros met at the Qatar Open and ended up locked in a staggering 10-minute, 766-shot rally. The International Table Tennis Federation, which runs the event, said in an Instagram video that it "has got to be the longest rally ever in modern table tennis history!" Li Jie of the Netherlands and Hitomi Sato of Japan are both internationally ranked table tennis players known for their defensive skills. Li competed in the 2008 and 2012 Olympics. Sato is a champion doubles player. The score when Thursday's rally happened was 0-0. Neither player "took the risk to attack first, resulting in an endless rally," the ITTF wrote. The rally was interrupted not by a failure of focus or coordination, but by a stray ball from a neighboring match area. Under the ITTF rules, a rally may be stopped "because the conditions of play are disturbed in a way which could affect the outcome of the rally." Presumably, another little white ball entering the players' field of vision could affect the outcome. Li eventually ended up winning the match and moving on in the tournament, which has four more rounds.

Brewers: Ryan Braun excited about health

Ryan Braun is feeling the best he has in years, thanks for asking, but don't expect to see him in a Cactus League game any time soon. "We know Ryan doesn't need a lot of at-bats so you're not going to see him for awhile," Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. "He's healthy. I think it's safe to say, at least the (World Baseball Classic) and I think it will be after that, even (until he plays in a spring game). The 33-year-old left fielder — the team's ranking veteran — has never been one to need a lot of exhibition at-bats to prepare himself for the rigors of the regular season and now, with a decade of experience under his belt, he has his spring routine down. "If Opening Day was today, I'd be 100 percent ready for the season," Braun said. "I need spring training, I just don't feel like I need at-bats to be ready for games. "Maybe a week or two, come down here and run around, be in cleats for five or six hours every day. I need to throw every day, I need to catch some fly balls and get some routes, take some balls off the bat, take batting practice every day. I need to do all of those things but I've never felt like I needed a lot of at-bats in spring training." The last few springs haven't been as simple as this one for Braun. In 2012, there was the lingering cloud of suspicion following his positive test for PEDs, the eventual victory of his appeal and the now-infamous news conference. Since then, there has been a 65-game suspension and injuries and surgeries to address issues with his thumb and back. But he comes to camp this year with a full offseason behind him; no injuries, no medical procedures — just a lot of sleepless nights after the addition of a second child to his family. And like last year, there will likely be some sort of plan in place to manage Braun's playing time in order to keep him at his best shape. Braun appeared in 135 games last year — five fewer than in 2015 — but produced his best numbers since 2012. He batted .305 with 30 home runs, 91 RBIs, 16 stolen bases, a .365 OBP and .903 OPS. "Ultimately, it's about getting the most out of every player on your roster," Braun said. "I feel a lot better this year than I have in a long time."

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WEATHER

- **Tonight** Increasing clouds, with a low around 17. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph.
- **Tomorrow** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 26. Northwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southeast in the afternoon.
- **Tomorrow Night** Patchy fog after midnight. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 22. South wind around 10 mph.
- **Wednesday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 38. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph.
- **Thursday:** A slight chance of rain and snow before midnight, then a slight chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 28. West wind 10-15 mph. Chance of precipitation 20%.
- **Friday:** A chance of flurries before noon. Partly sunny, with a high near 32. West wind 10 to 15 mph.

COMMERCIALS

Announcer: People tend to describe farmers as steady and hard working. But we're also the riskiest gamblers out there. As a farmer, my livelihood depends on the weather. That's why I bought Farm Insurance from Auto-Owners Insurance, to protect my equipment, livestock and everything else. My local agent lives right in my community and is here for me, no matter what. Visit [Your Agency Name] in [Your City] today at [Website Address]

Americans For The Arts

There's just not enough Art in our Schools. No wonder people think Louis Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon. It's a long way from the Apollo Theatre to the Apollo program, but for Louis Armstrong giant leaps for mankind were simply a matter of course. For more information about the benefits of arts education, please visit us on the AmericansForTheArts.org. Just like great Louis Armstrong, all you need is a little brass. Art. Ask For More.

Bob The Builder

Kids share the fun as Follow Me Scoop follows Bob wherever he goes. Kids push Bob's talky-talky button and Scoop drives and then...makes the coolest moves! Have lots of fun, when you bring home Follow me Scoop! Another Bob the Builder Toy from...Learning Curve!