ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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Yulia Navalnaya

Russian public figure, widow
of Russian opposition leader
Alexei Navalny

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Context

The wife of Aleksej Navalny gives a speech on behalf of Navalny, who has written this when he was still in jail. Aleksej asked Julia to express this statement in the case Navalny would die in prison. Julia gives this speech during the presentation of Navalny's book '*Patriot'*.

Speech

Dear friends,
By the time Julia shares these words with you, I will no longer be here. If you are listening to this, it means the corrupt elites of Russia have succeeded in silencing me. But do not be sad. People can be silenced by a regime, but ideas and desires cannot be silenced by anyone. The ideas I fought for—the hope I carried for Russia—belong to all of us, and they are more powerful than any regime's lies or bullets.

For decades, Russia has been plundered by elites in the Kremlin. Putin and his cronies are the true enemies of Russia—not Ukraine, not the West. It is the Kremlin that keeps our country poor, not Washington, not London. We Russians have everything we need to grow and thrive, but instead of growth, we are stuck with war, corruption, and lies. This is far from the Russia we deserve.

Let me ask those who defend Putin as the 'father of Russia' this simple question: how can he be our 'father' when so many live in poverty while he just sits in a palace 39 times the size of Monaco? This is not strength—it is theft. And it is not just Putin. Without his propagandists—the heirs of Joseph Goebbels—the Kremlin would never have been so successful in its looting. These people do not merely serve the regime; they actively destroy our Russia. They should be brought to court, just as any war criminal.
The atrocities in places like Bucha are not only committed by soldiers but also by those who spread the lie that such actions are part of 'de-Nazifying' Ukraine. This propaganda does not protect Russia; it poisons it. Yet we are told to fear enemies abroad when the greatest threat lies within Russia.

Some will call me a radical, an extremist, even a terrorist. But look around. Who are the real extremists? Those who steal billions, wage wars, and stoke hatred—or those who demand honesty, justice, and peace? Some say Russia cannot change, that we will never become democratic - forever stuck in a cycle of tsars, emperors, general secretaries, and presidents.
But we Russians can break the cycle! We can build a Russia where power is shared, where taxes are spent where they are collected, and where no leader is above the people.

After I was poisoned, many asked why I returned to Russia. The answer is simple: where else could I go? Russia is my home. I love it too much to abandon it to thieves and liars. And so, I say, through Julia: do not give in to fear. Fear is the Kremlin's greatest weapon, but honesty and transparency are its greatest enemy.
If the Kremlin has killed me, it is not because they are strong—it is because they are afraid. Afraid of our courage, our unity, and the truth we carry in our hearts. Let us honour this truth. Let us fight for a Russia that is free, just, and worthy of its people. Continue our battle. Do it for our beautiful Russia.