

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

Liepa
Šeškevičiūtė

AS

Yevgeny Prigozhin

Russian oligarch and
former leader of the
Wagner Group



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Context of the speech:

Yevgeny Viktorovich Prigozhin is the former leader of the private military company called the Wagner Group which has played a major role in Ukraine since the start of the invasion in 2014 and has been involved in conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. Prigozhin gained particular global prominence in 2022 when he started recruiting Russian prisoners into the Wagner Group to fight in Ukraine. Since 2022, Prigozhin has been a major critic of the Russian army and he has criticized the Russian Defense Ministry on numerous occasions. Crucially, on June 23rd, 2023, Prigozhin launched a rebellion against Putin. He made it public that the Russian government was lying about the reasons for the invasion, his troops captured the city of Rostov-on-Don and advanced to Moscow. All of a sudden, the treason charges against him were dropped and he was relocated to Belarus. Exactly 2 months later, Prigozhin was allegedly killed in a plane crash. In this speech, Prigozhin rises from the dead. The year is 2025, Russia is losing, Belarus is weakening, and Prigozhin is full of anger seeing his plan go to waste. He delivers a speech to the officials in the Kremlin, targeting Vladimir Putin and Sergei Shoigu specifically.

The speech:

Vladimir Vladimirovich, Shoigu,...

I must admit that I have made a mistake. For years, I stood by your side - I served you as a business partner, as an owner of the most renowned restaurants in St. Petersburg. I made deals with you and sent my men to fight for the great Russian cause, defending the nation's honor in lands ranging from Ukrainian forests to the Libyan desert. I saw my mercenaries die in fields of blood, in fields that were unfamiliar to them, away from their families and home. I was a fool. I was a fool because I should have never trusted you! I should have turned my back against you and started this rebellion in 2014! You sit in your golden armchairs, high up in the Kremlin, preaching on live television about how I am a traitor while you're too scared to show your face to your own people in real life. You're just a bunch of cowards, sitting in your dachas shaking out of fear, sentencing millions of innocent Russian boys to death in the fields of Ukraine while your own children are far away sunbathing on yachts in the Caribbean islands, making videos on Instagram about their bougie life.

Don't lecture me about what is a traitor. Look at the mirror instead. Through the years of your control, you've caused this nation nothing but harm. And now, with Ukraine winning the war, the game is over. There is no Russian Empire. And in 5 years there probably won't be a Russia. You've run this country down - Lukashenko himself is more likely to take over Russia unless he gets a heart attack before you do! You should have done yourself a favor and saved your pride by stepping away when I started my rebellion. I would have never brought such shame to mother Russia.

I had Belarus in my fist when I controlled Wagner. I could have taken over the pathetic little Baltic states in 1 single day. My army, my men did more in 1 year than the Russian army did in 10. You are a disgrace to this country. A public embarrassment. I've watched you lead this country down a path of weakness and cowardice for years and it should have ended ages ago! Your den of spineless bureaucrats who are blind with allegiance, too scared to raise a finger against you or anyone else in this appalling establishment, have fooled you into thinking that you two have it all. Look around you. The nations spanning from Kazakhstan to Georgia no longer even fear you - they laugh at your ridiculous attempt to mobilize the nation for the 17th time. Tell me one thing, who are we calling to the army this time? The seven-year-olds from the Tomsk oblast? Or the 90-year-old retired men from Kaliningrad? I know

for one I could have made this country better. The minute I set my hands on Wagner I could have had it all. The mistake I regret the most is stopping that rebellion. We should have entered Moscow. We should have taken you all down. We should have taken over Russia piece by piece. And then we would have built the empire. I could have occupied any country I pointed to with my men! I could have made it greater than the Soviet Empire! But now it's all lost.

You call yourself great leaders, great minds, but what have you really achieved? National shame? Humiliation? Your days in the Kremlin are numbered. Just wait until the people take to the streets, starting another Bolshevik revolt and taking you out one by one because of what you have done to their homeland. When the West starts dissecting Russia piece by piece and turning it into another puppet state, and when all of you here are standing in front of the ICC desperately begging for forgiveness, don't forget that you are the only ones to blame. Your pride and ignorance have brought you your demise. Welcome to your own hell, cowards.