

# **ATHENA**

## **FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH**

**MSc Course**

**"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"**

Máté

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**AS**

**A newly appointed Head  
of NATO Cybersecurity  
Department**



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**ATHENA**  
- Jean Monnet Chair -



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This “foreign policy speech” was originally written for the ATHENA Jean Monnet Chair MSc Course “The EU and the Post-Soviet Space” taught by Dr. Olga Burlyuk. It is published as part of our mission to showcase peer-leading papers written by students during their studies.

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**Background:** A series of sophisticated cyber-attacks on key infrastructure in several NATO member states has lately targeted Post-Soviet states such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. These attacks have caused global confusion and uncertainty by disrupting electrical systems, financial institutions, and communication networks.

The digital evidence implies involvement of state-sponsored actors, most likely from Russia and potentially China, with the goal of exploiting vulnerabilities in these Post-Soviet States' cyber defenses. The choice of targets appears to be intentional, with the goal of disrupting NATO's eastern flank and putting the alliance's determination and competence to safeguard its newer members, many of which have historical ties and lingering vulnerabilities from their Soviet past to the test.

**Location: An urgent NATO Cybersecurity Summit in Tallin, Estonia.**

**Actor: First Speech of the newly appointed Head of NATO Cybersecurity Department**

**Year: 2025**

Ministers, Ambassadors, esteemed members of the NATO Cybersecurity Centre,

In ordinary times, we gather to discuss strategies and advancements. But today, we stand united in response to an extraordinary challenge. The recent cyber-attacks on our alliance and its Baltic member states have not just disrupted our systems; they have targeted the very core of our democratic values and freedoms.

**(Break)**

In an era where digital infrastructure is the backbone of our nations, these attacks have exposed weaknesses that must be addressed immediately. They did not just target our systems; they have aimed to undermine the trust and unity that bind us. Just as the world witnessed our solidarity in the face of physical attacks, it must now experience our unbreakable bond in cyberspace. The impacted nations' strength and tenacity in these tough times are admirable, and they exemplify the unbreakable spirit of our alliance.

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The sophistication of these attacks serves as a wake-up call. We have seen a coordinated effort to exploit the digital gaps in our defenses, particularly in those regions still grappling with the legacy of their past.

*Like a looming shadow of a once formidable empire, the influence of a powerful neighbor, reminiscent of past dominions, hangs over these nations — a subtle yet palpable presence, ever watchful and ready to capitalize on any fissure or vulnerability within our collective shield.*

But in these challenges, we also find an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to each other and to our shared values of freedom and democracy.

**(Break)**

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In dealing with this threat, we must strike a fine balance between security and the liberties we cherish. Some may claim that strengthening our cyber defenses would result in a digital arms race. However, let us be clear: our goal is not to dominate but to defend; not to suppress but to empower. Our response is rooted in the principles of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

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As we face this new kind of warfare, we must adapt and evolve. Therefore, I am proud to announce the inception of the Digital Shield Alliance. This initiative marks a new chapter in our collective defense strategy, focusing on strengthening the cyber resilience of our Post-Soviet members and enhancing our overall cybersecurity capabilities.

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As we forge our path forward, let us recall the fundamental tenet that has always guided our alliance. Perhaps the NATO charter reflects best the attitude that we will approach: An attack on one is an attack on all. Let this be a message to those who seek to undermine our security: We are unified in our commitment, and we will tackle this challenge with strength and determination. As we press ahead into this new frontier of cybersecurity, we will be guided by the spirit of cooperation and resolve that has always been the hallmark of NATO.

Together, in the face of this new challenge, we shall not waver, we shall not falter, we shall stand united, and we shall overcome.

Thank you.