

# SEMINAR SERIES

## MATVEI SHEVCHENKO

**JEREMIAH SULLIVAN FELLOWSHIP AWARDEE**

**Tuesday, September 16th**

**5:00 PM – In-person & Zoom**

**Coble Hall #108 (801 S. Wright Street)**

### NO PEACE, NO ILLUSION: RUSSIA'S LONG-TERM CONFRONTATION STRATEGY AND THE CRITICAL WEAKNESS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

This research argues that Russia is not pursuing peace, but preparing for a sustained confrontation with NATO and Europe. At the core is NATO's Article 5—the alliance's collective defense clause—which commits members to act in response to an armed attack "as deemed necessary." That ambiguity has created a structural gap Moscow systematically exploits through hybrid operations designed to test NATO's limits, erode allied unity, and undermine deterrence without crossing the threshold for direct military engagement. Peace, in the Western sense—built on mutual restraint and cooperation—is not part of Moscow's strategic horizon.

Using Russian- and Ukrainian-language sources, doctrinal texts, and open-source intelligence, the project traces the ideological consolidation of Putin's regime, its historical pattern of revisionism, and its calculated use of hybrid warfare, populism, and economic militarization. It examines conventional force expansion alongside peace negotiations used as strategic deception, and it projects the risks of leaving NATO's vulnerabilities unaddressed.

The central questions are: How does Russia exploit ambiguity in collective defense? What drives its long-term revisionist strategy? And what structural changes are needed to prevent escalation? The goal is not only to map Russia's integrated political, military, and economic approach, but also to develop actionable policy recommendations to strengthen Europe's security architecture against a determined and prepared adversary.

*Matvei is a senior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, double-majoring in International Relations and Economics and pursuing a Certificate in Global Security. His research focuses on European security, NATO's deterrent posture, and Russian hybrid warfare. A native speaker of Russian and Ukrainian, he works extensively with primary-source materials to inform his analysis. His academic work includes projects on deterrence strategy, the weaponization of energy, economic coercion, hybrid warfare, and the exploitation of institutional ambiguity in international frameworks. Beginning this fall, he will join a faculty-led research team examining foreign policy decision-making during major crises.*



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