

Javier Milei, hypermasculinity and foreign policy

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OPINION

Masculinity manifests itself through a set of attributes, values, beliefs, meanings, and behaviors associated with men, the product of a social construct rooted in a particular society. Masculinity finds expression in multiple spheres, including foreign policy. At the same time, political leaders of different ideological persuasions and historical contexts invoke it in the conduct of their countries' international relations. In this sense, masculinity encompasses both a rhetoric and a practice. At its core, it operates through a binary logic: it reflects and affirms aggression, dominance, and assertiveness in opposition to understanding, compassion, and empathy. It emphasizes a dual condition: on the one hand, a relationship of opposites that can evolve into enmity; on the other, a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority. Within this framework, the exaltation of polarization — both domestically and internationally — becomes paramount and is promoted with unusual zeal. In the 1980s, Ashis Nandy introduced the notion of hypermasculinity as an extreme form of machismo. More recently, Xiaoting Han and Chenjun Yin have developed the concept of reactionary masculinity to explain a heightened form of masculinity that reinforces anti-feminist discourse while emphasizing the traits of an increasingly misogynistic male subculture. In both cases, the underlying premise is the perceived need to exaggerate masculine identity because it is supposedly threatened by the feminine, which challenges male dominance. This, in turn, is an attempt to restore an order and authority allegedly undermined by advances in social justice, gender equality, minority rights, sexual diversity, identity pluralism, multiculturalism, and related developments.



The purpose is to recover a form of masculine hegemony perceived to be under siege. Bombast and hyperbole become defining features of a narrative that calls for nothing less than a crusade to defend a supposedly endangered — perhaps even pre-modern — West that claims to need leadership. In short, this new “culture war” is also a struggle to reassert male dominance. In the case of President Javier Milei, he has become a leading example of the influence of reactionary hypermasculinity on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. In his January 2025 address at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Argentinian President Javier Milei laid out several of his core beliefs and principles. He described the idea of social justice as “sinister, unjust, and aberrant”. He continued, “feminism, diversity, inclusion, equity, immigration, abortion, environ-

mentalism, gender ideology, among others, are all heads of the same creature whose purpose is to justify the expansion of the state.” Women, he argued, “do not complain that most prisoners are men, nor that most plumbers are men... let alone that most people killed in wars are men”. He also asserted that, “in its most extreme forms, gender ideology quite simply amounts to child abuse. They are pedophiles...” Taken together, he presented these claims as evidence that “the West has gone astray and must be set back on course.” Implicitly, he casts himself as the one entrusted with that mission. In his speech before the Conservative Political Action Conference in February 2025, Milei was unequivocal: “Only through this international alliance of the Right will we be able to put an end to the political caste we are confronting, which

is dragging the West into its darkest depths... Having a clearly defined enemy is a fundamental aspect of our cultural war... (and for that reason) we are fighting a crucial battle for the future of humanity.” Consequently, he argued, it is essential to combat such “aberrations” as “the climate paranoia agenda” and “the excesses of gender ideology,” among others. During a June 2025 visit to Israel, Milei elaborated on his ideas further by stating: “Whether we accept it or not, the West is now facing a defining test... (for) it is being poisoned by an internal, self-inflicted barbarism; woke ideology and its moral relativism.” He then stated at the Liberty International World Conference in August 2025: “The Argentine Republic fell victim to a new political class that made social justice its banner... Argentina is therefore a battle-

Argentina's President Javier Milei arrives with a chainsaw at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), in Oxon Hill, Maryland, the US, on February 20, 2025.
● GAGE SKIDMORE/FLICKR



Javier Milei, he has become a leading example of the influence of reactionary hypermasculinity on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. This mode of masculinity has been framed within a deeply apocalyptic vision of the West. A fascination with danger, heroism understood as relentless resolve, and cruelty elevated to the level of creed are characteristic features of the hypermasculine personality.

Argentina's President Javier Milei (2nd-R) approves of US President Donald Trump as the latter gestures during their meeting at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in Oxon Hill, Maryland, the US, on February 22, 2025.
● THE WHITE HOUSE



field on which the future of millions of people is at stake, where two completely antagonistic models of the nation confront one another.” Milei continued by claiming that society is afflicted by parasitic ideas that must be fought vigorously: “The first example of a mental parasite is the notion of social justice... This naturally leads us to another mental parasite: the notion of social rights... For decades, they have been inoculating our people with these mental parasites...and that is why the cultural war is so important.” Milei’s reactionary hypermasculinity in foreign policy has not been merely rhetorical. At the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and at both regional and international summits, the Argentine government has distanced itself from initiatives related to gender equality, climate change, and social justice, voting against resolutions that enjoyed overwhelming support across the Americas and the wider international community. For example, in 2024 at the UN, Argentina’s Milei was the only country to vote against a UN General Assembly resolution on preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in the digital environment. At a Ministerial meeting of the G-20 in 2024, Argentina was the only nation that did not sign a declaration on gender equality and women empowerment. In 2025, the government voted against UN resolutions that included gender issues: among others, the call to systematically mainstream a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the call in favor of the improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural area. At the November 2025 Community of Latin American and Caribbean States-European Union, Argentina rejected parts of the final declaration that referred to gender questions, among other issues. Javier Milei, he has become a leading example of the influence of reactionary hypermasculinity on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. This mode of masculinity has been framed within a deeply apocalyptic vision of the West. A fascination with danger, heroism understood as relentless resolve, and cruelty elevated to the level of creed are characteristic features of the hypermasculine personality. Exaggeration and distortion are likewise intrinsic to the notion of reactionary masculinity. This, in turn, has enabled Javier Milei to use his considerable international visibility to launch what Richard Shorten describes as a “reactionary diatribe”: the systematic use of digression, repetition, and relentless insistence. It is entirely possible that, on a personal level, the president’s style of masculinity — closely resembling that of Donald Trump — has served him well. But the world is worse off with Milei and Trump’s brands of machismo.

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