

Masculine Foreign Policy : Geopolitical Codes Interpretation of Donald Trump 2nd Period

Kebijakan Luar Negeri Maskulin: Interpretasi Kode Geopolitik Donald Trump Periode Kedua

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Abstract:

This study offers an alternative explanation of Donald Trump's foreign policies during his second presidential term through a feminist lens in International Relations. Using the concept of hegemonic masculinity as the main analytical framework, combined with the geopolitical codes framework Through a speech analysis of ten of Trump's foreign policy speeches and remarks delivered between January 21 and September 30, 2025, the study dissects his discourse across five dimensions of geopolitical reasoning. The findings reveal that Trump's foreign policy consistently enacts and reproduces the logic of hegemonic masculinity by privileging dominance, transactional loyalty, coercive strength, and unilateralism. In this configuration, statecraft is remasculinized: protection becomes synonymous with control, and diplomacy is subordinated to unilateral power.

Keywords: Donald Trump, Feminism, Foreign Policy, Geopolitical Codes, Hegemonic Masculinity

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini menawarkan perspektif baru dalam memahami kebijakan luar negeri Donald Trump pada masa jabatan keduanya melalui pendekatan feminis dalam studi Hubungan Internasional. Dengan memadukan konsep *hegemonic masculinity* sebagai kerangka analitis utama dan pendekatan kode geopolitik, penelitian ini menelaah kerangka kebijakan luar negeri Trump melalui sepuluh pidato dan pernyataan yang disampaikan pada 21 Januari hingga 30 September 2025. Analisis ini menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan luar negeri Trump secara konsisten mereproduksi logika *hegemonic masculinity yang* menegaskan dominasi, mengutamakan loyalitas yang bersifat transaksional, menampilkan kekuatan koersif, serta kecenderungan untuk bertindak secara unilateral. Dalam kerangka ini, praktik diplomasi mengalami proses remaskulinisasi, di mana perlindungan ditafsirkan sebagai bentuk kontrol, dan diplomasi dikesampingkan.

Kata-kata kunci: Donald Trump, Feminisme, Kebijakan Luar Negeri, Kode Geopolitik, Hegemoni Maskulin

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Introduction

In his recent controversies, or should we instead say, a typical day in the US foreign policy, Donald Trump, threatens to escalate US actions against Venezuela under the cover of drugs flooding the US. The New York Times dug deeper into this and found that White House had already authorised CIA covert actions in Venezuela (Barnes & Pager, 2025). This is a recurring theme within contemporary US Foreign Policy under Donald Trump that the US will use its power to coerce friends and foes if they are at odds with the US. This is problematic in that it requires a deeper understanding of how we should interpret US foreign policy under Donald Trump.

Recent scholarly discourse on Trump's Foreign Policy has tried to shed light on this field. There are several writings and explanations about Trump's Foreign Policy. Some argued that Donald Trump exhibits transactional tendencies of US foreign policy (Schweller, 2018; Beeson, 2020; Woods, 2025); others claim that Donald Trump's personality is reflected within US Foreign Policy (Wolf, 2017; Harden, 2021; White, 2022); other argues that Trump foreign policy is intertwined with the growing populist tendencies of America First and Make America Great Again (Biegon, 2019; Wojczewski, 2020; Hall, 2020); the other trying to explain Trump using the framework of grand strategy and connect it with a broader strategy and doctrine of USFP (Dombrowski & Reich, 2017; Brands, 2017; Clarke & Ricketts, 2017). Existing literature mainly sought to explain Trump's FP through the angle of transactionalism, personality, populism, and grand strategy. However, it predominantly neglects a crucial analytical lens: a feminist analysis. In 2017, Clara Eroukhmanoff used gendered reading to read Donald Trump's 100-day foreign policy, linking feminism with international security to highlight Trump's policy as transforming security matters into private affairs, and justifying the use of force as a necessary disciplinary tool. Beyond that, there is little to no analysis of feminism specifically used to interpret Donald Trump's foreign policy.

This paper advances the discourse by employing a feminist analysis to interrogate the gendered foundations of Trump's foreign policy. We argue that the framework of hegemonic masculinity is essential for understanding the coercive and transactional character of his approach. To systematically demonstrate this, we utilise Geopolitical Codes—a framework articulated by

Flint that analyses how states establish their global position through a set of strategic calculations concerning allies, enemies, and threats (Flint, 2022). This methodological combination allows us to trace how hegemonic masculinity is not merely a rhetorical style but is embedded in the very logic of Trump's statecraft.

Our analysis applies this integrated framework to a curated set of ten speeches and remarks delivered during the initial nine months of his second term (January 20 to September 30, 2025), all pertaining directly to foreign policy. By interpreting the signals within these speeches through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, we reveal a consistent pattern of gendered narratives that privilege dominance, aggression, and a dismissal of cooperative norms.

The article proceeds in three parts. The first section develops our theoretical framework by synthesising Feminist Foreign Policy, the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and the methodological structure of geopolitical codes. The second section presents our empirical analysis, deconstructing the selected speeches to illustrate the performance of hegemonic masculinity across the five dimensions of Trump's geopolitical code. The final section concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for understanding the relationship between gender, power, and contemporary statecraft.

Framework and Method

This section establishes the theoretical and methodological foundations for a feminist analysis of foreign policy in Donald Trump's second term. Grounded in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), this paper integrates the critical lens of Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP), following the argument of Aggestam and True that FFP can be fruitfully incorporated into FPA to uncover the gendered dynamics often neglected in mainstream scholarship (Aggestam & True, *Foreign Policy Analysis and Feminism*, 2024). To systematically operationalize this approach, we employ the framework of geopolitical codes. This methodology provides a structured means of dissecting foreign policy rhetoric into its core strategic components. By applying the critical principles of FFP to the data organized by these codes, this analysis exposes how hegemonic masculinity is prevalent in Trump's foreign policy.

Feminist International Relations (IR) provides a critical framework that uses gendered analysis to challenge the conventional boundaries and assumptions of the discipline. It operates with an emancipatory ethos, seeking to

shift the focus of IR towards a more comprehensive and holistic understanding by revealing the gendered dimensions of theory, structure, and political action (Masters & Zalewski, 2022; Aggestam, Rosamond, & Kronsell, *Theorising feminist foreign policy*, 2018). At its core, Feminist IR argues that mainstream theories like Realism and Liberalism are not neutral but are built upon a masculine worldview that prioritizes the state, war, and hard power, while relegating gender—and often women themselves—to the 'domestic' sphere (Enloe, 1993). This results in a distorted and partial perspective that obscures how gender hierarchies are fundamental to the operation of international politics.

The emergence of Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP), as practiced by states like Sweden, represents a practical application of this critique, aiming to replace masculinized practices with policies centered on human security, cooperation, and inclusion. It is within the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) that this study situates its investigation. Aggestam and True provide a crucial pathway for this, arguing that FFP can be integrated into FPA to uncover the gendered dynamics traditionally neglected in foreign policy scholarship. They identify two key trends: one positive, focusing on the adoption of pro-gender norms, and another, regressive trend, defined by the rise of illiberal populism that actively contests and reverses these norms.

This paper directly engages with Aggestam and True's second trend. The foreign policy of Donald Trump's administration serves as a prime example of this backlash—a deliberate "remasculinization" of American statecraft (Jeffords, 1989). This concept describes a political and cultural process that reasserts hegemonic masculine ideals as the core of national identity and policy. While the U.S. made significant advances in embedding pro-gender norms under the Biden administration (Tausendfreund, 2022). Trump's presidency marked a sharp reversal, sweeping aside these developments in favor of a foreign policy paradigm that openly valorizes dominance, aggression, and transactional politics.

This process of 'remasculinization' is theoretically grounded in the concept of hegemonic masculinity. As defined by Connell and others, hegemonic masculinity is the dominant, idealized form of masculinity that legitimizes patriarchal gender hierarchies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Carver & Lyddon, 2022; Hopkins & Giazitzoglu, 2024). In foreign policy, this manifests as a discursive and practical dominance where traits like aggression, unilateralism, and coercion are valorized, while co-operative, empathetic, and diplomatic

approaches—often culturally coded as 'feminine'—are marginalized (Elias, 2007; Eroukhmanoff, 2017; Mahayasa & Pramono, 2023).

To analyze this, we require a method to identify how hegemonic masculinity is *enacted* in political discourse. As Hopkins & Giazitzoglu argues, hegemonic masculinity is a practice that must be performed, and its domination is revealed through specific narrative codes (Hopkins & Giazitzoglu, 2024). This paper posits that geopolitical codes, as formulated by Flint, provide an efficient methodological framework to isolate and analyze these performances (Flint, 2022). Geopolitical codes are the strategic calculations a state leader uses to orient their country toward the world, which can be broken down into five key indicators: (1) the identification of current and potential enemies, (2) the identification of current and potential friends (allies), (3) the strategies to maintain these allies, (4) the strategies to counter enemies and emerging threats, (5) the justification of these calculations to domestic and global audiences.

These indicators are crucial for a gender analysis because they decompose the complexity of foreign policy into core discursive elements. Each indicator serves as a specific site where a leader's worldview is articulated, allowing us to systematically examine how hegemonic masculinity is embedded in the very logic of statecraft. By applying a feminist lens to these five points, we can trace how a masculinized foreign policy is not merely a style but a structured system of thought and practice.

To empirically apply the integrated framework established above, this study conducts a qualitative analysis of ten public speeches and remarks delivered by Donald Trump during the first nine months of his second term, from January 20 to October 1, 2025. The primary data for this analysis consisted of video recordings sourced from official and reputable channels on YouTube, including The White House archive and C-SPAN, to ensure authenticity. The verbal content from these videos was then transcribed. To guarantee textual accuracy, these transcripts were rigorously cross-referenced and, where necessary, corrected against the official transcripts provided by RollCall.com, a non-partisan service dedicated to documenting U.S. political discourse.

The ten speeches selected for analysis are presented in Table 1 below. The selection was not arbitrary but was guided by the following criteria to ensure a comprehensive and representative dataset. The first is: policy relevances, where: speeches or remarks that are related to foreign policy or are within the context of foreign relations is selected. Next is context of speeches, when: we select speeches

or remarks that are presented in a mix of venues, particularly during international summits, foreign events or significant events (such as inauguration or state of the union speeches). The third is relevant themes, where: we select speeches that are likely to contain material relevant to the indicators of the geopolitical code framework.

Table 1: Ten Foreign Policy-Relevant Speeches by President Donald Trump (2025) Selected for Geopolitical Analysis

Speech No #	Date	Venue/ Context	Event/ Occasion	Rationale for Selection
1 (Trump, President Donald Trump 2025 Inaugural Address FULL SPEECH, 2025)	January 21 2025	U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C.	Donald Trump Inaugural Address	To capture the foundational justification and declaration of fundamental purpose for Trump's foreign policy.
2 (Trump, President Trump Full Speech to Joint Session of Congress, 2025)	March 5 2025	U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C	Donald Trump's first address to the joint session of Congress	To analyze the comprehensive outlining of allies, enemies, and strategic priorities in a key domestic political setting.
3 (Trump, Donald Trump Announces New Tariffs at a Rose Garden Event - April 2, 2025, 2025)	April 2 2025	The White House, Washington, D.C.	Donald Trump announces new tariffs	To examine Trump dealing with partner and adversaries
4 (Trump, Trump speaks at Saudi-US Investment Forum, 2025)	May 13 2025	Riyadh, Saudi Arabi	Donald Trump delivers a speech in front of a	To study how the US maintains and nurtures an ally

			US-Saudi investment event	
5 (Trump, Donald Trump Address U.S. Service Personnel at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, 2025)	May 15 2025	Al Udeid Military Base, Qatar	Donald Trump gave a speech at the key US CENTCO M site.	To analyse the justification for military posture, identification of regional enemies, and reassurance of allies.
6 (Trump, Donald Trump Holds a Bilateral Meeting with Mark Carney of Canada at the G7, 2025)	June 16, 2025	Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada	Donald Trump gave a speech during the G7 Summit in Canada	To examine interactions and framing of traditional allies and highlight strategies for maintaining and challenging these relationships.
7 (Trump, President Trump Statement on U.S. Strikes on Iranian Nuclear Sites, 2025)	June 21, 2025	The White House, Washington, D.C.	Donald Trump addresses the nation after the Iran Strike	To assess the use of military instruments and how the US is countering their adversaries.
8 (Trump, President Trump addresses NATO summit, 2025)	June 25, 2025	Hague, Netherlands	Donald Trump's remarks at the NATO Summit	To explore the US position within the traditional allies and how they counter the shared threat.
9 (Trump, President Trump addresses U.N. General Assembly, 2025)	September 23, 2025	UN Headquarters, New York City	Donald Trump's 2 nd term first General	Offers a comprehensive account of how the US positions itself in contemporary geopolitics.

			Assembly speech	
10 (Trump, Donald Trump Addresses Military Leadership in Quantico, Virginia, 2025)	September 30, 2025	Quantico, Virginia	Donald Trump addresses military leadership	To analyse the role and justification of the military in countering enemies and emerging threats.

Sources: Processed by the authors

Following the selection of speeches, the analysis employed a qualitative critical discourse analysis, proceeding in three stages. First, the speeches were transcribed and their texts organised according to the five core indicators of the geopolitical code framework (Flint, 2006). Second, within each of these five categories, the text was systematically coded for predefined discursive markers of hegemonic masculinity that we will outline in Table 2 (e.g., transactional language for 'allies,' demonising rhetoric for 'enemies,' boasts of force for 'countering threats'). This created a dataset of gendered utterances categorised within their specific strategic context. Finally, in the interpretive stage, these coded instances were synthesised and read through the critical lens of Feminist Foreign Policy (Aggestam & True, 2024) to build a coherent argument about how hegemonic masculinity is performatively enacted across the entire structure of Trump's foreign policy discourse.

The following indicators, derived from the author's interpretation of theoretical literature on hegemonic masculinity and Feminist Foreign Policy (Elias, 2007; Eroukhmanoff, 2017; Carver & Lyddon, 2022; Mahayasa & Pramono, 2023; Aggestam & True, Foreign Policy Analysis and Feminism, 2024; Hopkins & Giazitzoglu, 2024).

Table 2: Geopolitical codes and Hegemonic Masculinity Marker

Geopolitical Code	Indicators of Hegemonic Masculinity
Identifying Friends/Allies	Transactional language, criticising allies, exposing their weakness, praising an authoritarian leader, and hierarchical framing of the relationship

Identifying Enemies/Threats	Demonising/dehumanising language, personal attack on the leader/emasculating nicknames, threats, exaggeration, binary thinking
Maintaining Allies	Dismissal of multilateralism, hard power and leverage, neglect of soft power, intimidation, and conditional support
Countering Enemies	Preference for hard power and military force ('fire and fury', boasts of military capability); unilateral action; aggressive threats; marginalisation of non-military solutions.
Justifying the Code	Appeals to national pride/honour ('respect', 'great again'); simplistic, emotional sloganeering; personalisation of policy ('I alone'); dismissal of critics as 'weak'.

Sources: Processed by the authors

Analysis of Each Geopolitical Code

This section will present the results of the analysis of the ten selected speeches. The structure of this section will follow the five geopolitical codes. Each section will outline how hegemonic masculinity is discursively prevalent within Trump's Foreign Policy.

Code 1: Identifying Friends / Potential Friends

In Trump's Foreign Policy, hegemonic masculinity frames friends and potential friends through the logic of dominance and dependency, defining them by their tribute, compliance, and emulation of "strongman" authority.

Transactional Language

Trump consistently reduces alliances to economic transactions, evaluating partnerships through payment and contribution rather than shared values. He declared, *"My administration is also working on a gigantic natural gas pipeline in*

Alaska, among the largest in the world where Japan, South Korea and other nations want to be our partner with investments of trillions of dollars each" (Speech #2). Here, friendship is commodified, reduced to the partnership of contribution. Similarly, he affirmed, *"Yesterday, we signed an agreement for Qatar to purchase \$42 billion worth of the finest American military hardware... Qatar will also be investing \$10 billion to support this massive base in the coming years"* (Speech #5). Such statements reveal a transactional masculinity that translates diplomacy into ownership and hierarchy, where alliances become proof of America's ability to command tribute. Friendship, in this framing, is not merely transactional but also symbolizes economic deference, where financial contributions signify respect and recognition of U.S. superiority.

Criticizing Allies

Trump's friendships are maintained not through cooperation but through discipline. He publicly shames allies for failing to meet his expectations, positioning himself as a patriarchal leader correcting the complacency of dependents. He admonished European nations, *"Europe has sadly spent more money buying Russian oil and gas than they have spent on defending Ukraine, by far... It's hard to believe that they wouldn't have stopped it and said at some point, come on, let's equalize, you've got to be equal to us, but that didn't happen"* (Speech #2). Through ridicule, Trump reasserts the United States' masculine authority, framing discipline as virtue and compliance as strength. The friend who hesitates becomes effeminate: passive, indecisive, and in need of correction.

Hierarchical Framing of Relationships

In Trump's rhetoric, allies are subordinated within a hierarchy that affirms American primacy. His reference to Ukraine exemplifies this: *"Earlier today, I received an important letter from President Zelenskyy of Ukraine... Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians... Regarding the Agreement on Minerals and Security, Ukraine is ready to sign it at any time that is convenient for you"* (Speech #2). The phrasing positions the U.S. as the one who determines when peace and prosperity may proceed. Similarly, in addressing NATO, Trump stated, *"The United States accounts for two thirds of all NATO defense spending... we were carrying much more than our fair share"* (Speech #8). This articulation reinforces a paternal logic of protection, where American strength sustains global security, and allies exist in a state of dependency. Hierarchy becomes an act of care of how the powerful

protect the weak and in doing so, the masculine self-image of America as the hegemonic leader is maintained.

Praise for Authoritarian Leaders

Trump's admiration for authoritarian rulers reveals his preference for strength, decisiveness, and command—traits that mirror his own masculine ideal. His praise for Arab monarchs demonstrates this alignment: *"What a great place, what great people... I want to thank His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince, for that incredible introduction. He's an incredible man. I've known him a long time now. There's nobody like him... With this historic state visit, we celebrate more than 80 years of close partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia"* (Speech #4). Likewise, he applauded the Emir of Qatar, *"A man, a leader, Emir, he's been a special friend of mine for a long time... he's a great leader"* (Speech #5). This rhetorical reverence for "strong" men transforms authoritarian power into a model of masculine prowess. Thus, this friendship reflects not shared values but shared displays of command.

Extending Friendship through Power

Trump's foreign policy language often presents friendship as an act of benevolence from a position of dominance. His remarks on Lebanon illustrate this masculine impulse: *"It's horrible what's happened in Lebanon, but you have a great ambassador, I can tell you that... My administration stands ready to help Lebanon, create a future of economic development and peace with its neighbors"* (Speech #4). Similarly, he invoked his authority to justify leniency toward enemies-turned-friends: *"After discussing the situation in Syria with the crown prince...and also with President Erdogan of Turkey... I will be ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness"* (Speech #4). Here, friendship is framed as conditional mercy, where the masculine act of lifting sanctions becomes a demonstration of control. Even his discussion of Ukraine's letter of compliance and Russia's supposed cooperation, *"We're going to get it stopped. It's a senseless war that would have never happened if I was president and it shouldn't be allowed to go on. And I think we're being given good cooperation by Russia and by Ukraine."* (Speech #3), reflects this dominance disguised as diplomacy. The act of providing security becomes a demonstration of power; gratitude from allies, a reaffirmation of status. Through this framing, friendship is anchored in dependence and defined by control.

Conditional Praise and Selective Admiration

Trump's approval of allies is conditional, granted only when their actions conform to his expectations. He commended NATO members only after their submission to his financial demands, stating, "*NATO allies committed to dramatically increase their defense spending... something that no one really thought possible*" (Speech #8). He similarly acknowledged Germany's policy shift with condescension masked as praise: "*I give Germany a lot of credit... they went back to fossil fuel and nuclear, which is good*" (Speech #9). Such language converts compliance into virtue and positions deviation as weakness. Friendship, therefore, becomes a moralized test of strength—measured not by mutual respect, but by the willingness to mirror America's assertive posture.

Across these speeches, Trump constructs friendship as a performance of dominance, dependency, and reward. His alliances are marked by the rhetoric of transaction and the discipline of hierarchy: friends are those who pay tribute, comply, and emulate his strength. In praising authoritarian leaders, he legitimizes power as the masculine essence of friendship, where loyalty is proved through submission and material exchange. When allies falter, he corrects them; when adversaries submit, he reclaims them. This logic masculinizes diplomacy itself: protection becomes authority, generosity becomes control, and respect becomes obedience. Trump's "friends" exist within a paternal order sustained by discipline and deal-making. The friend, in this global order, is not an equal partner but a symbol of America's hegemonic masculinity.

Code 2: Identifying Enemies / Potential Enemies

Trump's identification of enemies is a performance of hegemonic masculinity aimed at redeeming a supposedly violated America. By designating adversaries as corrupt, chaotic, and manipulative, it creates a binary divide where US virility and righteousness must be asserted through control and punishment.

Demonizing and Dehumanizing Language

Trump constructs enmity through strict moral binaries, positioning enemies as corrupt, invasive, and inhuman. His description of Iran signifies this notion: "*The biggest and most destructive of these forces is the regime in Iran, which has caused unthinkable suffering in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Yemen and beyond*" (Speech #4). The enemy is an impure force spreading chaos, which must be purged

through masculine justice. This rhetoric collapses complexity into moral binaries, reducing complex geopolitics to a moral crusade. He intensifies this by dehumanizing Iran, *“We successfully carried out a massive precision strike on Iran’s nuclear enrichment facilities... it was called obliteration”* (Speech #8). Here, violence becomes an assertion of masculine military intervention. By casting obliteration as victory, Trump replaces empathy with control. In his words, *“Our objective was the destruction of Iran’s nuclear enrichment capacity and a stop to the nuclear threat posed by the world’s number one state sponsor of terror”* (Speech #7). Masculinity and moral righteousness are linked, asserting that violence and domination are necessary acts of defense against terror.

Exaggeration and Victimhood as Masculine Justification

Trump portrays America as a violated body, feminized through exploitation and thus in need of masculine redemption. He laments, *“For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, raped, and plundered by nations near and far, both friend and foe alike. American steelworkers, auto workers, farmers, and skilled craftsmen... They watched in anguish as foreign leaders have stolen our jobs, foreign cheaters have ransacked our factories, and foreign scavengers have torn apart our once beautiful American dream...”* (Speech #3). His retaliatory stance becomes an act of reclamation, a restoration of power through protectionism and force. In this framing, the masculine duty is to redeem itself. Violence and economic aggression thus serve as instruments of reclaiming its masculinity, returning dignity to a violated nation.

Trump’s enemy construction extends beyond geopolitics into trade, where he equates economic rivalry with war. He proclaims, *“Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades. And now, it’s our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the European Union, China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Canada... charge us tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them”* (Speech #2). This retaliation is a way to reassert America’s dominance after years of emasculating exploitation. Exposing nations like India, China, and South Korea, *“India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100 percent. China’s average tariff on our products is twice what we charge them. And South Korea’s average tariff is four times higher”* (Speech #2), signifies Trump’s response as a way to “fight back,” where tariffs act as a tool for warfare.

Binary Thinking and Overexaggeration

Trump reduces international relations to a world of winners and losers, strong and weak, masculine and emasculated. He stated, *“If imposing tariffs and protective barriers made nations poorer, then every country on earth would be racing to eliminate these policies and China would be the first in line. They run a very strong country, but they’re not first in line”* (Speech #3). The compliment to China’s “strength” underscores an acknowledgment of masculine competition that must be subdued. Similarly, his ultimatum toward Iran, *“If Iran’s leadership rejects this olive branch and continues to attack their neighbors, then we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure... drive Iranian oil exports to zero... Iran will never have a nuclear weapon”* (Speech #4), illustrates Trump’s fixation on total compliance or annihilation. There is no middle ground, no diplomacy; power is validated through dominance, not dialogue.

Across these speeches, Trump demonstrates masculine reassertion. The world he imagines is one of violation and masculine redemption: America, once emasculated by invasion, deceit, and weakness, must reclaim its dominance through punishment and control. Enemies are feminized—corrupt, chaotic, manipulative—while America embodies virility, control, and righteousness. Through his demonization of Iran, ridicule of economic competitors, Trump transforms global politics into a morality play of domination and emasculation.

Code 3: Maintaining Friends

Trump's strategy for maintaining alliances is rooted in a patriarchal vision of world order. He derides multilateral cooperation as weakness, sanctifying a form of leadership based on military and economic might, which transforms alliances into vertical relationships of authority and conditional support

Dismissal of Multilateralism

Trump’s position on alliance maintenance conveys deep suspicion toward multilateralism, which he associates with indecision and emasculation. Rather than supporting cooperation, he elevates independence as the true marker of strength. Declaring that *“This great transformation has not come from Western intervention noise or flying people in beautiful planes giving you lectures on how to live and how to govern your own affairs”* (Speech #4), Trump dismisses the inefficacies of diplomacy as mere posturing. The rejection of the United Nations further reiterates this disdain: *“The United Nations did not even try to help in any of them. I*

ended seven wars, dealt with the leaders of each and every one of these countries, and never even received a phone call from the United Nations offering to help in finalizing the deal” (Speech #9). Through these remarks, Trump casts America as the self-reliant patriarch of the international system, emancipated from the bureaucratic dependence of multilateral institutions. The masculine state acts alone, confident in its authority and unencumbered by the collective hesitation of others.

Hard Power and Leverage

In Trump’s imagination, friendship is maintained not through sentiment or shared values but through the tangible assertion of military might. Military power and economic leverage are the tools of discipline that guarantee respect. He boasts, *“We’re now selling large quantities of American made weapons to NATO and we’re getting really fair pricing...It’s my hope that from Europe to Asia, to the Middle East, our allies will make similar commitments to increase their military capabilities and this will greatly strengthen our alliances.”* (Speech #10), transforming trade and arms sales into an act of dominance. Likewise, he warns enemies that *“If you threaten America or our partners, however, then you’ll be faced with overwhelming strength and devastating force. We have things that you don’t even know about... the United States military launched more than 1,100 strikes on the Houthis in Yemen”* (Speech #4). Protection, here, is indistinguishable from punishment, in the sense that the same strength that secures friends can also devastate them should they deviate. Thus, Trump frames alliance by insisting power relations itself is the moral justification for loyalty.

Neglect of Soft Power

Trump’s disavowal of multilateral cooperation extends naturally to a rejection of soft power. Diplomacy, empathy, and cultural influence are feminized as ineffectual instruments compared to sheer unadulterated force. He insists, *“It’s vital that this additional money be spent on very serious military hardware, not bureaucracy”* (Speech #8), casting institutional engagement as pointless. Even his pursuit of peace, *“In the Middle East, we’re bringing back our hostages from Gaza... the Abraham Accords”* (Speech #2), is framed not as negotiation but as conquest, a masculine achievement realized through strength rather than persuasion. The absence of emotional or moral rhetoric in these statements underscores a worldview where respect flows only from capability, and peace itself is a form of

domination achieved through deterrence. In this hierarchy of power, diplomacy is merely window dressing, while militarism is more effective.

Intimidation

In Trump's foreign policy vocabulary, intimidation functions as an instrument through which obedience is secured and hierarchy reaffirmed. His proclamation, *"If you threaten America or our partners, however, then you'll be faced with overwhelming strength and devastating force"* (Speech #4), exemplifies this dynamic. Even the language of defense of "overwhelming," "devastating", transforms deterrence into an example of masculine aggression. When he later adds, *"As president, my priority is to end conflicts, not start them... But I will never hesitate to wield American power, if it's necessary, to defend the United States of America or our partners"* (Speech #5), he positions peace as a result of intimidation. Protection thus requires the perpetual display of readiness to punish; fear becomes the driver of loyalty. This coercive nature between dominance and safety mirrors patriarchal control through the threat of withdrawal or retribution.

Conditional Support

Even Trump's overtures of friendship and unity are steeped in hierarchy. His self-description as *"a peacemaker and unifier"* (Speech #1) conceals a logic of conditional benevolence, where peace is extended to those who comply with American order. He underscores this by tying alliance to transactional outcomes: *"We just reached a historic trade agreement with the United Kingdom... China has agreed to open up to the United States for trade"* (Speech #4). Cooperation is rewarded only when it mirrors U.S. interests, as seen when he boasts, *"If I didn't like him, I'd get out of here so fast... I like him too much. That's why we give so much, you know, too much"* (Speech #4), revealing the personal and hierarchical nature of his diplomacy. Likewise, his claim that *"I got on the phone with the two countries... we were going to solve that war. We did"* (Speech #10) reimagines peacemaking as an act of masculine leadership, in which submission ensures stability. Benevolence, in this imagination, becomes a privilege which is granted, not shared, and alliance is maintained through displays of gratitude and obedience.

Across these statements, Trump's maintenance of alliances reveals a distinctly patriarchal vision of international order. Multilateral cooperation is derided as weakness, while strength constituted through military, economic, and

personal might is sanctified as the ultimate form of leadership. By privileging hard power over diplomacy, and intimidation over persuasion, Trump transforms friendship into a vertical relationship of authority. Support is conditional, peace is performative, and protection is inseparable from punishment. In this masculinized global order, the United States stands as the commanding patriarch that is respected, feared, and obeyed, its dominance continually reaffirmed through the subordination of those who depend upon it.

Code 4: Countering Enemies

Trump's strategy for countering enemies is a direct performance of hegemonic masculinity, prioritizing unilateral force and coercion over diplomacy. He frames national strength as an unyielding, aggressive autonomy, while portraying negotiation as a form of emasculation. This approach transforms foreign policy into a spectacle where domination is central to national identity

Unilateralism

Trump consistently constructs America's confrontation with its enemies through unilateral action, portraying agency from institutions as the highest form of masculine resolve. He proclaimed, "*No other military on earth could have done it*" (Speech #8), a declaration that erases collective contribution in favor of individual triumph. Similarly, in reference to Iran, he boasted, "*Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated... the bully of the Middle East must now make peace*" (Speech #7). These statements posit isolation as strength and dominance as paramount, casting the United States as a self-reliant enforcer of global order. The absence of cooperation signifies unilateralism—America acts not out of consensus but out of its own will. This unilateralism performs a distinctly masculine autonomy, where the ability to act alone without restraint becomes the ultimate marker of national strength and control.

Rejection of Diplomacy

In Trump's worldview, diplomacy embodies indecisiveness that is incompatible with masculinity. At his bilateral meeting, he lamented, "*They'd like to talk, but they should have done that before. I had 60 days and they had 60 days... I'd say Iran is not winning this war and they should talk immediately before it's too late*" (Speech #6). The rejection of dialogue here is not merely strategic but figurative:

to negotiate is to yield, to hesitate is to be emasculated. Likewise, he dismissed the UN's role entirely, saying, *"The UN writes a really strongly worded letter and then never follows that up. It's empty words,"* (Speech #9). In contrast, he declared, *"The only thing that solves wars is action"* (Speech #9). This rhetoric aligns decisiveness with masculinity and deliberation with weakness, redefining power as the refusal to conform. The masculine state acts, while the feminized states opt to negotiate, asserting that dominance, not dialogue, is the true determinant of leadership.

Threats and Intimidation

Trump's counter-enemy discourse thrives on intimidation as performance. He warned, *"If you threaten America or our partners, however, then you'll be faced with overwhelming strength and devastating force"* (Speech #4), and declared that *"I will never hesitate to wield American power, if it's necessary...America's military will answer our enemies without even thinking about it."* (Speech #5). This threatening posture transforms deterrence, designed to provoke respect and subordination. Trump's boast, *"We were a little bit threatened by Russia recently, and I sent a submarine—the most lethal weapon ever made"* (Speech #10), dramatizes the threat of retaliation as a diplomatic strategy. Such rhetoric enacts masculine dominance through the assertion that America's power must be visibly, even ostentatiously, enforced. The enemy's compliance is not enough; their fear is the desired outcome. By equating intimidation with order, Trump renders terror an instrument of governance and masculinity a guiding hand.

Marginalization of Non-Military Threats

Trump's approach to countering enemies rests on an unyielding faith in hard power, dismissing non-military strategies as irrelevant or weak. He announced, *"We just got the greatest missiles, the greatest weapons... you have to do it because we believe in peace through strength"* (Speech #4). Peace, in this notion, is not a moral state but a result of dominance and a reward for submission. Trump's remark that *"In the event that Russia is not ready to make a deal, the United States is fully prepared to impose very strong tariffs, which would stop the bloodshed quickly"* (Speech #9) recasts tariffs as militarized coercion rather than methods of negotiation. Even trade is weaponized; trade becomes a substitute for strike. When Trump concluded, *"We must be so strong that no nation will dare challenge us... and in this case, I used trade, I'm not going to trade with you"* (Speech #10),

Trump blurred the lines between commerce and conflict, reaffirming that strength be it military or economic, remains the only legitimate defence. In this formulation, non-military avenues are tolerated only insofar as they perform aggression.

Across these statements, Trump's strategy for countering enemies embodies the basis of hegemonic masculinity through autonomy, coercion, and intimidation. Unilateralism becomes paramount, diplomacy a sign of weakness, and violence the ultimate show of strength. By rejecting cooperation and choosing retribution, Trump constructs national strength as the masculine standard of disciplined, forceful, and unyielding. The enemy, by contrast, is emasculated—open to negotiation, indecisive, and susceptible to fear tactics. Through this gendered moral order, Trump transforms U.S. power into a spectacle of masculinity, where domination is not simply a strategy but also a part of its identity. To “counter enemies” is, in his belief, to portray sovereignty as a show of manhood: independent, aggressive, and absolute.

Code 5: Justifying Position

Trump's justification for his foreign policy transforms nationalism into a gendered moral order. He leverages emotional appeals to national pride and personal authority to legitimize a vision of strength reclaimed from past 'weakness,' while dismissing critique as a deviation from this masculine destiny.

Appeals to National Pride and Honor

Trump grounds his foreign policy justification in the rhetoric of national pride and reclamation, positioning the United States as a once-humbled giant reclaiming its rightful dominance. He opened his presidency proclaiming, *“From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer”* (Speech #1). This declaration transforms governance into moral redemption, portraying America as a resurrected patriarch whose strength demands acknowledgement and adulation. Later, at the NATO Summit, he reiterated this narrative of acknowledgement: *“We've reasserted the credibility of American deterrence, which is like no other”* (Speech #8). Through such pronouncements, pride and respect become the political equivalent of masculinity. Thus, national honor is not merely restored; it is re-imagined as masculinity, free of weakness through defiance and superiority.

Simplistic Emotional Messaging

Trump's discourse relies on repetition and emotional simplicity to mobilize nationalist sentiment through affect rather than argument. He assured audiences, *"We will take in trillions and trillions of dollars and create jobs like we have never seen before... We have been ripped off for decades by nearly every country on earth"* (Speech #2). The binary of victimization and revenge structures Trump's appeal: America, once exploited, now rises in triumph. Similarly, he celebrated prosperity as destiny, declaring, *"Tariffs are about making America rich again and making America great again and it's happening and it will happen rather quickly"* (Speech #2). By compressing complex economic realities into rhythmic slogans, Trump performs leadership as passion and certainty. The emotional cadence of his speech transforms grievance into potency—a performance of masculine confidence that reassures through strength rather than substance.

Personalization of Policy

Trump fuses national achievement with personal agency, conflating his leadership with America's revival. At NATO he boasted, *"At the NATO summit in June, virtually all NATO members formally committed to increase defence spending at my request from 2 percent to 5 percent of GDP"* (Speech #9). That statement is indicative of Trump's personal conquest, situating the president as the prominent figure of authority in which his words are supreme. Trump vehemently proclaimed, *"In the United States, we've launched the Golden Age of America... and with the help of the people of the Middle East, the golden age of the Middle East can proceed right alongside of us"* (Speech #4). Here, global order itself is contingent on his authority, in the sense that it is a paternal projection of its outward strength. Through such framing, Trump performs hegemonic masculinity as leadership embodied: decisive, commanding, and indispensable. Therefore, the leader's will is not limited to state representation but has profound implications for global order.

Dismissal of Critics and Alternative Viewpoints

Trump's justification of policy also depends on dismissing institutions and global norms that constrain unilateral power. He sidestepped international cooperation, asserting, *"The entire globalist concept of asking successful industrialized nations to inflict pain on themselves and radically disrupt their entire societies must be rejected completely and totally, and it must be immediate"* (Speech #9). Likewise, he

presumes the Paris Climate Accord as an act of self-sabotage, insisting that *“America was paying so much more than every country. Others weren’t paying. China didn’t have to pay until 2030”* (Speech #9). In such remarks, dissent is recast as deceit, and multilateralism as emasculating dependence. Trump’s remark, *“They didn’t want to disturb the country where those bases were located. I said we give those countries billions of dollars. We can disturb them a little bit”* (Speech #5), further downplays moral restraint, affirming power through dismissiveness. To question America’s prerogative is to deny its masculine identity as the global leader.

Trump’s justification is grounded in transforming nationalism into a gendered moral order in which pride, emotional simplicity, and authority are the tools of legitimacy. By appealing to honor, he reclaims masculine strength from the imagined emasculation of prior impotence; by exerting inflammatory remarks, Trump converts perceived grievance into motivation for better legitimacy. Trump’s self-personification of policy renders the leader as the sole guardian of American hegemony. Finally, his dismissal of criticism and cooperation reframes domination as destiny, asserting that yielding is weakening and questioning is deviating. Through these intertwined narratives, Trump’s justification of power enacts the production of hegemonic masculinity on a global scale that is confident, defiant, and self-legitimizing. America’s greatness, in these statements, is not merely political; it is the perpetual assertion of manhood through strength.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that hegemonic masculinity is a pervasive force in Donald Trump’s foreign policy, as revealed through a feminist analysis of his geopolitical codes. The findings consistently show a pattern of transactional and hierarchical relationships, demonization of enemies, and a preference for coercion over diplomacy, framing U.S. power as a performance of dominant, defiant manhood. This not only clarifies the gendered underpinnings of the Trump presidency but also underscores how masculinity shapes statecraft, with real-world consequences for global security. By prioritizing domination over human security, this approach highlights the urgent need for gendered critiques to deconstruct and challenge such practices.

We acknowledge the study's limitations, including its focus on only ten speeches from the early phase of Trump's second term, which may not capture evolving rhetoric or broader policy actions. Future research could expand on this by examining a wider range of discourses, such as policy documents or executive behaviors, to assess the full extent of gendered performance in foreign policy.

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