

Daily Meditation 7-27-2026

The Hysterical Masculinity of Hegseth, Trump & MAGA

Good morning.

In today's meditation, we are discussing the "precarious manhood," a phrase used in my first edition, my Trump as Antichrist, *Trump and MAGA as Antichrist* book, the precarious manhood of MAGA.

And just this week in an article in Slate magazine, it was entitled "Trump Got Elected and Re-elected Because of Men. Now They are Turning their Backs on Him." Yes, they broke the bro-code. It shows that *the president won re-election in 2024 in large part due to the role of men in the manosphere, the collection of influencers in media production that preach a vicious gospel of masculinism. Trump has betrayed countless allies and reneged on all sorts of campaign promises, but his commitment to preferencing men over women has never seemed to falter. Returning men, especially young ones, have given him their support. But a new poll conducted by the Economist and Mika poll, found that support is actually diminishing among men. Trump's net approval rating among men in the poll was minus 22, the lowest ever recorded in either of his presidential terms. Women are also cratering when it comes to support for Trump, but men even more so. When he took office, his net approval rating among men was about plus 17. It has fallen 39 points since then. A sign that a great number of people who helped propel Trump into office on a popular vote victory, are growing displeased with their chosen leader. And a poll from the American Research Group conducted last week, painted an even grimmer picture for the president. The support in that poll reached only 30%, while 67% disapproved of his performance. So that is a minus 37% approval.*

But lo and behold, just this morning, and accordingly, Sunday morning, when I finished up my meditation for today, Monday, that is — two articles appeared around exactly this topic. One is that Barron Trump, the son of Donald Trump, has received a subpoena to testify regarding the Tate brothers, who are sort of heroes in manosphere for some reason, and have been accused of rape in England as well as in Romania, and have close connections to the Trump family and especially to Barron Trump. But even more, there was this article by Nick Terse in the Intercept, that just appeared Sunday morning, entitled "Pete Hegseth's Crisis of Masculinity." It's really an amazing companion to my article, which was written this morning and yesterday, before I ever read this article. So let me share it with you.

Self-styled War Secretary Pete Hegseth has a problem with low testosterone. It has left him suffering from what you might call an acute crisis of masculinity. An acute crisis on masculinity. I'm pretty sure he caught it from Teddy Roosevelt. Bear with me, I'll explain. Last week, the Trump administration's preening, strutting wannabe he-man, announced a new mandatory annual screening for troops aged 30 and older, including women, for testosterone deficiency. Troops under 30 can volunteer to be screened. Anyone with low hormone levels will have an option to receive testosterone replacement therapy. Said Hegseth: "It's about restoring and optimizing your natural capability by ensuring you have the biological foundation required to sustain the fight on the brutal and unrelenting modern battlefield." Like all Hegseth initiatives, he links it to lethality, now the animating feature of his life. He called topping-off troops' testosterone levels a "sacred duty." Anyone who has observed Hegseth over the last 15 years can tell you, the man is riddled with deep insecurities. This is just the latest manifestation of nagging anxieties about himself and the wheel-spinning, never-winning military he leads. After 18 months of crackpot policies and puerile posturing at the realm of the War Department, Hegseth's hysteria has only grown.

Notice the writer is using the word hysteria, which is the centerpiece of my article. Michael wrote: *Hegseth has forever struggling to prove his manhood through physical exertion, posting videos of himself engaging in fitness challenges, etc. etc. And by beating up on the likes of Venezuela, attacking elementary school kids in Iran, blowing up unarmed boats packed with civilians in the Caribbean Sea, and threatening tiny Cuba — whereas hero Teddy won fame for a Spanish-American War charging up San Juan Hill. Hegseth believes you can measure manhood by testing testosterone, the same way he believes you can kill your way to victory on the battlefield. It is part of a mélange of flaccid fallacies and fantasies that seem to dominate the worldview of this man, who — and here's the little resume on him — paid \$50,000 to a woman who accused him of raping her, whose former sister-in-law abused him of abusive behavior toward his second wife, whose own mother once called out the fact that he belittles — this is a quote from his mother -- belittles, lies, cheats, sleeps around, and uses women for his own power and ego. From his mother. This fellow heads our Defense Department, and has changed the name to War Department, or wants to.*

All the testosterone in the world isn't going to win America's wars, achieve Hegseth's dream of turning soft men hard, or transforming "Pentagon pussies" into something more in line with his fantasies, much less cure the crushing insecurity swirling in the brain of America's fragile war secretary and the deep deficiency that has long plagued him.

Again, this is an article on Sunday, July 26th, by Nick Terse, writing in the Intercept, entitled “Peak Excess Crisis of Masculinity.” So clearly, I’m not alone in this consideration of what is driving this particular Defense Department head. And what is the deep source of fierce anti-trans that so characterizes MAGA in our time? Is hysterical masculinity at its core? What are men afraid of? Is the medicine dancing in a circle instead of climbing Jacob’s Ladder? How much exaggerated capitalism is born of hysterical masculinity asserting itself?

All these questions, I think, are altogether apt to ask of a public official in a position as powerful and weighty as that of defense director.

Thank you. We’ll see you next week.