

“We do not make pacts with communists”:
The Evolving Rhetoric
of Argentine President Javier Milei
in Relation to China

Sawyer DeShon
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Textual & Investigative

The Turn of the Millennia

Argentina's Main Export Partners:

- ca. 2000 - Brazil 24%, EU 21%, US 11% (CIA World Factbook, 2000)
- ca. 2022 - Brazil 16%, China 11%, US 7%, Chile 5% (CIA World Factbook, 2022)



Figures 1 & 2. Data from UN Comtrade.

IMF Executive Board Approves 30-month US\$44 billion Extended Arrangement for Argentina and Concludes 2022 Article IV Consultation

March 25, 2022

Argentina's 'unprecedented' drought pummels farmers and economy

By Lucila Sigal and Eliana Raszewski

March 9, 2023 4:22 PM EST · Updated a year ago

Argentina inflation soars past 100% mark

15 March 2023

By Laura Gozzi, BBC News

China Lets Argentina Tap Extra \$6.5 Billion From Swap Line

- Second tranche activated during South American leader's visit
- Fernandez says government can now intervene in FX market

By [Manuela Tobias](#)

October 18, 2023 at 8:39 AM EDT

Updated on October 18, 2023 at 10:58 AM EDT

Key Terms

The Swap:

- a mutual loan of foreign currency (pesos/yuans)
- political and commercial maneuver

BRICS:

- Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
- a geopolitical bloc

Javier Milei's recent comments towards Beijing articulate the commercial and geopolitical connections between Argentina and China, and his practical approach shows an evolving understanding of a nation's obligation to maintain connections with strong trading partners, even in the face of ideological differences.

Who Is Javier Milei?

- ‘anarcho-capitalist’
- libertarian
- economist by trade
- former congressman,
2020-2021



Image from La Cancilleria Argentina

Analytical Framework

Aristotle's three genres of rhetoric, per *Rhetoric I*:

- forensic – “either attacks or defends someone” (32)
- epideictic – “either praises or censures somebody” (32)
- deliberative – “urges us either to do or not to do something” (32)

Forensic

attack or
defense of past
events

Deliberative

urging for or
against a
future action



Epideictic

praise or censure in
the present



Javier Milei ✓
@JMilei

RIFAR EL PAÍS POR MONEDAS

Reservas: Argentina pide a China ampliar en más u\$s3.000 millones el swap de monedas



Reservas: Argentina pide a China ampliar en más u\$s3.000 millones el swap de monedas

From ambito.com

11:29 AM · Jan 26, 2022

“RAFFLING OFF THE COUNTRY FOR COINS”

Reserves: Argentina asks China to increase the currency swap by three billion dollars (USD)

- January 26, 2022

“When I said during the campaign that I wouldn’t do business with China, because I don’t side with dictators and communists, the slaves and sycophants of this fake Steve Jobs tried to pin me as liberal and against commerce. They’ve only seen the tip of the iceberg, and already they’re going mad.”

- February 5, 2022



Javier Milei ✓

@JMilei



Cuando en campaña señalé que no haría tratos con China, ya que no me junto con dictadores y comunistas, los esclavos y ensobrados del Steve Jobs falso salieron a pegarme con que yo no era liberal y que estaba contra el comercio.

Ahora han visto sólo una punta y ya están como locos.

[Translate post](#)

10:02 AM · Feb 5, 2022

Bloomberg en Español, *‘Exclusiva con Javier Milei: Promete pagar deuda de Argentina y cerrar el banco central’*

What are your tenets there [regarding international policy]?

“Our fundamental tenets are an open market, peace, liberty, and aligning ourselves with the West, the foremost of which are the United States and Israel.”

And regarding China, is it a primary commercial partner?

“Well, they’ll be commercial partners of the private sector. We do not make pacts with communists.”

But then, what would you do, or rather, would you close Argentina’s relations with China?

“I would not promote any relation with communists: not with Cuba, not with Venezuela, not with North Korea, not with Nicaragua, not with China.”

- August 16, 2023

Tucker Carlson, *'The Javier Milei Interview'*

You've said that as president of Argentina you will not do business with China.

"In fact, not only am I not going to do business with China, I'm not going to do business with any communist. Well, let's see: I am a defender of liberty, of peace, of democracy. Communists do not enter there. The Chinese do not enter there. Putin does not enter there. Lula does not enter there..."

We from the state are not going to promote any type of action with communists or socialists."

- September 14, 2023



Javier Milei
@JMilei

Periodista brasileiro que vive em EEUU, Leonardo Coutinho expone a empresa china interviniendo en las elecciones de argentina. Los Ads pro Massa vendrán desde China. Mira los prints.

Ahora se está intentando identificar la conexión entre la empresa y el gobierno chino.

Eso es grave! En EEUU, por ejemplo, eso puede resultar en impeachment del presidente electo.

Y otra: por qué China prefiere Massa a Milei?

[Translate post](#)

Leonardo Coutinho @lcoutinho · Oct 28, 2023

"O Consulado Geral da China em São Paulo aproveita a oportunidade para renovar à Alesp os protestos da sua elevada consideração."



4:25 PM · Oct 28, 2023 · 3.4M Views

“A Brazilian reporter who lives in the US, Leonardo Coutinho exposes a Chinese company meddling in Argentina’s elections. The pro-Massa ads come from China. Look at the screenshots. Now they’re trying to identify the connection between this company and the Chinese government.

This is serious! In the US, for example, this could result in the impeachment of the president elect. And another thing: why does China prefer Massa to Milei?”

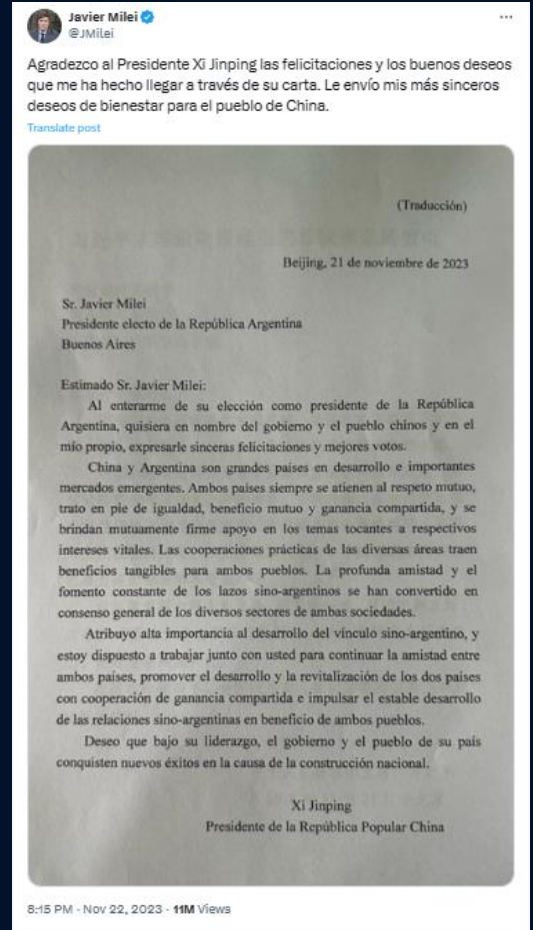
- October 28, 2023

Election Day

November 19, 2023

“I thank President Xi Jinping for the congratulations and well wishes expressed in his letter. I send him my sincerest wishes for the well-being of the people of China.”

- November 22, 2023



La Nación, *'El discurso completo de Javier Milei como presidente de la Argentina el día de su asunción'*

"Like the fall of the Berlin Wall marked the end of a tragic era for the world, these elections have marked a turning point in our history."

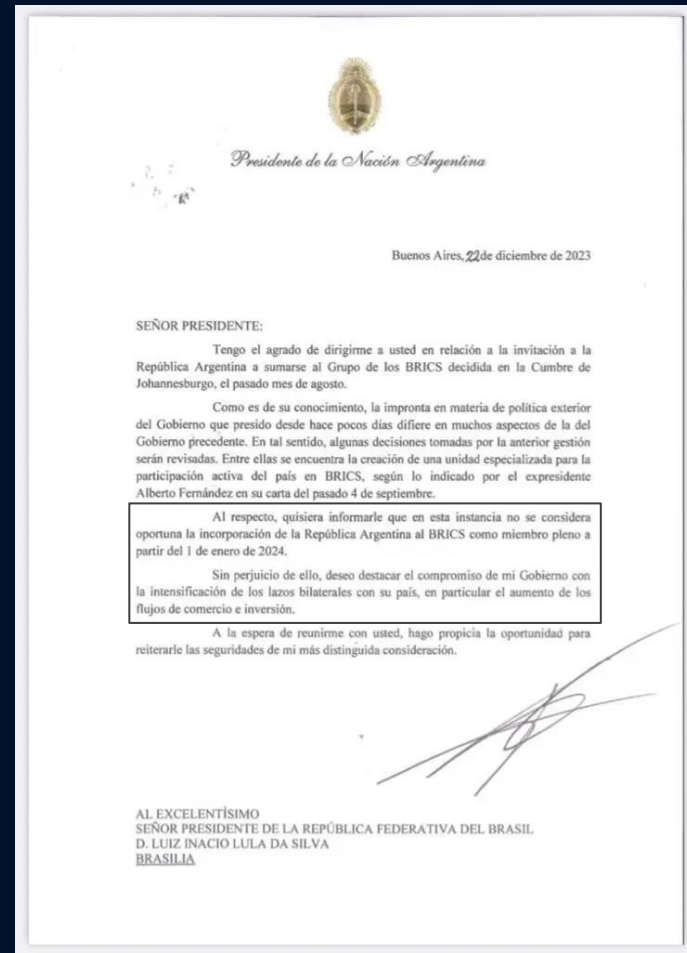
- December 10, 2023

Carta de Javier Milei para los líderes de los países de BRICS

“I want to inform you that for the time being, as of January 1, 2024, the incorporation of the Republic of Argentina into BRICS is not being considered.

In spite of this, I wish to emphasize the commitment of my Government towards the intensification of bilateral ties with your country, in particular the increased flow of commerce and investments.”

- December 22, 2023



The Wall Street Journal, *'Exclusive: Argentine President Milei Says There's 'No Plan B' for Economy'*

China, which is a very important country for Argentina, not only as an enormous market for your exports, but also for its financial support; why have you declared that you don't want to have relations with communists? Why jeopardize this important relation with China?

"It's true that I'm not going to be allied with communists. It's true that we reject being part of BRICS. But we have always held that commercial matters wouldn't have to be affected, because basically, it's the private sector's decision. Now it's true that I don't consider them [China] to be our strategic partner, but you have to separate geopolitical matters from commercial matters. You can have distinct differences. We can have a difference with the United Kingdom regarding the Falkland Islands. However, it doesn't make it impossible to have a set of adult commercial relations."

- January 28, 2024

Evolution of Epideictic Rhetoric

Feb. 05, 2022

“I don’t side with dictators and communists.”

Aug. 16, 2023

“Our fundamental tenets are an open market, peace, liberty, and aligning ourselves with the West... We do not make pacts with communists.”

Sep. 14, 2023

“I am a defender of liberty, of peace, of democracy. Communists do not enter there. The Chinese do not enter there.”

Dec. 22, 2023

“...the incorporation of the Republic of Argentina into BRICS is not being considered.”

Jan. 28, 2024

“It’s true that we reject being part of BRICS... Now it’s true that I don’t consider them [China] to be our strategic partner, but you have to separate geopolitical matters from commercial matters.”

Evolution of Deliberative Rhetoric

Feb. 05, 2022

“I wouldn’t do business with China.”

Aug. 16, 2023

“I would not promote any relation with communists: not with Cuba, not with Venezuela, not with North Korea, not with Nicaragua, not with China.”

Sep. 14, 2023

“I’m not going to do business with any communist... We from the state are not going to promote any type of action with communists or socialists.”

Dec. 22, 2023

“I wish to emphasize the commitment of my Government towards the intensification of bilateral ties with your country,”

Jan. 28, 2024

“It’s true that I’m not going to be allied with communists.”

How has Milei's rhetoric softened?

- dissociates communism from China
- separates Milei's opinion from the Argentine government's actions
- affirms the private sector's agency with regards to China and cements Milei's neo-liberal stance

These strategies allow Milei to maintain his campaign promises—continuing to be the chainsaw-wielding outsider to his constituents—while simultaneously balancing a delicate relationship with both an ideological opponent and commercial ally. Through this analysis of his carefully-crafted rhetoric, we can see a political dance that allows him to walk the fine line of personal opinion and public policy.

Despite two years of inflammatory rhetoric, our analysis has shown that Milei has effectively changed "we do not make pacts with communists" to "I do not make pacts with communists", softening his stance and leaving the door open for Argentina's continued economic relations with China the country, even in the face of his personal qualms with China the "communist" country.

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