

PUTIN'S AUTARCHY LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY: IMPLICATIONS FOR INDONESIA'S NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

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Abstract

Changes in the contemporary geopolitical order have placed energy resources as a strategic instrument in international relations and national defense design. This study examines how Vladimir Putin's authoritarian-autarctic leadership style transforms energy sovereignty into a geopolitical tool and the implications of this policy for the design of defense strategy and doctrine, with an applied focus on efforts to develop an Indonesian national defense strategy based on strategic natural resources (SDA). The research approach used is qualitative descriptive, relying on a review of scientific literature (2021–2025), policy analysis, and an interdisciplinary analytical framework in the form of leadership theories (transformational, transactional, adaptive) and strategic analysis tools (PESTEL). The results identify the central characteristics of Putin's leadership: (1) institutional centralization and dominance of state-owned enterprises in energy governance; (2) instrumentalization of energy exports as a means of geopolitical coercion; and (3) strategic adaptation in the form of market pivots and import substitution due to external pressures. These energy policies have a direct impact on Russia's strategic design: financing military modernization through energy rents, increasing the resilience of the domestic military industry, and developing operational options below the threshold of conventional war; but also creating fiscal vulnerabilities and socio-environmental trade-offs. In the Indonesian context, the findings confirm that the use of natural resources to strengthen defense resilience has strategic potential if balanced with transparent governance, political legitimacy, environmental sustainability, and the adaptation of Pancasila values. Operational recommendations include strengthening state-owned enterprise governance, developing strategic reserves and decentralized infrastructure (microgrids), industrializing critical mineral value chains, and diversifying energy diplomacy. Limitations of the study include reliance on public secondary sources and the rapidly changing dynamics of the energy market; further research is recommended combining quantitative fiscal-energy scenario models and interview-based primary studies.

Keywords: Autarchy Leadership, Energy Autarky, Energy Sovereignty, National Defense, Vladimir Putin.

A. INTRODUCTION

Changes in the configuration of global power over the past decade have placed competition between major powers on an increasingly multi-domain spectrum encompassing military, economic, energy, technological, and information dimensions. Amidst this landscape, national leadership style is one of the determining variables shaping strategic policy preferences, resource mobilization capacity, and the design of security and defense

doctrines. Leaders who choose protectionist, technocratic, or authoritarian strategies will produce different policy patterns in terms of strategic resource allocation, defense industry development priorities, and the use of non-military instruments of power (e.g., energy) to achieve geopolitical goals (Courtney & Wasielewski, 2024).

Russia under President Vladimir Putin stands out as a case study in which energy sovereignty has been made an integral part of national security strategy. Since 2014 and intensifying after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russian energy policy has been directed at securing supply sovereignty, building resilience to external sanctions, and leveraging its position as a hydrocarbon supplier to achieve geopolitical and economic objectives through long-term trade contracts, a market shift to Asia, and import substitution policies for energy technologies (Malev, 2019; IEA, 2022). Institutional arrangements (the role of Gazprom and Rosneft), fiscal policies on energy exports, and the Kremlin-sanctioned energy security doctrine demonstrate how energy assets can be legitimized as instruments of foreign policy and national security (Collins, 2017; Gross & Stelzenmüller, 2024).

The phenomenon of “energy as a weapon” is not just a term, but a documented practice of coercive strategies: gas flow restrictions during bilateral crises, the use of prices and long-term contracts to negotiate political gains, and the structuring of energy value chains to favor domestic military-industrial interests. These practices were then tested by the global response of Europe's transition to supply diversification, the development of LNG infrastructure, and the REPowerEU policy that reduced dependence on Russian supplies, which in turn forced Moscow to adjust its strategy (such as strengthening energy relations with China and accelerating LNG projects in the Arctic) (Corbeau & Mitrova, 2024; Reuters, 2025).

The Indonesian context demonstrates the practical relevance of this analysis. Indonesia is a country rich in natural resources (oil, gas, coal, and strategic minerals) and faces operational vulnerabilities if energy security is not guaranteed. From a national defense perspective, a reliable energy supply is a prerequisite for the operational readiness of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), logistical capabilities, and other essential state functions.⁹ The Russian experience emphasizes two important points for the formulation of a natural resources-based defense doctrine: first, control over strategic resources and technological independence can increase a country's political and operational room for maneuver; second, centralized and export-oriented natural resource management can create a trade-off between domestic welfare, environmental sustainability, and long-term stability if governance is not strengthened (Collins, 2017).

From a leadership and strategy perspective, Putin's model tends to be authoritarian-autarkic with transactional elements, namely emphasizing elite control, mobilizing economic instruments (including state-owned enterprises) for strategic purposes, and adapting policies to external pressures, compared to the transformational leadership model that emphasizes broad participation and collective learning (Burns, 1978). However, adaptive aspects still emerged when energy policy was reoriented towards Asia or when LNG capacity development was accelerated post-sanctions; this emphasizes the need for analysis that brings together leadership theory (transformational, adaptive) with military strategy theory so that foreign lessons can be contextualized for the formation of a national doctrine that is in line with Indonesian values and institutions (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Academically, there is a significant research gap. Studies on global strategic leadership styles (particularly authoritarian autarky) often focus on persona descriptions or macro-geopolitical narratives, without examining the concrete operational implications for defense doctrine design, such as force development planning, logistics sustainment, military energy readiness, and strategic technology integration. Studies linking the dimensions of

leadership, energy politics, and defense doctrine design are still limited, particularly in the context of developing countries with vast natural resources but different governance institutions than Russia (Massalin, 2021).

To address this gap, this research approaches the problem interdisciplinary, combining analysis of leadership theory (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Heifetz et al., 2009), energy policy studies, and military strategy frameworks to examine how autarky leadership, using Russia and Putin's energy policies as a case study, can yield relevant and measurable lessons for developing Indonesia's national defense strategy based on strategic natural resources. This approach emphasizes that the adoption of elements of energy sovereignty must be contextualized with the principles of Pancasila, transparent governance, and sustainable development goals so that the resulting defense policy is effective, legitimate, and sustainable.

This study aims to (1) analyze the characteristics of Vladimir Putin's autarkic leadership in managing energy resources as a geopolitical instrument; (2) evaluate the implications of this energy policy on the design of Russia's defense strategy and doctrine; and (3) formulate operational policy recommendations for the development of Indonesia's national defense strategy based on the utilization and protection of strategic natural resources, taking into account Pancasila values, governance principles, and the sustainability of national development.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Autarky Leadership

Autarky is a term used to describe a state or economy that operates independently. Autarky, in its most basic sense, means "self-sufficient," although it is almost always used in reference to an entity (Corporate Finance Institute, 2015), meaning that the entity, whatever its form, can operate and thrive free from outside influence, support, or trade. The modern trail of autarky generally begins with German economist Friedrich List and his book "The System of National Political Economy," published in 1841. After studying under Friedrich Wilhelm and Joseph Schelling, List moved around, studying and attempting to update the economic perspectives put forward by Alexander Hamilton. The roots of autarky ultimately stem from Georg Friedrich Hegel and the Hegelian belief system, which calls for a strong state and the development of a centralized government that receives input from, but is not overwhelmed by, individuals and their decisions. While far more complex than a single concept, Hegelian philosophy, at its core, focuses on the economic and political power tied to the nation-state, and asserts that trade outside the nation-state is treasonous because it threatens the health and growth of the nation as a whole.

The terms "autarchy," "autarchie," and "autarky" have been used interchangeably for many years to describe the phenomenon of self-sufficiency, or more specifically, "(a policy of) economic self-sufficiency in a political unit" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). Ancient Greek philosophers (e.g., Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Plato, and Aristotle) were among the first to discuss the importance of autarky; they considered it an ideal state for both cities and individuals/households and even used the term to refer to happiness and God (Mayhew, 1995). In Politics, (Jowett et al., 1908) highlighted the importance of cities moving toward self-sufficiency, presenting it as the ultimate goal and the most desirable state of urban existence: "to be self-sufficient is the aim and the best." Two complementary types of self-sufficiency can be distinguished in Aristotle's philosophy of autarky: 1) self-sufficiency in terms of life when a city lacks nothing to meet its basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, and shelter), and 2) self-sufficiency in terms of well-being when a city lacks nothing necessary for a good life (Mayhew, 1995).

Various philosophies of autarky were developed between the 17th and 21st centuries to promote deglobalization, with each sharing the following common premises: “(1) isolation from foreign economic influence, (2) isolation from foreign political and/or cultural influence, and (3) promotion of international peace” (Helleiner, 2021). (Layton, 2010) sees autarky as one of four distinct states of a complex, adaptive, and multilevel marketing system. He suggests that autarky is an initial state in the evolution of marketing systems but does not exclude a new paradigm shift toward autarky, triggered by a myriad of events, such as natural disasters, wars, diseases, or even systematic collapses that relegate the entire system to a state similar to autarky (Layton, 2011). Deglobalization is currently seen as a historically recurring phenomenon in the world economy: 1) the first phase of deglobalization lasted for about 50 years (between 1929 and 1979) and was primarily triggered by the Great Depression and World War I, while 2) the second phase of deglobalization began with the global financial crisis in 2008 (Jones, 2004; Kim et al., 2020). The world has become increasingly fragmented in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and climate change. The largest economies have adopted significant autarkic measures towards greater national independence (Dieter & Biedermann, 2022).

Energy Sovereignty

Energy sovereignty is “the right of a country and nation to independently determine energy management policies to achieve energy security and independence” (Purba, 2016). This definition explains that Indonesia is considered a country with national energy sovereignty when national policies related to energy and its governance are planned, created and implemented independently, that is, without dependence, infiltration, and pressure from external forces, whether the state or other institutions or organizations. This does not mean that Indonesia cannot collaborate with other parties, but cooperation and exchange of information or agreements related to national energy governance issues must be free from pressure from, and dependence on, external interests.

Energy sovereignty is the fulfillment of national energy needs independently without foreign interference or being subordinated to international institutions (BPIW PU, 2022). The vocabulary of energy security, energy independence, and energy sovereignty are three different meanings both in substance and objective in the formulation and implementation of policy concepts to realize them, but are often mixed up. Meanwhile, what is meant by national energy security is "a condition of guaranteed energy availability, public access to energy at affordable (rational) prices in the long term while still paying attention to environmental protection." (Hikam, 2014) Energy security is a description of the extent to which energy can be provided in a timely manner and guaranteed availability at affordable prices and acceptable quality. Indicators used to describe energy security include (1) the amount of energy (availability) both resources and energy reserves, (2) infrastructure availability (accessibility), (3) energy prices (affordability), (4) energy quality (acceptability), and (5) energy portfolio or mix (energy mix). Besides that, energy security also has an element of (6) sustainability, so that energy is required to be managed by paying attention to the environmental carrying capacity.

National Defense in an Energy Perspective

National defense, also known as national defense, is all efforts to maintain state sovereignty, the territorial integrity of a country, and the safety of the entire nation from threats and disturbances to the integrity of the nation and state. The essence of national defense is all comprehensive defense efforts whose implementation is based on awareness of the rights and obligations of citizens and confidence in one's own strength. National defense is carried out by the government and prepared in advance with a national defense system. National defense is a joint force (civil and military) organized by a country to guarantee the

integrity of its territory, the protection of its people, and/or safeguard its interests. National defense is managed by the Ministry of Defense. The armed forces are referred to as defense forces and, in some countries (e.g., Japan), Self-Defense Forces. In military language, defense is the ways to ensure the protection of a sensitive unit and if these resources are clear, for example regarding self-defense methods according to their specialization, air defense, missile defense, etc. Defense actions, tactics, operations, or strategies are to oppose/respond to attacks.

National defense is essentially determined not only by military capability alone, but also by the availability of strategic resources that support the sustainability of military operations and the vital functions of the state. Energy is a key prerequisite in this context because it is directly related to troop mobility, the operation of defense equipment, logistical readiness, and the capacity of the defense industry. This concept aligns with the view that "energy security is an integral part of national security," where failure to guarantee energy supplies implies a significant reduction in national defense capabilities (Yergin, 2020). Therefore, many countries incorporate energy aspects into their national defense and security strategies as a critical factor determining resilience against external threats and internal disruptions.

Furthermore, the energy perspective in defense also contains a geopolitical dimension. Countries with substantial energy reserves can utilize them as a diplomatic tool, an instrument of deterrence, and even leverage in international negotiations. Conversely, countries with a high dependence on energy imports tend to face strategic vulnerabilities, both in the form of potential embargoes and global price fluctuations that disrupt defense budget stability (Colgan, 2013). Thus, energy management is not merely an economic issue, but rather part of a multidimensional defense strategy. Energy, in this context, is seen as a "force enabler" that transforms domestic resources into tangible defense power.

In the Indonesian context, the interconnectedness of energy and defense issues is increasingly pressing. As an archipelagic nation with extensive territory and extensive maritime borders, Indonesia requires a secure energy supply to support military operations at various strategic points. The Ministry of Defense has emphasized the importance of integrating energy policy into defense doctrine, particularly through the development of national energy reserves, diversification of energy sources, and the development of renewable energy for defense needs (Sukma, 2015). This demonstrates the awareness that energy independence serves not only economic development but also a key pillar of national defense. Therefore, Indonesia's future defense strategy needs to internalize the energy perspective as an integral instrument for maintaining national sovereignty and resilience.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Case Study Selection

This study uses a qualitative design with a descriptive-analytical approach, because its main objective is to describe the phenomenon of Vladimir Putin's autarkic leadership in managing energy as a defense instrument, then extracting its strategic relevance for Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the meaning, context, and dynamics of policies that cannot be reduced to mere numbers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The case study of Russia was chosen considering that this country shows the most explicit practice of using energy as a geopolitical instrument as well as national defense, especially since the 2014 Ukraine crisis until the 2022 invasion. This intrinsic case study model provides space for an in-depth analysis of how authoritarian-autarkic leadership interacts with energy resources and defense policies (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The research data sources consisted of academic literature (books, indexed international journal articles), reports from global energy agencies (e.g., IEA, EIA, BOFIT), Russian policy documents, and Indonesian national regulations related to energy and defense. Secondary data were selected because they provide a track record of policies that can be systematically traced, while limited interviews with defense and energy experts in Indonesia served as a complement to enrich the policy perspective. The analysis process was conducted using qualitative content analysis techniques that focused on identifying themes, patterns, and relationships between concepts (Schreier, 2012). Analytical tools included the PESTEL framework to map external factors influencing energy-defense policy, and triangulation of leadership theories (transformational, adaptive, and autarkic-transactional) to connect empirical findings with the conceptual framework. In this way, the research went beyond simply describing cases but also extracted strategic principles that could be contextualized to Indonesia.

Validity and Reliability

To maintain validity, researchers applied source triangulation by comparing findings from various academic, institutional, and practitioner sources to ensure interpretations were not biased toward a single perspective. Conceptual validity was strengthened by linking the findings to established leadership theories and defense strategies in the literature (Bass, 1985; Heifetz et al., 2009). Meanwhile, reliability was maintained by documenting the entire data collection process, source selection criteria, and analysis steps so that they could be replicated by other researchers in similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With this approach, research results are expected to provide a credible, consistent picture with strong practical and academic relevance.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Putin's autarkic leadership in managing energy resources as a geopolitical instrument

The analysis shows that Vladimir Putin's leadership in the energy sector combines three main characteristics: (1) centralized state control over strategic energy assets; (2) an instrumentalist orientation toward energy exports as a foreign policy tool; and (3) strategic adaptation to external pressures through market diversification and technology import substitution. These characteristics are consistent with an authoritarian-autarkic leadership pattern that prioritizes vertical coordination and the use of state-owned enterprises for geopolitical purposes.

First, the centralization of control since the beginning of Putin's administration has positioned state actors, particularly Gazprom, Rosneft, and Novatek, not simply as commercial enterprises but as instruments of national policy. Consequently, investment decisions and export contracts are often guided by strategic state interests rather than pure market logic (LaBelle, 2023) (Colgan et al., 2023). The placement of the siloviki elite in energy management and policy reinforces centralized decision-making mechanisms and reduces the space for independent private actors (Balmaceda et al., 2024).

Second, regarding the instrumentalization of energy exports, data and comparative studies indicate that Russia uses long-term contracts, pricing structures, and infrastructure channels to maximize political leverage over major consumers, particularly Eastern and Central European countries. Measures such as supply restrictions during bilateral crises have been documented repeatedly in recent decades (Hartvig et al., 2024; Kivimaa & Sivonen, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these instruments is now influenced by recipient policy responses (supply diversification, LNG development, and decarbonization), which reduce Russia's margin of maneuver in its traditional markets (Boute, 2022; Pye et al., 2025).

Third, strategic adaptation, the consequences of economic sanctions, and market changes since 2014 (peaking in 2022) have prompted Moscow to accelerate its pivot to Asian markets (a strategy that requires price negotiations, the construction of LNG infrastructure, and long-term contracts with China). This has resulted in a quantitative and qualitative shift in exports, with Arctic LNG and new pipelines becoming priorities, although this shift faces technical, financial, and competitive obstacles, making it difficult to easily displace European market share in the short to medium term (Corbeau & Mitrova, 2024) (Meza et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this pattern is best described as a combination of transactional autarkic leadership (the use of incentives/threats and elite coordination) and adaptive leadership (the ability to adjust strategy to new conditions). Leadership studies suggest that Putin does not primarily rely on transformational collective mobilization, but rather utilizes state structures to achieve pragmatic strategic goals and uses coercion when necessary (Burns, 1978; Heifetz et al., 2009).

This mapping of leadership characteristics clarifies how strategic decisions regarding energy are not merely economic; they are manifestations of national policies directed from the center of power. Therefore, imitating "models" without considering the country's institutional structure and core values can have negative implications (such as authoritarianism, weak governance, and environmental degradation).

Energy as a Geopolitical Instrument

Under Putin, energy, particularly gas, has been treated as a strategic geopolitical instrument. Since the 1990s, Russia has relied on gas as a "coercive diplomatic weapon" against Europe (Collins, 2017). Suraya (2021) notes that Gazprom controls two-thirds of Russia's gas and is a major exporter to Europe; all of its policies are designed to support the Kremlin's geopolitical goals. Gazprom has even been called the "Russian Foreign Ministry of the 21st century" due to its role in Russia's international energy relations (Syahid Suraya, 2021). For example, Russia withheld gas supplies to Ukraine and Eastern Europe during geopolitical crises (e.g., 2006, 2009, 2014) to exert political pressure, and diverted flows to routes that bypassed Western European markets (e.g., Nord Stream). The United States and the European Union are aware of this strategy. The Europe's Energy Security Initiative (Gross & Stelzenmüller, 2024) observed that Moscow's "sharp energy weapon" is natural gas supplied through Gazprom and long-term contracts. However, Putin's attempt to retaliate against Europe by "dropping its weapons" has backfired due to Europe's energy diversification: Gazprom is now unable to replace the lost European market share by shifting to Asia. The European Commission (KEU) even stated that Putin's plan to divide Europe with energy has failed; the EU is now moving towards a clean energy transition and the REPowerEU policy to gradually end Russia's dependence on fossil fuels.

Russia systematically manages its resources. For example, Putin emphasizes the need for "technological independence" (using domestically produced equipment) and the development of a domestic LNG market in the Arctic (Malev, 2019). Russia's long-term energy strategy (ES-2050) also emphasizes expanding gas and coal exports to Asia while making energy an integral part of foreign policy and national security. The emphasis on import substitution and focus on Asian markets demonstrate the military's strategic leadership orientation: leveraging domestic advantages to enhance national capacity. The Russian economy has historically been highly energy-dependent (high energy intensity) (BOFIT, 2024), making control of its energy resources a key tool for achieving geopolitical ambitions.

The implications of Putin's energy policy for the design of Russia's defense strategy and doctrine

Secondary data analysis and policy studies indicate that Russian energy policy significantly contributes to several aspects of defense strategy design, including: (1) financing

military modernization through energy rents; (2) increasing the resilience of domestic defense logistics and industries; (3) geopolitical influence that changes the strategic calculus of opponents and partners.

1. Financing military modernization. Oil and gas revenues are a significant component of the Russian state budget and provide funding for military spending and defense equipment modernization programs. Empirical studies have shown a correlation between periods of high energy prices and accelerated weapons modernization programs and strategic exercises; conversely, sanctions and declining revenues force budget rationalization and prioritization of essential capabilities (Skalamera, 2023) (IEA, 2022).
2. Military-industrial independence and import substitution. Sanctions pressures drive import substitution policies in the energy technology and equipment sectors, as well as a push to strengthen the domestic defense industry. This has resulted in a doctrinal orientation that prioritizes long-term survivability and domestic production of critical assets for sustained military operations in the face of external interruptions (Massalin, 2021).
3. Geopolitical leverage and the doctrine of inclusive non-military uses. Energy sovereignty provides Russia with tools to influence the strategic environment (deterrence by denial/compellence via energy), which for doctrine designers means developing options below the threshold of conventional war (grey-zone operations) and increasing integration between foreign policy, economics, and military capabilities (LaBelle, 2023). However, this effectiveness is diminished when targets implement supply diversification and technology substitution, situations that require Russia to shift its strategy from coercive to protective and cooperative.
4. Weaknesses and trade-offs. Utilizing energy as a strategic instrument also carries weaknesses: budgetary dependence on energy rents makes military strategy vulnerable to market fluctuations; a strong export orientation can override domestic needs and investment in resilient infrastructure; and centralized decision-making has the potential to lead to inefficiencies and corruption that are detrimental to long-term defense readiness (Balmaceda et al., 2024).

Relevance for Indonesia

How are Putin's lessons relevant to developing Indonesia's defense strategy? As a country rich in natural resources, Indonesia has the opportunity to apply the principle of energy sovereignty to strengthen national capabilities. However, this approach must be aligned with the values of Pancasila and democratic principles. For example, Suraya (2021) recommends that Indonesia develop battery-based renewable energy so that this strategic resource becomes a bargaining chip and national deterrence (Syahid Suraya, 2021). This aligns with the needs of a modern defense industry, such as the development of lithium-based energy systems for military electric vehicles.

The Indonesian Ministry of Defense has highlighted the importance of energy security in the defense context. Ministry documents identify "energy security" as a crucial element of the defense system, ensuring the continuity of military operations, both in peacetime and in times of crisis (Sundari, 2024). This means that Indonesia must secure energy supplies (both fossil and renewable) for defense purposes. Just as Russia controls Gazprom, Indonesia needs to strengthen the role of state-owned energy companies and national research in defense policy. For example, investing in electric cars and renewable energy generation near the border could reduce dependence on imported military fuel.

From a leadership perspective, Putin's autarkic approach needs to be contextualized with our values of struggle. Transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) will be needed to inspire

national synergy in facing strategic challenges (Qoyyimun Nafal et al., 2024). TNI (Indonesian National Armed Forces) and civilian leaders must encourage youth participation in high-tech sectors, strengthen domestic industrial innovation, and foster national solidarity (*mustawahid*) in utilizing natural resources for defense. However, Putin-style autocracy and extreme centralization must be avoided, as they contradict the principle of togetherness in Pancasila. An adaptive approach (Heifetz et al., 2009) is also crucial: leaders must be flexible in aligning energy policies with international and domestic dynamics.

Operationally, Indonesia can combine Putin's approach with our values. Long-term strategies could include import substitution in strategic sectors (military fuels, defense electronic components), strengthening energy diplomacy with partner countries (so that our resource surplus supports political shifts), and developing natural resource-based defense alliances (such as lithium cooperation with Australia or Brazil). However, all these efforts must be accompanied by transparent and accountable governance, so that the desired energy sovereignty aligns with social justice and environmental sustainability. For example, instead of excessive fossil fuel exploitation, Indonesia could accelerate the transition to clean energy while developing a pilot defense-industry plant project involving military universities and relevant state-owned enterprises.

In short, Putin's autarkic leadership style teaches the importance of strategic independence through energy, but Indonesia must adopt it with transformationalism and adaptability in accordance with Pancasila. National strategic leadership should be able to integrate natural resources, human strength, and technology within the *Sishankamrata* framework in an inclusive, characteristic, and innovative manner for long-term national resilience.

Operational policy lessons and recommendations for Indonesia's natural resource-based national defense strategy

A key lesson from Russia's experience is that strategic energy resource management can be an instrument for enhancing state capabilities including military financing, geopolitical bargaining power, and logistical resilience but also poses budgetary, environmental, and governance risks if not balanced by robust oversight and transparency mechanisms (Yergin, 2020; Colgan, 2014). For Indonesia, which possesses substantial natural resource assets and unique geographic challenges (as an archipelagic nation), policy recommendations must balance strategic independence, democratic governance, and the principles of sustainable development. The following statement outlines systematic operational recommendations in four domains: 1) institutional policy and governance; 2) defense operational readiness (logistics sustainment); 3) strategic natural resource-based defense industry development; and 4) energy diplomacy and strategic alliances.

Institutional policies and governance

The first recommendation emphasizes institutional and governance reform: strengthening the role of state-owned energy enterprises (Pertamina, PT PLN Persero) must be achieved through clear accountability mechanisms, the separation of commercial and strategic state functions, and the implementation of good corporate governance in accordance with international standards. The experiences of other countries and studies on state-owned enterprises confirm that centralization without checks and balances increases the risk of politicization of decisions, inefficient resource allocation, and the potential for corruption factors that actually weaken long-term resilience (OECD, 2016). Recommended practices include (a) establishing a clear public mandate for strategic state-owned enterprises; (b) publicly published periodic performance audits; (c) rules on conflicts of interest and technical management rotation; and (d) mechanisms for participation by civil society stakeholders (parliament, academia, and the public) to maintain the legitimacy of strategic policies. These

steps align with the general framework for state-owned enterprise governance, which is recommended to maintain a balance between commercial objectives and national interests (Muyasyaroh, 2024; Rizaldi et al., 2024).

Defense operational readiness

Two urgent technical steps are (a) the development of a strategic fuel reserve (SPR) specifically for defense purposes and (b) the decentralization of energy infrastructure for border bases/ports through microgrids and renewable energy storage.

- a. Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) and defense-specific fuel reserves. Countries facing the risk of supply disruptions maintain strategic reserves to maintain the continuity of economic and military operations. A study of Indonesia shows that despite operational reserves, there is not yet an adequate SPR to mitigate major disruptions. Therefore, the establishment of an SPR (including the allocation of quotas/components for military needs) is a priority policy. SPR development must incorporate strategic location, stock rotation mechanisms, and storage facility security standards (Wijayanto et al., 2022) (Saputra & Lutfiana Rakhman, 2025).
- b. Supply decentralization and microgrids at strategic bases. To minimize logistical vulnerability (dependence on centralized fuel supplies), military bases on outermost islands need to be equipped with renewable energy-based microgrids plus battery storage systems to enable islanding (operating independently) during disruptions. A study of military microgrid implementation at the Indonesian Defense University demonstrated that microgrids are a practical solution to ensure electricity availability and support the national energy transition policy, while reducing the need for fossil fuels, which are difficult to distribute to remote areas (Kuntjoro et al., 2023). Pilot implementation at selected bases requires a cost-benefit analysis, infrastructure security assurance, and a technical training program for Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) personnel (Aprianto et al., 2024).

Development of defense industry based on strategic natural resources

Utilization of natural resources to support the defense industry must be directed at creating a domestic value chain (from extraction processing manufacturing R&D recycling), especially for critical minerals (nickel, cobalt, lithium, and other battery materials) (Pasaribu et al., 2025). The IEA and its critical minerals market report confirm that demand for raw materials for batteries and military applications will continue to increase, so developing a downstream national battery industry is a strategic opportunity to provide encrypted energy components for military platforms (IEA, 2023). However, industrialization policies must include: (a) strict environmental standards and spatial planning approvals to prevent socio-ecological degradation; (b) equitable value-sharing schemes for local communities; (c) incentives for downstream investment with requirements for technology transfer and local content; and (d) integration of civil-military R&D programs for technology adaptation to the context of defense operations (e.g., tactical energy storage systems, portable micro-turbines, hybrid propulsion). In addition, the formulation of a critical minerals industrialization roadmap needs to anticipate global market volatility and third-party dependency in the supply chain, so that policies must include risk mitigation strategies (market diversification, long-term agreements, strategic reserves of raw materials) (Lucas, 2025; IEA, 2023).

Energy diplomacy and strategic alliances

Energy as a foreign policy instrument must be managed through pragmatic diplomacy: partner diversification, joint reserve agreements, and energy facility exchange mechanisms can enhance regional resilience while providing Indonesia with diplomatic leverage. The diplomatic framework must be rooted in the principle of free and active, yet pragmatic: Indonesia can negotiate strategic energy partnerships that provide access to reserves,

downstream technology, and infrastructure investment (e.g., refining capacity, pipelines, and LNG terminals). Furthermore, energy diplomacy can also be directed at developing project-based soft power for example, cooperation on the construction of renewable power plants in neighboring countries as a form of regional stabilization but all forms of cooperation must be preceded by an assessment of geostrategic risks and resource management regulations to avoid unilateral exploitation. Literature on Indonesian energy diplomacy emphasizes the role of coordination between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, and the Ministry of Defense to produce integrated policies. (Indonesian Energy Diplomacy, various studies; Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources/BPPT).

Balancing: governance, environment, and legitimacy

All of the technical recommendations above will only be effective if supported by strong governance and political legitimacy. An autarky model that places natural resources entirely under central control can indeed speed decision-making, but without transparency and checks-and-balances, it risks undermining public trust and causing serious socio-environmental impacts. Therefore, any pro-resilience policy must incorporate accountability norms (regular public reporting, community participation, environmental impact assessment) and guaranteed benefits for local communities as prerequisites. This aspect is relevant to ensure that the energy sovereignty being built remains consistent with Pancasila values and sustainable development goals (OECD, 2016) (IEA, 2023).

Implementation priorities and further research agenda

In order of operational priority, I recommend: (1) finalizing the legal framework and budget allocation for SPR and military reserves; (2) pilot microgrids at 3–5 border bases with performance monitoring; (3) a critical mineral downstreaming roadmap that combines environmental requirements and technology transfer; (4) establishing an inter-ministerial forum (ESDM, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bappenas, BUMN) for strategic energy diplomacy. Further research should focus on economic-budget models (fiscal scenario modeling), feasibility studies of defense microgrids, and geopolitical risk analysis of critical mineral supply chains (IEA, 2023; Kuntjoro et al., 2023; Wijayanto et al., 2022).

The above recommendations emphasize that Indonesia can utilize natural resources as a component of strengthening national resilience without literally imitating the Russian autarky model. The key is a balance between strategic independence, good governance, and a commitment to sustainable development and democratic values. Theoretically, these results strengthen the argument that state leadership (leadership agency) can transform resources into geopolitical power when combined with a supportive institutional structure. However, differences in the institutional context between large autocracies and Pancasila-based democracies limit generalizability: transforming energy policy into an effective defense instrument only when accompanied by institutional capacity, political legitimacy, and economic preparedness. Limitations of this study include limited primary data (particularly access to internal Russian documents) and the rapidly changing dynamics of energy markets; further research should incorporate quantitative models to project the financial impacts of various energy price scenarios.

E. CONCLUSION

This study finds that Putin's authoritarian-autarkic leadership transformed energy resources into a geopolitical instrument through a combination of institutional centralization, the use of state-owned enterprises as policy tools, and strategic adaptation to external pressures. The implications of this energy policy are evident in Russia's ability to finance military modernization, strengthen the resilience of its domestic defense industry, and gain

political leverage in the international arena but they also create budgetary vulnerabilities and socio-environmental trade-offs. For Indonesia, these findings emphasize that utilizing natural resources as a component of its defense strategy may provide strategic advantages, but its effectiveness depends on transparent governance, political legitimacy, and policy alignment with Pancasila values and the principles of sustainable development.

To deepen understanding and enhance policy utility, further research should combine quantitative and qualitative methods: fiscal-energy scenario modeling to evaluate the impact of energy price fluctuations on defense spending; comparative studies across resource-rich democracies and authoritarian states; and primary research based on in-depth interviews with stakeholders in the energy sector, defense industry, and policymakers. Furthermore, interdisciplinary studies assessing the environmental and social impacts of military energy security strategies will be essential to ensure policy recommendations align with sustainable development goals.

This research is limited by its reliance on open secondary sources and public literature, as well as limited access to internal Russian policy documents, which limits the ability to assess decision dynamics at the deepest policy level. Furthermore, energy markets are dynamic, and strategic projections and implications can change with shifts in prices, technology, and geopolitics. Consequently, findings should be interpreted as contextualized and require additional verification through primary data and study updates at short intervals.

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