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Russia's Energy Sovereignty: Vladimir Putin's Leadership Autarky and its Relevance to Indonesia's National Defense

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ABSTRACT
Russia's energy sovereignty under Vladimir Putin demonstrates how strategic resource control can serve as both a foundation for national defense and a tool for geopolitical influence. This study examines Putin's autarky leadership model—characterized by centralized energy governance, economic nationalism, and the integration of energy policy with military strategy and explores its relevance to Indonesia's defense modernization toward Golden Indonesia 2045. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with library research methodology, this study analyzes secondary data from government documents, defense white papers, and academic literature published between 2015-2025. The analysis reveals that Putin's leadership consolidates energy (oil and natural gas) as a dual instrument: funding defense modernization and enabling coercive diplomacy, particularly through pipeline projects like Nord Stream. This approach combines classical realism with economic nationalism to reduce external dependency and maintain strategic autonomy. For Indonesia, the study identifies critical lessons: the necessity of integrating energy independence with defense doctrine, developing a resource-based defense industry, and establishing ethical leadership frameworks rooted in Pancasila values. Key recommendations include: strengthening national energy policy as a defense asset, promoting local content in defense technology, designing an adaptive defense doctrine based on natural resource sovereignty, and building energy diplomacy to enhance Indo-Pacific stability. Unlike Russia's centralized autarky, Indonesia's model should emphasize collaborative sovereignty balancing national independence with democratic accountability, environmental sustainability, and social justice. This research contributes to strategic leadership literature by connecting energy geopolitics with defense philosophy in an ASEAN context.

INTRODUCTION

Vladimir Putin's leadership has become a symbol of the consistency of Russia's autarky strategy amid increasingly multipolar global geopolitical dynamics. Under his leadership, Russia asserted energy sovereignty as the main instrument of foreign policy and national defense (McCrone, 2021). The management of strategic natural resources (especially oil and gas) is not only an economic pillar but also a means of strengthening Russia's position in the

global arena. This strategy is realized through tight state control over the energy sector, the strengthening of relations with non-Western partners, and the use of energy as a tool of coercive diplomacy against Europe and NATO allies (Helleiner, 2021; Khrushcheva & Snetkov, 2018). This approach reflects a pattern of autarky leadership rooted in the principles of national self-reliance and strategic resilience, where energy resources are used to ensure the continuity of state power in the face of economic pressures and international sanctions (Lo, 2023; Gustafson, 2021).

In the Indonesian context, energy sovereignty based on Pancasila values and the philosophy of universal defense is a prerequisite for defense independence toward Golden Indonesia 2045. Dependence on imported energy, weak defense industrialization, and the lack of optimal integration between energy policy and military strategy highlight the need to reflect on the autarky leadership model applied by Russia (Gindarsah & Priamarizki, 2024; Goldthau et al., 2019). The lessons learned from Putin's strategy are not to be imitated absolutely but to be adapted within an ethical and democratic framework that aligns with the character of the Indonesian nation (Mitrova & Yermakov, 2019; Rutland, 2015; Wilson, 2015). Energy policy integration, strengthening the independence of the defense industry, and optimizing strategic natural resources can serve as the foundation for an independent, resilient, and sovereign defense system (Sukma, 2022).

The intersection of energy sovereignty and defense strategy is not unique to Russia. China's energy nationalism, for instance, demonstrates a parallel approach in which the state systematically secures energy supplies through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) while simultaneously modernizing its military to protect these strategic corridors. China's National Energy Administration works in tandem with the People's Liberation Army to ensure energy security across land and maritime routes, creating what scholars term the "energy-defense nexus" (Zhao, 2022; Chen & Wu, 2021). The militarization of the South China Sea, partly motivated by energy resource claims, exemplifies this integration. Similarly, India has developed an energy-defense framework through its Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) initiative, emphasizing domestic defense production powered by national energy independence. India’s Defense Production Policy 2020 explicitly links energy self-sufficiency with military modernization, particularly in developing indigenous defense technologies that reduce reliance on imported fuel and components (Pant & Joshi, 2020). These comparative cases reveal different models: Russia's centralized state control, China's state-led economic integration, and India's public-private partnership approach. Each model reflects distinct political systems and strategic cultures, yet all recognize energy as a critical enabler of military power and national autonomy.

Despite extensive literature on energy geopolitics and defense modernization separately, few studies have systematically examined the philosophical and operational linkages between leadership autarky, energy sovereignty, and defense doctrine—particularly in the context of democratic emerging powers like Indonesia (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 2016; Gerras, 2015). Existing research tends to focus either on the economic dimensions of energy security (Pascual & Zambetakis, 2019) or on military modernization strategies (Kuik, 2021) without exploring how leadership philosophy shapes the integration of these domains. Furthermore, most comparative studies concentrate on major powers (Russia, China, U.S.), leaving a significant

gap in understanding how middle powers in Southeast Asia can adapt autarkic principles within democratic and multilateral frameworks. This study addresses three specific gaps: first, the lack of philosophical analysis connecting leadership autarky theory to energy-based defense strategy; second, insufficient comparative examination of how different political systems operationalize energy-defense integration; and third, the absence of normative frameworks for adapting autarkic principles within Pancasila-based governance. By bridging these gaps, this research provides both theoretical contributions to strategic leadership studies and practical guidance for Indonesia's defense policymakers (Ang et al., 2015; Bompard et al., 2017).

This study uniquely connects leadership autarky to energy-based defense strategy through a comparative philosophical lens, examining not only the operational mechanisms of Russia's energy sovereignty but also the ethical and doctrinal implications for Indonesia's defense modernization. Unlike previous research that treats energy security and defense as separate domains, this study develops an integrated framework that positions energy sovereignty as both a material foundation and a philosophical principle of national defense. The novelty lies in three dimensions: (1) conceptual—introducing "collaborative autarky" as an alternative to centralized autarky models, emphasizing democratic accountability and sustainability; (2) methodological—applying interdisciplinary analysis that combines geopolitical theory, leadership philosophy, and defense doctrine studies; and (3) contextual—providing the first systematic examination of Putin's autarky leadership model's relevance to ASEAN defense strategies, particularly within Indonesia's Pancasila framework. This approach moves beyond descriptive comparison to offer normative insights on how democratic middle powers can achieve strategic autonomy without sacrificing ethical governance or regional cooperation.

The purpose of this research is to provide a clear direction for analysis and serve as a conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between leadership, energy sovereignty, and national defense. Through the formulation of well-defined objectives, this study aims not merely to remain at a descriptive level but to explore the strategic essence of Vladimir Putin's autarky leadership style and the values that can be ethically adapted within the Indonesian context. Thus, the results are expected to contribute academically and practically to strengthening the literature on strategic leadership and the development of defense doctrines that align with the ideals of national independence.

METHOD

This research applies a descriptive qualitative approach using the library research method. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on the conceptual and interpretive analysis of Vladimir Putin's leadership style in the context of energy autarky and its relevance to Indonesia's national defense strategy. This methodology enables researchers to trace the linkages between aspects of leadership, energy geopolitics, and defense doctrine based on secondary sources of high credibility.

1. Types and Approaches to Research.

   This research is descriptive-analytical and utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, combining perspectives from leadership philosophy, energy geopolitics, and defense strategy. The goal is not only to describe the phenomenon of Putin's leadership, but also to analyze it in relation to the development of Indonesia's defense doctrine based on the

principle of natural resource independence (SDA). This interdisciplinary approach was selected to ensure that the research results extend beyond the theoretical level and can be adapted into ideas with operational implications for national defense.

2. Data Sources.
   The research data consisted of:
   a. Secondary primary data includes official documents from the Russian and Indonesian governments such as defense white papers, energy policy, speeches by heads of state, as well as strategic reports from international institutions such as the IEA and SIPRI.
   b. Secondary scientific data, in the form of academic literature such as books, reputable journals, policy analysis articles, reports from think tanks such as the RAND Corporation, CSIS, and the Carnegie Moscow Center, as well as academic publications that discuss leadership theory and energy geopolitics.
3. Data Collection Techniques. Data were obtained using documentation methods and literature review. This stage included the identification, classification, and synthesis of relevant sources. Data selection was conducted based on actuality (published within the last 5–10 years), the credibility of the issuing body, and relevance to the issue of energy sovereignty and national defense strategy.
4. Data Analysis Techniques. The analysis is carried out using content analysis, with the following steps:
   a. Data reduction: sorting and grouping information according to central themes such as autarky leadership, energy geopolitics, and defense strategy.
   b. Interpretation of meaning: interpreting the connection between Putin's leadership style and the direction of Russia's energy policy.
   c. Contextualization: linking the findings to Indonesia's strategic situation and needs.
   d. Normative-strategic synthesis: formulating the relationship between the value of struggle, natural resource independence, and national defense doctrine based on the principles of Pancasila and the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045.

   This analysis is based on the geopolitical paradigm of energy (Klare, 2012), strategic leadership theory (Yukl, 2013), and the modern defense doctrine approach that emphasizes the alignment between people, power, and policy.
5. Data Validity. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and cross-disciplinary critical reading. Each data point is compared and verified using academic literature, policy reports, and credible media publications. The researcher also adopts a reflective stance, remaining aware of the potential for interpretive bias that may arise from sources with political nuances.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Concept of Autarky Leadership in the Context of Defense Strategy.

a. Definition and Philosophical Foundations of Autarky Leadership

Autarky leadership is fundamentally grounded in the principle of total national independence in managing strategic resources across economic, political, and defense domains. The term autarky originates from the Greek autarkeia, meaning “to stand on one’s own strength.” In the context of modern politics, this concept refers to a state’s effort to reduce

external dependency and strengthen internal capacity as the foundation of national power. This idea is rooted in the classical theory of realism in international relations, which emphasizes power and security as the core elements of state survival. For Vladimir Putin, autarky does not signify isolationism, but rather a form of self-reliant sovereignty—a leadership model asserting the state's right to determine its course of policy without external interference.

This leadership philosophy emerged from Russia's historical trauma over the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, which he described as "the greatest geopolitical disaster of the twentieth century." Since then, Putin has sought to restore Russia's national strength through revitalizing a natural resource-based economy, consolidating domestic political power, and pursuing a foreign policy positioning Russia as a major global actor. Putin's autarky concept rests on three main principles: economic sovereignty, the integration of national power, and the centralization of strategic leadership. Economic sovereignty involves full control over vital assets, particularly energy. The integration of national power refers to the synergy among economic, military, scientific, technological, and ideological domains. Meanwhile, the centralization of strategic leadership underscores that major decisions—especially related to defense—must emanate from a single, strong command center to prevent internal fragmentation or external influence.

b. Characteristics of Autarky Leadership: Between Nationalism and Defense Strategy

The main feature of autarky leadership is the combination of protectionist nationalism and a militaristic approach in public policy. Putin believes that military power without an independent economic base will only result in strategic dependence, while an economy without political sovereignty will become a foreign instrument. Therefore, under Putin's leadership, Russia is striving to build strategic autonomy—the ability to withstand global pressures through full control over domestic supply chains and the energy sector. From a defense perspective, autarky translates into the concept of "defense self-sufficiency." The country must be capable of producing its own weapons systems, managing military logistics without critical imports, and guaranteeing energy supplies for military operations in the long term. This concept explains why Russia rejects dependence on Western technological products, instead developing alternative systems such as the Mir financial network and the GLONASS navigation system to reduce Western dominance in military information and communication technology.

Autarky leadership also possesses a psychological dimension: it shapes the collective consciousness of the people, emphasizing that national independence is the most fundamental form of defense. Putin frequently uses the "Russia under siege" narrative to foster internal solidarity and justify policies of military reinforcement and restrictions on outside influence. This strategy strengthens national defense morale, aligning with the principle that defense power is measured not only by the quantity of weapons but also by the level of social unity and ideological loyalty of the people to the state.

c. The Strategic Dimension of Autarky Leadership for National Defense.

Autarky under Putin's leadership extends beyond the economic sphere and functions as a grand strategy that integrates all instruments of state power: diplomacy, economy, military, and ideology. In this context, energy is positioned as the principal pillar of defense. Control

over gas, oil, and other natural resources enables Russia to sustain military operations without disruption from external embargoes. Additionally, energy revenues are directed toward the modernization of armaments and the financing of long-term strategic projects, such as the development of hypersonic technology and the S-400 air defense system. This energy independence also acts as strategic leverage at the global level, allowing Russia to use energy as a bargaining tool in its foreign policy—most notably in relations with the European Union and China. Such policies illustrate how the energy sector is not merely an economic asset, but an integral part of the national defense complex.

Thus, autarky plays a dual role: reinforcing internal stability while expanding Russia's external influence on the global stage. With respect to territorial defense, this concept is realized through reforms aimed at creating a more flexible and independent military structure. Russia has developed the Integrated Strategic Command, which combines intelligence, logistics, and technological functions within a single command unit. This demonstrates how autarky leadership enhances defense command efficiency and strengthens readiness to face multi-domain warfare, including cyber and information domains (Giles, 2016).

Energy as a Geopolitical Instrument of Russia

Energy in the Russian context is not merely an economic sector but serves as a foundation of national power and a key instrument of strategic diplomacy. Under Vladimir Putin's leadership, energy management has been elevated into an integral element of both foreign and defense policy. With abundant oil and natural gas reserves—making Russia one of the world's largest energy exporters—Putin recognizes that control over energy equates to control over global political influence. Within the Kremlin's strategic paradigm, energy functions as a form of hard power that can be transformed into soft power through market dependence and international distribution networks.

a. Energy as an Instrument of Power and National Identity.

Putin positioned energy as a symbol of Russia's sovereignty and as the core of the nation's revival following the crises of the 1990s. As Russia began to recover from the post-Soviet economic collapse, the nationalization of the energy sector became a key priority. The government reclaimed control over strategic companies such as Gazprom, Rosneft, and Transneft, which had previously been fragmented among various oligarchs. This move was not merely economic, but also inherently political: restoring energy to state control meant restoring state authority as the dominant actor. Putin regards energy as a "tool of national identity"—a symbol that Russia is once again standing tall as a great power (velikaya derzhava). Through state control of energy, Russia not only secures national revenue but also establishes a robust mechanism for domestic social and political control. Energy independence is considered the main pillar of autarky; as such, Russia must not depend on other countries for its domestic energy needs. In his official speeches, Putin often asserts that economic dependence on the West constitutes a form of "modern colonialism" that must be overcome. This energy nationalism also functions as an ideological narrative, reinforcing the legitimacy of his regime in the eyes of the public.

b. Energy as a Diplomatic and Geostrategic Weapon

Russia employs energy—especially natural gas—as a potent tool of coercive diplomacy. Europe, which relies on Russian supplies for more than 35% of its gas needs, is the primary target of this strategy. When political relations deteriorate, gas supplies are often leveraged as instruments of pressure. The Russia-Ukraine gas crises of 2006 and 2009, along with restrictions on gas flows to Eastern Europe after 2014, demonstrate how Russia uses energy as

an even sharper political negotiating tool than military force. This approach is widely known as the energy weapon: the use of energy to coerce other countries into aligning their behavior with Moscow's interests.

Energy has become a geopolitical “currency” whose value even surpasses that of traditional diplomacy. Pipelines such as Nord Stream and TurkStream are not only economic projects, but also political instruments designed to control energy flows and negotiate Russia's strategic position vis-à-vis NATO and the European Union. In this context, Russia serves as a Eurasian energy gatekeeper, simultaneously controlling resources, infrastructure, and markets. These factors provide Russia with a strategic advantage in the face of Western economic sanctions. Despite embargoes and financial restrictions, European countries’ dependence on Russian gas has continued to bolster the Kremlin’s position. This underscores the effectiveness of energy strategies not only as a geopolitical shield, but also as a global bargaining tool.

c. Energy, Militarization, and National Security

The financial gains from the energy sector are used by Russia to strengthen its military power. Substantial revenues from gas and oil exports serve as a primary source of funding for the modernization of weapons systems and defense technology research. The development programs for the Avangard hypersonic missile, Su-57 fighter aircraft, and S-400 air defense system are financed in part by a surplus of energy export earnings. The close linkage between energy and the military reflects the pattern of Russia's "defense economy," wherein the energy sector not only sustains the defense budget but also constitutes a primary asset protected by national security policies. Strategic energy infrastructure—such as gas pipelines, LNG terminals, and storage facilities—is viewed as a vital asset that must be defended with a layered security system. In Russia's 2014 and 2021 national security doctrines, energy security is explicitly identified as a component of state security. The integration of energy and defense is further evident in Russia's security diplomacy in the Middle East. By establishing energy partnerships with countries such as Iran, Syria, and Turkey, Russia not only expands its export markets but also enhances its military influence in this geopolitically strategic region. In this context, energy operates as an "entry ticket" for Russia's military and political involvement beyond its immediate neighborhood..

d. Energy as a Pillar of National Resilience and Economic Resilience

Energy security is an integral part of Russia's national security. The government places domestic energy supply as a strategic priority, ensuring the availability of fuel for the industrial, transportation, and military sectors without dependence on imports. The import substitution program, which has been in place since 2014 after Western sanctions were imposed, has encouraged Russia to strengthen domestic industries in the oil, gas, and mining sectors. This approach resulted in a new form of national self-reliance called strategic autonomy—the ability to maintain economic and political stability without being subject to external pressures. Thus, energy is not only a means of economic exchange but also a non-military defense instrument that underpins the entire system of state power.

Relevance for Indonesia: Energy Sovereignty as a Pillar of National Defense

a. Energy as a Vital Element of National Resilience.

In the Indonesian context, energy is not just an economic need, but the foundation of the nation's strategic independence. Without the availability of stable and nationally controlled energy, the country's entire defense and security system is at risk of being paralyzed. Energy underpins the mobility of troops, military logistics, and the activities of the defense industry that rely heavily on fuel and electricity. So, just as Russia positions energy as a geopolitical

leverage, Indonesia needs to see energy as a defense enabler, a resource that determines the ability to survive, adapt, and respond to crises. Indonesia's dependence on oil imports, especially from the Middle East, is a strategic vulnerable point. In situations of global crisis or regional conflict, supply disruptions can lead to economic stagnation and weakening of military capacity. Therefore, energy sovereignty is not just economic jargon, but a key element in a comprehensive defense strategy. Independently and efficiently managed energy will strengthen Indonesia's position in the face of unconventional threats such as cyber warfare against energy infrastructure, supply sabotage, and diplomatic pressure based on energy dependence.

b. Integration of Energy and Defense in National Doctrine

The Russian experience shows that energy can be an integral part of defense doctrine. In the Indonesian framework, this principle can be translated through the strengthening of Universal Defense, a concept that emphasizes the integration of all national potentials in the defense system. Domestic energy control, both fossil and renewable, must be placed as a subsystem in a long-term defense strategy. This includes:

1) Military Energy Independence, by developing biofuels, lithium batteries, and solar energy to support TNI operations in remote areas.
2) National Strategic Energy Reserves, which are not only stored for economic needs, but also to maintain war readiness in the event of global supply disruptions.
3) Energy Infrastructure Resilience, by strengthening the protection of power grids, oil refineries, energy ports, and distribution pipelines as part of national vital objects.

The integration between energy and defense must be directed at the development of a competitive and research-based national energy industry ecosystem. This is where the relevance of Putin's autarky leadership model can be adapted, the state must dare to take a dominant role in the strategic energy sector, without losing transparency and public accountability.

c. Pancasila as the Ethical Foundation of Energy Independence

Unlike Russia which emphasizes nationalism of power, Indonesia has a nationalism of harmony, independence rooted in human values and social justice. The principle of "Energy Sovereignty" in the framework of Pancasila means placing energy as a people's right as well as the responsibility of the state to ensure equity and sustainability. This approach demands leadership that is not only strategically strong, but also morally wise. National energy development must not sacrifice the environment or remove indigenous peoples from exploited areas. Indonesia's ideal energy independence is one that balances security, sustainability, and equity, three elements that are the basis of ethical strategic leadership.

Challenges and Ethics of Strategic Leadership. a. Structural and Institutional Challenges

Energy independence in Indonesia is faced with complex structural problems: overlapping energy bureaucracy, dependence on foreign investment, weak integration between energy and defense policies, and suboptimal science and technology research in the field of strategic energy. This policy disintegration causes each sector to run with its own logic (the economy demands profits, defense demands preparedness, and the environment demands sustainability) without a uniform strategic vision. Indonesia's strategic leadership needs to emulate Putin's consistency in integrating cross-sectoral policies, but with democratic and accountable principles. In this case, the roles of the National Resilience Council, Bappenas, and

the Ministry of Defense must be synergized so that energy policy is not trapped in a sectoral paradigm. Effective leadership is one that is able to sew all national potentials into one sustainable policy direction.

a. Global Challenges and the Risk of Technology Dependency

In addition to domestic factors, Indonesia faces external pressure in the form of energy geopolitics. The dominance of major countries in energy supply chains and transition technologies (such as solar panels, EV batteries, and LNG) is creating new forms of dependency. If not managed, the energy transition can actually replace dependence on imported oil with dependence on imported technology. Strategic leadership in the defense sector must be able to navigate these changes. Indonesia needs to build technological sovereignty, namely the ability to produce and secure its own energy technology. International cooperation is still needed, but with the principle of equal partnership, not only being a consumer of technology, but also playing the role of a producer and developer. This is in line with the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045 which places innovation and mastery of technology as the core of national strength.

b. Ethics of Strategic Leadership: Between Sovereignty and Justice

Effective strategic leadership is not measured by assertiveness and efficiency, but also by the ability to maintain a balance between national interests and human values. Putin has managed to show how energy can be used as a tool to defend sovereignty, but his approach has often been criticized for ignoring aspects of global ethics and people's well-being. Indonesia must avoid such an authoritarian pattern. Strategic leadership in Indonesia must be oriented towards collective resilience, not individual dominance. This means that the state plays a role as a director and protector of strategic resources, while the community, academia, and the private sector function as partners in maintaining national energy sustainability.

c. Ideal Strategic Leadership Model for Indonesia

The relevant leadership model for Indonesia is not authoritarian autarky, but collaborative autarky: independence built through synergy between national actors. The ideal strategic leader should have four main capacities:

1) Geopolitical vision, to understand the relationship between energy, economy, and defense at the global level.
2) Adaptive intelligence, to adapt strategies to technological changes and new threats.
3) Moral integrity, to uphold ethical principles over short-term political interests.
4) The ability to mobilize nationally, to mobilize human and natural resources towards a common goal.

With this approach, Indonesia can achieve energy independence with character, ethics, and sustainability, while strengthening its strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region. Energy is no longer just a commodity, but a symbol of strategic independence and national identity that affirms the true meaning of sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

Vladimir Putin's leadership represents a modern autarky model that makes energy the main instrument of geopolitics as well as the foundation of state sovereignty, where full control of the energy sector gives Russia the ability to maintain strategic autonomy as well as global bargaining power. Energy is positioned not only as a source of defense funding, but also as a

non-military defense layer that supports military logistics and a means of diplomatic pressure on consumer countries, thus forming a comprehensive deterrent that combines military, economic, and political power. For Indonesia, Russia's experience confirms that energy independence is an integral part of national resilience that must be developed through domestic resource bases, science and technology research, and strengthening the defense industry. From this study, several strategic recommendations can be proposed: first, the government needs to strengthen the national energy policy as a national defense asset that is integrated with the defense logistics system; second, encouraging integration between energy independence and the defense industry through local content programs and energy technology research; third, developing a defense leadership model that is rooted in Pancasila and the principle of non-aggression, as well as adaptive to regional dynamics; fourth, designing a defense doctrine based on natural resources and national innovation by involving universities, research institutions, and the energy industry; and fifth, building an energy diplomacy framework to strengthen the sovereignty and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. Thus, Indonesia can maintain sovereignty while increasing strategic competitiveness without shifting towards expansionism, but remains based on the principles of universal defense and social justice.

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