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THE PHENOMENON OF "STRATEGIC TANDEM" AND "ENDOGENOUS REGIONALISM" IN CENTRAL ASIA: A HISTORICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE MULTILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN (1991–2022).

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ANNOTATION. This study provides an in-depth analysis of the formation, dynamics, and institutional stages of political, economic, security, and cultural-humanitarian cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan from 1991 to 2022. In the complex geopolitical situation that emerged in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union, mutual trust between the two major powers served as the primary pillar for ensuring regional security and stability. The article is based on the concept of "endogenous regionalism" in international relations, as well as the "strategic tandem" model compared to the experience of France and Germany. From cautious pragmatism in the early years of interstate relations to the Treaty of Strategic Partnership after 2017 and the Treaty of Historical Alliance in 2022

Keywords: Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, endogenous regionalism, strategic tandem, border delimitation, allied relations, consultative meetings, industrial cooperation.

MARKAZIY OSIYODA “STRATEGIK TANDEM” VA “ENDOGEN REGIONALIZM” FENOMENI: O‘ZBEKISTON VA QOZOG‘ISTON KO‘P QIRRALI MUNOSABATLARINING TARIXIY HAMDA INSTITUTSIONAL TAHLILI (1991–2022-YILLAR)

ANNOTATSIYA. Ushbu tadqiqotda 1991–2022-yillarda O‘zbekiston Respublikasi va Qozog‘iston Respublikasi o‘rtasidagi siyosiy, iqtisodiy, xavfsizlik va madaniy-gumanitar hamkorlikning shakllanishi, dinamikasi hamda institutsional bosqichlari chuqur tahlil qilinadi. Sovet Ittifoqi parchalanganidan keyin mintaqada yuzaga kelgan murakkab geosiyosiy vaziyatda mintaqa xavfsizligi va barqarorligini ta’minlashda ikki yirik davlat o‘rtasidagi o‘zaro ishonch asosiy tayanch bo‘lib xizmat qildi. Maqolada xalqaro munosabatlardagi “endogen regionalism” konsepsiyasi hamda Fransiya va Germaniya tajribasiga qiyoslangan “strategik tandem” modeli asos qilib olinadi. Davlatlararo munosabatlarning dastlabki yillardagi ehtiyotkor pragmatizmdan 2017-yildan keyingi strategik sheriklik va 2022-yildagi tarixiy ittifoqchilik shartnomasigacha bo‘lgan transformatsiyasi aniq tarixiy faktlar, shartnomaviy-huquqiy hujjatlar va statistik ko‘rsatkichlar asosida yoritilgan.

Kalit so‘zlar: Markaziy Osiyo, O‘zbekiston, Qozog‘iston, endogen regionalizm, strategik tandem, chegaralar delimitatsiyasi, ittifoqchilik munosabatlari, Maslahat uchrashuvlari, sanoat kooperatsiyasi.

ФЕНОМЕН "СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКОГО ТАНДЕМА" И "ЭНДОГЕННОГО РЕГИОНАЛИЗМА" В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ: ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ И ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ МНОГОГРАННЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ УЗБЕКИСТАНА И КАЗАХСТАНА (1991–2022 ГГ.)

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АННОТАЦИЯ. В данном исследовании проводится глубокий анализ становления, динамики и институциональных этапов политического, экономического, безопасности и культурно-гуманитарного сотрудничества между Республикой Узбекистан и Республикой Казахстан в 1991–2022 годах. В сложной геополитической ситуации, сложившейся в регионе после распада Советского Союза, взаимное доверие между двумя крупными державами послужило основной опорой в обеспечении региональной безопасности и стабильности. В статье за основу берется концепция "эндогенного регионализма" в международных отношениях и модель "стратегического тандема," сопоставленная с опытом Франции и Германии. От осторожного прагматизма в первые годы межгосударственных отношений к Договору о стратегическом партнерстве после 2017 года и историческому союзничеству в 2022 году

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, Узбекистан, Казахстан, эндогенный регионализм, стратегический тандем, делимитация границ, союзнические отношения, консультативные встречи, промышленная кооперация.

INTRODUCTION. The Central Asian states, which gained independence in 1991, were faced with strategic imperatives such as consolidating their sovereignty, transitioning to a market economy, and establishing their position as independent actors in the arena of international relations [6, p. 12]. The relations between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which together account for the bulk of the region's total territory, economic capacity, and population, have become the central pillar of not only the two neighboring republics, but also the entire regional security architecture [7, p. 45].

History demonstrates that during periods when external major geopolitical powers intensify their pursuits to expand their spheres of influence, the internal stability of the region relies solely on the internal drive and shared interests of the regional states themselves [5, p. 88]. Over the thirty-year period from 1991 to 2022, relations between Tashkent and Astana traversed a complex, occasionally contradictory, yet consistently pragmatic and responsible path [8, p. 46]. During this period, vast experience was accumulated regarding the complete delimitation of mutual borders in accordance with international legal norms, the rational utilization of transboundary water resources, the overcoming of trade barriers, and the adoption of unified positions within international organizations [6, p. 34]. The conceptual study of this experience as a holistic historical and political system holds paramount scientific significance for understanding modern integration processes in Central Asia.

METHODOLOGY. The methodological foundation of the study comprises historical-comparative analysis, chronological consistency, systems analysis, and retrospective methods. In elucidating the topic, a harmonious synthesis of the principles of two leading schools of international relations theory—neorealism and constructivism - was utilized [7, p. 52]. Furthermore, the theory of "endogenous regionalism" was applied to examine regional integration through internal imperatives rather than external directives or geopolitical pressures [8, p. 48]. To characterize the nature of Uzbek and Kazakh leadership, the "strategic tandem" model, analogous to the famous "Franco-German axis" model in European integration, was employed as an analytical tool [6, p. 115]. The source base involved the analysis of bilateral treaties, international agreements, statistical reports, and official statements signed between the two states [1; 2; 3; 4].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. Periodization of Relations and the Legal Framework. The evolution of relations between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan from 1991 to 2022 can be divided into three primary historical stages: The First Stage (1991–2000): The Establishment of Legal

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Foundations and the Recognition of Sovereignty. The Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance signed in Tashkent on June 24, 1992 [1], alongside the Treaty on Eternal Friendship signed on October 31, 1998 [2], laid a solid cornerstone for bilateral dialogue. Although initial integration frameworks were established during these years, the hardships of the economic transition period precluded full-scale unification [7, p. 60]. The Second Stage (2001–2016): The Legal Consolidation of Borders and Pragmatic Relations. During this stage, the most difficult and complex issue—the delimitation of the state border exceeding 2,350 kilometers in total length—was resolved. The border treaties signed in November 2001 and September 2002 [3] averted potential territorial disputes in the region. However, during these years, non-tariff barriers, customs restrictions, and caution regarding transport corridors predominated in trade relations, leaving interaction largely confined within multilateral organizations [8, p. 50]. The Third Stage (2017–2022): Strategic Awakening, Trust, and Elevation to the Level of Alliance. A historical turning point occurred between Tashkent and Astana when the Central Asian region was declared the top priority of Uzbekistan's foreign policy [5, p. 95]. The Declaration on Further Deepening Strategic Partnership was signed in 2017, followed by the Declaration on Allied Relations in 2021, and ultimately, on December 22, 2022, the historic Treaty on Allied Relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan was signed in Tashkent [4]. With this document, bilateral relations were elevated to the highest tier recognized in international law.

The "Strategic Tandem" and "Endogenous Regionalism" Factors. Inter-state relations shifted from a paradigm of mutual competition to a paradigm of "responsible leadership" [8, p. 51]. Just as Germany and France united in Europe to lay the groundwork for the European Union, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in Central Asia recognized that they serve as the leading locomotives of regional integration [6, p. 120]. As a result of this new mindset, the Consultative Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia institute has been successfully functioning since 2018 [5, p. 104]. Convened without external intermediaries, this platform created opportunities to address water, energy, border crossing, and logistics issues in the region through mutually beneficial dialogue. Thus, the concept of "endogenous regionalism," which asserts that the destiny of the region directly depends on the willpower of its own peoples, became a practical reality. [9, p. 104]. **Growth in Trade, Economic, and Industrial Cooperation.** While bilateral trade turnover hovered around 2 billion USD in 2016, this metric surpassed 4.5 billion USD by the end of 2022, with both parties setting the goal of reaching 10 billion USD in the coming years [8, p. 53].

The bilateral relationship transitioned from simple raw material trade to high-value-added industrial cooperation: First, the "Central Asia" International Center for Industrial Cooperation was established in the border territories. Second, assembly lines for Uzbek automobiles were launched in Kazakhstan, while agricultural machinery and textile enterprises were successfully established in Uzbekistan [7, p. 72]. Third, energy systems were resynchronized, and balanced compensation mechanisms were introduced to guarantee mutual deliveries of water and electricity during the winter and summer seasons.

Cultural, Humanitarian Ties, and Public Diplomacy. The sustainability of inter-state political agreements rests upon sincere spiritual bonds between peoples. In 2018, the Year of Uzbekistan was held in Kazakhstan, and in 2019, the Year of Kazakhstan was celebrated in Uzbekistan at a high level [8, p. 55]. Institutional results were also achieved in education: over 280 direct agreements were concluded between higher education institutions. A branch of M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University began operating in Chirchiq. Departments of Kazakh Language and Literature were expanded across several leading Uzbek universities, strengthening the system for training highly qualified specialists for nearly 400 Kazakh-medium schools operating in the country [6, p. 145].

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CONCLUSION. The path traversed by relations between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan from 1991 to 2022 allows for the following conclusions: First, moving past the initial years of independence marked by caution and separate developmental trajectories, both states have practically demonstrated that regional security and economic prosperity are interdependent. Second, the Treaty on Allied Relations signed in 2022 elevated mutual trust to the highest international legal format, creating a legal shield to transform Central Asia into a cohesive entity speaking with a unified voice in the global arena. Third, the "strategic tandem" model between Tashkent and Astana serves as an indispensable factor in regional security and economic integration, and will continue to function as the primary driver in ensuring the shared prosperity of the peoples of Central Asia in the future.

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