

Journal of Peace Studies Vol. 9, Issue 2, March-April 2002

**Pakistan, Founder's Aspirations and Today's Realities**

**Edited by Hafeez Malik,**

**Oxford University Press, 2001, Pages. 464**

**Saleem Kidwai\***

*\*Dr. Saleem Kidwai is Director (Hony.), International Centre for Peace Studies and currently Fulbright Fellow in Villanova University, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.*

Intrigues, usurpation of power by force, suppression of citizen's rights and aspirations, exploitation of religion and belied hopes sum up the history of Pakistan. This unfortunate country has not been able to establish a one-nation identity, although, ironically, it was created in the name of the two-nation theory. Pakistan was energized by a commitment to Islamic traditions but could not transcend divisions and rivalries in its regional levels. Nor were its leaders capable of bridging the gap, or even reconciling antagonistic claims. In fact, the gulf between its federating units is increasing, thanks to the perpetual military rule. Pakistan is at a crossword and only a full accounting of the past, with all its mistakes, may enable the country to regain its direction. In order to know **whither** the state is tending, one must understand from where it has come.

Why could Pakistan not evolve viable political institutions and face serious problems of political and economic management? What factors caused political instability in Pakistan/Why did the politicians fail in that country? Why were the bureaucracy and the army able to expand their role and become important power-wielders? Are the repeated military takeover acts of deliberate designs or the inevitable consequence of the failure of representative system? Was the separation of erstwhile East Pakistan a historical necessity or the product of folly and mismanagement/Is Pakistan a failed state? Can it survive?

The book under review endeavours to answer these and similar questions with historical and analytical perspectives so as to untangle complexities of Pakistani politics. It is a collection of papers presented at an international seminar held under the auspices of Pakistan-American Foundation and the center for Arab and Islamic studies, Villanova University to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Pakistan.

The introductory chapter by the eminent Political scientist and the editor of the volume Hafiz Malik who was the moving spirit behind the seminar is a realistic and has given objective assessment of the situation. While explaining the founders aspirations and contemporary realities, he frankly concludes that today's Pakistan is in sharp contrast to what the founding fathers had aspired it to be.

The next four contributions deal with the constitutional and political developments of Pakistan through different prisms. The constitutional history of Pakistan reflects the chequered course of the country since independence. The dominant and overriding role of constitution making, and its intertwining with political developments, becomes apparent in any analysis of this fifty-year period.

A former commander of Pakistan army, K.M Arif, examines the working of military governments of Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and Ziaul Haq. While highlighting military's positive contributions, he admits that martial law retarded the growth of democracy, weakened the political system, caused constitutional crisis and hindered the development of institutions

A well-known American scholar, Craig Baxter, analyses Pakistan as a failed state. Judging Pakistan in the light of factors that are the normal goals of every state, such as state-building, nation-building, economy-building, participation and distribution, he concludes that Pakistan has failed as a state.

The next two chapters are devoted to nuclearisation of the sub-continent. The first essay presents a comprehensive history of nuclear development in India and Pakistan. And the second throws light on US reactions to nuclear explosions. The pieces dealing with the sectarian conflicts in Pakistan make pathetic reading. According to the authors while conflict between Shias and Sunnis cannot be resolved at the moment, it can be managed and controlled. Can it be done now in Pakistan? The answer is negative.

The essays on foreign policy provide a review of Pakistan's interaction with the international community with a focus on geographic, political and economic factors. India-Pakistan relations, including the Kashmir problem, get a lengthy treatment. Other aspects of foreign policy include inter alia, relations with major powers and Muslim world, especially Afghanistan, Central Asia and Gulf region. Pakistan's efforts to cope with the post-cold war international and regional environment have also been examined, thereby providing the readers with a comprehensive perspective on all major aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy.

The essays included in the volume outline some important aspects of the first fifty years. They provide a framework for reappraisal. They put forward all the pitfalls of the past and hint at the challenges that lie ahead. The book captures the highlights of Pakistan's political history and endeavours to understand the factors that shaped its history. The editor deserves commendation for bringing out such a wonderful and neatly produced book. The book is not only useful for researchers and students but also serves as a valuable reference for general readers who are interested in Pakistan's history, politics and foreign policy'