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Selig S. Harrison, Paul H. Kreisberg, and Dennis Kux (eds.): India and Pakistan: the first fifty years. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999. 215 pp. ISBN 0 521 64185 3 (hardcover), 0 521 64585 9 (paperback).

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On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of independence of India and Pakistan the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars organized a conference of leading scholars in the USA for Assessing their progress, problems, and prospects. Political, economic, and social developments plus foreign and security policy were analysed separately for India and Pakistan. The editors were well suited for the task: Selig S. Harrison looks back at half a century watching and analysing events in South Asia as correspondent, senior journalist and analyst. Paul Kreisberg served as a diplomat in India and Pakistan and moderated a series of second track dialogues between the two countries, and Dennis Kux served as senior diplomat and intelligence coordinator in and on South Asia.

The first part deals with economic development. India's (Paul R. Brass: India: Democratic progress and problems) well-known achievements in democracy are listed, but also the drawbacks of central interference of states' affairs and the fact, that most "legislation passed both the central government and the states does not emerge from parliamentary debate and open discussion in the press, but through ordinances issued by the government and later by the legislature" (p. 31). Written before the nuclear tests of 1998 we find emphasized that "the Indian state has failed to provide Indians with the national self-respect they seek from the rest of the world" (p. 40). The neighbouring country is equally critically reviewed (Robert LaPorte: Pakistan: a nation in the making). Four "governmental constructs" for the first four decades are differentiated, i.e. the "non-representative parliamentary government" of the pre-Ayub years, the "tutelary democracy" of Ayub times, a non labelled one for the return to democracy under Yahya to Zia and "semidemocracy" of the last years of Zia. That "Pakistan has moved towards becoming a full democracy", as a fifth construct, is an assessment made under the impression of the Eighth Amendment, which had given the president far reaching rights. As we know, Pakistan again moved away from democracy, when Nawaz Sharif became more and more autocratic. On October 12, 1999 the army took over once more. Writing that the troika, namely the presidency, the priministership, and the military, "was rather like an unsteady three-legged stool" (p. 51) may sound a bit un-balanced (after all three legged stools can be very steady, indeed), except that a four legged one is meant where one of the legs (parliament ?) has gone missing. But the prediction has become true: "The most likely consequence of another failure of parliamentary democracy will be yet another period of military rule" (p.60). Although what happened in 1999 was not so much a "failure of parliamentary democracy" than the outcome of the power struggle between the chief (civil and military) executives of the country.

When it comes to economic development, neither India (John Adams: India: Much achieved, much to achieve) nor Pakistan (Marvin G. Weinbaum: Pakistan: Misplaced priorities, missed opportunities) give much reason for enthusiasm, although both the respective authors try to see positive developments. India's is divided into three phases: "Nehruvian Planning, 1950-64; Contrary Currents, 1965-80; and the Golden Growth Path, 1981-98" (p. 66). Any positive

future development depends on a number of “ifs”, not the least the winding down of political tensions between India and Pakistan (pp. 86-87). In Pakistan, the heavy drain of defence expenditure and the absence of democratic institutions are seen as main factors hindering the country’s economic development. The “hopes ahead” presented are very modest, indeed, like averting bankruptcy. As so often, the analysts turn out to have been poor predictors: the impressive performance (mainly India’s) in services (IT-related) exports and even more the economic dividend of the “War against Terrorism” after 9/11 and the unprecedented and unimaginable flow of foreign exchange into India and Pakistan (mostly of nationals living abroad) have been outside the forecasting powers of the authors.

As for social development, none of the countries has been a success story. In the case of India (Sonalde Desai and Katherine F. Shreedhar: *India: Growth and inequity*), some astonishing facts are presented, e.g. that discrimination against girls and women is highest in both the poorest and the richest states: “one study found, that educated mothers in Punjab were far more likely to discriminate against their daughters than were uneducated mothers.” (p. 115). As for Pakistan (Anita M. Weiss: *Some progress, sobering challenges*), the deplorable state of the country becomes evident from the low values of social indicators (notably in education, especially that of the female population) and the country’s ranking among the least developed countries measured by the Human Development Index. Weiss quotes the “Father of the Nation”, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who famously said (without much effect): “It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners ... There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live” (p. 144) and cites the fact that already in 1994, the Government of Pakistan passed the Compulsory Education Act (p. 137), with little effect. What is being said of India, could also have been said for Pakistan, i.e. that it is not a failure of law, but a failure of implementation (p. 126).

The final papers deal with foreign and security policy. The chapter on India (Sumit Ganguly: *India: Policies, past and future*) is basically a short history of events and one may disagree on minor details: There is no trijunction between India, Nepal and Bhutan (p. 165), the “insurgency” in Kashmir had broken out before December 1989 (*ibid.*), and the “Hindu rate of growth” was 3.5 per cent and not 3 per cent (p. 166). “Three visions of the future” are presented: firstly the traditional nonalignment, secondly the pursuit of a muscular military posture, and thirdly a path in a pursuance of the 1997 Gujral regime, favoured by the presenter of the paper, i.e. improving the relations with the neighbours, strengthening the economic ties with ASEAN, continuing the liberalization process and continuing the security policy. The chapter on Pakistan (Thomas Parry Thornton: *Pakistan: Fifty years of insecurity*) follows the same, chronological pattern. Pakistan’s policy has been dominated by the threat perception and the search for reliable partners. Pakistan is seen as an “insecurity state”, even more than in 1947, “because of weaknesses in its national unity, political system, social infrastructure, and economy” (p. 187). Nevertheless, the post-Cold War world appears as offering more promise than the first half-century. The last contribution is -- with exception of the editors’ introduction -- the only one, where both the two states are dealt with, albeit only in connection with their relations to the USA (Stephen Philip Cohen: *The United States, India, and Pakistan: Retrospect and prospect*). More precisely, the relations of the United States with India and Pakistan, are being discussed. The analysis has turned out to be quite prophetic: The question whether the United States can “organize themselves to deal with one fifth of the world that is *not* a threat to U.S. security interests, that does *not* show signs of calamitous collapse, that has *not yet* (and is unlikely to) become a major economic partner, and that persists in expanding a political ideology that is *not* hostile to American values?” As

we know, the danger of the South Asian conflict becoming nuclear and the threat to U.S. domestic security posed by internationalist terrorist organisations has led the USA to take a more active interest in the region.

There is a detailed index and each chapter is followed by a list of suggested readings. The book is an excellent reader on South Asian affairs, especially for the majority of those who have an active interest in one of the two states but have less knowledge of the other. It is also a fine résumé of developments over the first fifty years and, thus, is a strongly recommended acquisition for any South Asia collection. Comparisons, however, of the two countries have to be made and conclusions have to be drawn by the readers themselves.