Introduction
Generally speaking, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) can be defined as, "a bilateral or multilateral measure that builds confidence, asserts the undesirable drift towards open hostilities, reduces tensions and encourages the adversaries to make contact for negotiations without taxing too much the operative policy pursuits." ¹ Thus, CBMs are measures or a process for building mutual trust that in a conflict situation prevents war and paves the way for conflict resolution. To be more specific, CBMs are "arrangements designed to enhance...assurance of mind and belief in the trust-worthiness of states...confidence is the product of much broader patterns of relations than those which relate to military strategy. In fact the latter have to be woven into a complex texture of economic, cultural, technical and social relationships."²

Therefore, the CBM initiative includes military and non-military efforts at unilateral, bilateral and international levels.
CBMs can be of governmental and non-governmental i.e. 'Track-II, nature. Broadly, CBMs can be categorised as: communication, notification, consultative, access, constraint, transparency, declaratory, security and preventive measures etc. The CBM process can result in a general unwritten understanding between states or may result in the signing of a formal treaty. However, the analysis of historical trends shows that success of CBMs is linked to the fact that states involved in a conflictual situation realise the potentials of the process and the need for its implementation.

Though the history of CBMs can be traced back to the Treaty of Versailles, the term was more frequently referred to in international politics during the post-Cold War period. The reason being that in Europe, CBMs, which were initiated during the Cold War, provided stability to the region even during the post-Cold War period. Since then, it has been generally assumed that by adopting CBMs in a conflict situation, states can evolve an atmosphere for conflict resolution. However, experience has shown that CBMs are region specific, as regions have different characteristics. The success of CBMs in Europe was because of gradual, step by step approach; continuity of the process; and in the beginning limited measures were taken to initiate the process. Then in the 1980s, the terminology of CBM was changed to CSBM}s
(Confidence and Security Building Measures). CSBMs can be defined as "those measures designed to increase understanding and reduce uncertainty through improved information." Such measures include: information exchanges, constraints, and observation or inspection measures.\(^3\)

Though the title of my presentation is "CBMs and Security Cooperation in South Asia: US Perspectives", as a Pakistani, I think it will be more appropriate for me to discuss US policy towards South Asia in the context of Pakistan-India relations.

**South Asian Region**

The South Asia's unique characteristic is its strategic disunity because of the conflicting inter-state relations. Unfortunately, global changes in the post-Cold War era have not successfully influenced the perceptions and attitudes of South Asian states towards each other, particularly those of India which has bilateral disputes with all regional countries. In this connection Pakistan-India contentious relations dominate the South Asian security scene. As regards major issues confronting Pakistan, the first and foremost is the core issue of Kashmir, and second are the nuclear and missile threats from India.

Michael Krepon has written in one of his reports: "CBMs cannot work in an unforgiving political climate. Likewise, CBMs
will fail unless the involved parties view them as mechanisms to preserve or enhance national security.” ⁴ This is particularly true for the South Asian region. Historical analysis shows that though the CBM process in South Asia has not failed as such, the process has not been able to effectively contribute towards establishing peace in the region. As Indian scholar P.R. Chari explains in one of his articles, “Empirical experience informs that a foundation must be laid for negotiating CBMs before such commitments are made. This is crucial in South Asia where abiding suspicions require meaningful communications being established between States before negotiating conflict-avoidance and Confidence-Building measures.” ⁵

Now, we know that CBMs is not a new phenomenon in South Asia, particularly between Pakistan and India. In fact, a number of agreements exist between Pakistan and India, which can be regarded as measures for confidence building between the two countries. Some important ones are as follows:

i. The Karachi Agreement of 1949, which established an eight hundred-mile cease-fire line (CFL) in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region.

ii. The Indus Waters Treaty in 1960 that resolved the resource-distribution problem between Pakistan and India.
iii. The Tashkent Declaration of 1966 that concluded the 1965 war.

iv. The Simla Agreement of 1971, renouncing the use of force as a means of settling outstanding disputes.

v. Direct Communication Links (DCL) known as 'hotline' between DGMOs established in 1971.

vi. The Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission established in 1982.


viii. Foreign Secretary level talks started since 1990—frequently stalled.


dx. An Agreement on Prior Notification of Military Exercises or major troops movement signed in 1991.


xii. 'Hotline' established in 1993 between the Pakistan Air Force and Indian Air Force.


xiv. The Lahore Declaration signed in 1999, during Mr. Vajpayee's visit to Lahore; and a Memorandum of Understanding, also signed during the visit, committing both sides to undertake immediate steps for reducing
the risk of accidental war or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons etc.

Unfortunately, the existence of above CBMs between Pakistan and India has not successfully reduced the tension, which exists between the two countries. The basic reason being non-existence of the “foundation” between the two countries, as stressed by P. R. Chari. To put it in simple words, lack of political trust between the two countries is the basic reason for the ineffectiveness of the existing CBMs between Pakistan and India.

**US Policy**

South Asia was, initially, regarded as a ‘low priority’ area on the overall US foreign policy agenda, as the US was more preoccupied by the Cold War with the Soviet Union. “Therefore, in the immediate aftermath of their independence, the US treated India and Pakistan as backwaters of the tattered and tense post-war world.” 6 Ambassador Dennis Kux, while referring to the meeting between State Department official, and US Ambassadors to Pakistan and India in December 1947, writes: “The consensus of the meeting was that the United States should promote some sort of loose economic cooperation between the two states. Beyond expressions of goodwill and friendship, US policy towards South Asia remained nebulous.” 7
Broadly speaking, since 1947, US policy towards South Asia has been to achieve two basic objectives: (a) mutually beneficial relationship with Pakistan; and (b) increased cooperation with India. A study of US involvement in South Asia points out that US has always been reluctant to get directly involved in any crisis situation in South Asia and has supported a third party involvement for de-escalating the situation. Another important trend in US policy has been that in its dealings with Pakistan and India, a tilt towards India has been evident. In this connection some important historical examples are discussed below.

First, as regards the Kashmir dispute, before it was brought to the UN Security Council, the US was reluctant to get directly involved. For example, when the British Commonwealth Secretary, in 1948, suggested conducting of plebiscite under international control, the US State Department's response was lukewarm. In January 1948, before the Security Council's session on Kashmir, Commonwealth Relations Secretary Philip Noel-Baker, UN Representative Sir Alexander Cadogan and Mountbatten's Chief of Staff Lord Hasting Ismay met Acting US Secretary of State Lovett and urged America to take the lead. Lovett expressed difficulty and said that the US "is spread very thinly in its present commitments." On the contrary, the US
supported the Security Council resolutions of April 1948 and January 1949 advocating plebiscite for Jammu and Kashmir. It supported the efforts of UNCIP and also of various mediators appointed, such as General McNaughton, Sir Owen Dixon, and Dr. Frank Graham. As is well known, proposals by all UN mediators were accepted by Pakistan but rejected by India.

Here, the irony of the matter is that though US had friendly relations with Pakistan and India it was reluctant to put enough pressure on India to agree to any of the suggested proposals for resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. As opined by Ambassador Dennis Kux, "Washington regarded the problem as a serious dispute between two countries with which the United States had friendly relations, but not as an issue involving vital US interests." In 1953, giving tacit approval to Indian policy of not supporting UN efforts the US supported the bilateral approach. Mr. Paul Hoffman, the presidential emissary to South Asia, during his visit to Pakistan and India, in April 1953, suggested bilateral talks between Pakistan's Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra and Indian Prime Minister Nehru. The bilateral discussions were held but without any results. Unfortunately, knowing the stand of India and Pakistan and concerns of both against each other on the issue, US made no effort to make the suggested talks meaningful. For example, no US envoy visited India and
Pakistan, as a follow-up visit to Mr. Haffman’s mission when the bilateral discussions began.

Then again in the backdrop of Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 US encouraged bilateral talks on Kashmir dispute. It sent a mission headed by Mr. Harriman who encouraged Pakistan’s President Ayub Khan and Indian Prime Minister Nehru to hold bilateral discussion. The two leaders held a meeting and as a result six rounds of talks at minister’s level (Bhutto-Swaran Singh) were held but no agreement could be reached. Then, when in 1989 the freedom struggle in Indian-held Kashmir gained momentum, US Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates and Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly visited India and Pakistan. They stressed on confidence building measures and clearly stated that Washington no longer supported a UN plebiscite instead preferred bilateral India-Pakistan talks for resolving the dispute. Since then, so far as the Kashmir issue is concerned, US has been following the policy of disengagement and basically supports the bilateral approach.

Second, the question of sharing the waters of the Indus basin resulted in strained relations between India and Pakistan in 1948. After Partition most of the canal head works remained in India. The issue arose when in April 1948 India cut off flow of canal waters to West Punjab in Pakistan. The two sides
were not successful in resolving the water sharing issue bilaterally. Since 1951 the World Bank held negotiations for resolving the issue. As part of its Cold War policies, in 1957 the US State Department evolved an ambitious regional policy initiative for resolving the major sources of tensions - Kashmir, Indus waters dispute and arms race - between India and Pakistan. In this context, though Pakistan kept US informed about the sensitive water dispute, the US showed no willingness to play a direct role or adopt a tougher stand against India for resolving the issue. In this regard, the US supported the involvement of the World Bank and the latter was the major source of funding in implementing the Indus Waters Treaty signed between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank in 1960.

Third, during the September 1965 war between India and Pakistan the US did not play a balanced role. As tension was building up, even the US Ambassador to India, Mr. Bowles, in a telegram dated September 2, urged "for direct US pressure at earliest possible moment on both sides in support of SYG's appeal." However, US President Johnson rejected any direct US influence and supported UN efforts. Then, on September 6, Pakistan's President Ayub Khan also appealed to US to "take immediate action under the 1959 US-Pakistan bilateral agreement and the November 5, 1962, aide-memoire." The US, however, ruled out any direct diplomatic
intervention. It supported the UN Security Council resolution for cease-fire. Here it may be noted that Pakistan was then member of SEATO. Though the agreement basically covered communist aggression only, the US reservation made in paragraph 1 of Article IV stated that, "in the event of other aggression or armed attack it (the US) will consult" other members as stated in paragraph 2 of Article IV. Unfortunately, no consultation was made and the US took a unilateral decision.

Again, the US suspended economic assistance and put an embargo on military exports to Pakistan and India stating that this had been done to support UN Security Council resolution. US termed it a neutral policy. However, the fact is that this US policy damaged Pakistan's interest more as it was depended on US for military supplies. Therefore, the so-called neutral policy turned out to be more sympathetic towards India. The US in fact showed less interest in the South Asian region during the 1965 crisis. As aptly summed up by Ambassador Kux, in his book, "To Washington policymakers, there appeared, in short, little justification for continuing the heavy political and security engagement in India and Pakistan. With the United States becoming increasingly absorbed in the Vietnam War, South Asia's importance in US strategic priorities declined."
Fourth, though Pakistan played an important role in bringing the US and China closer in the early 1970s and the US expressed concern over the rising tension between India and Pakistan as it could have an impact on its policy towards China, during the 1971 crisis the US avoided any direct role and supported UN intervention for cease-fire. The US administration reluctantly ordered the aircraft carrier 'Enterprise' to move in to South Asia but the action never materialised. The US-sponsored resolution in the Security Council was vetoed by the then Soviet Union and the second effort to convene another meeting of the Security Council was again vetoed by Moscow. Still the US was reluctant to intervene directly and supported the Soviet Union's efforts for effecting a cease-fire.

Fifth, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made South Asia the focus of US policy. Though Pakistan was a frontline state the US policy makers' tilt towards India was obvious. For example, the US approved a $3.2 billion assistance programme for Pakistan, whereas it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India in November 1984 for the transfer of limited dual-use technology. In the 1980s the US-Pakistan ties were different from the alliance relationship of the 1950s and 1960s. As Ambassador Kux aptly summarises, "During the Afghan war, the Americans and the Pakistanis were partners,
not allies. Their relationship was a marriage of convenience...Nevertheless, the Pakistanis had no illusions that the United States would support them against India, and US concerns about the nuclear issue kept simmering just below the surface.”

Sixth, US non-proliferation policy in the South Asian region is another example. India refused to sign the NPT and CTBT arguing that both discriminate between nuclear haves and have-nots. Pakistan is a supporter of non-proliferation; however, its stand on NPT and CTBT reflects its security concerns. India’s overt nuclearisation in 1998 is linked with its ambition of seeking a global status and hegemony in the region. The US policy towards Pakistan and India after the May 1998 nuclear tests cannot be regarded as even-handed. US foreign aid sanctions on both India and Pakistan, though Pakistan had to act because of national security interests, have been more damaging for Pakistan than India. Moreover, the condemnation of the act in case of Pakistan was harsher compared to the US statement issued after Indian tests. The US President Clinton, while responding to tests conducted by Pakistan, said, “by failing to exercise restraint in responding to the Indian test, Pakistan lost a truly priceless opportunity to strengthen its own security, to improve its political standing in the eyes of the world.” In response to Indian nuclear tests
the US President had said: "I want to make it very, very clear that I am deeply disturbed." Furthermore, the discussions US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbot, held with India and Pakistan were more favourable to India than Pakistan. The US has viewed India as a promising strategic partner. President Clinton, in March 2000, paid a short visit to Pakistan, whereas his visit to India was for five days. Notably, during his visit to India he signed the 'Vision Document' enhancing strategic cooperation with India.

Seventh, even during the current situation regarding Afghanistan, though Pakistan is once again a frontline state, the US-Pakistan relations is based on convergence of interest. It is being argued in Pakistan that once US interests are achieved the current relationship with Pakistan might conclude. India is still considered as an important partner of US in South Asia.

Conclusion

In South Asia the nature of relationship between states is such that various confidence building measures, which were adopted and still exist, have failed to have a positive impact. It may be pointed out here that, apart from governmental efforts, even non-governmental dialogue or the 'Track II' process working in South Asia has not been able to produce desired
results. The first effort of Track-II diplomacy was launched by United States Information Service (USIS) in 1990, when it organised a series of WORLDNET dialogues for Indian and Pakistani intellectuals. Since then various Track-II dialogues have been conducted, important among them is the Neemrana process initiated by USIS. Beside scholars, in the process are also involved retired civil and military officials. The basic idea behind such initiatives is that the officials, thanks to their past positions and connections, are able to provide positive inputs to governments. Though the governments in South Asia do extend support to the Track-II effort, there is a need to create trust and confidence at the official level among states. Otherwise the process gets vitiated by the misperceptions prevalent at the official level.

For the success of CBMs political will and trust among the parties is essential, which is unfortunately lacking in South Asia, especially in the context of India-Pakistan relations. This has damaged the regional cooperation effort in the form of SAARC, making it a hostage to India-Pakistan relations. The US role in South Asia has been that of an opportunist pursuing its own parochial interests. Though it has had relations with both Pakistan and India and could have played a balanced role in a crisis situation, the US always preferred an indirect role and also has adopted double standards so far as relations
with India and Pakistan are concerned. In South Asia for confidence building and security cooperation it is important that the contentious issues are resolved first. The approach of CBMs, having an impact or acting as a supporting process, has not so far been a successful process in South Asia. Therefore, in South Asia the policy of conflict resolution has to be adopted first to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence, which is necessary for the success of CBMs.

References


5. P. R. Chari, "CBMs in Post Cold War South Asia", in *Confidence Building Measures in South Asia*, Dipankar Banerjee, op. cit., p. 43.


