EXPLANATION OF VOTE
on draft resolution A/C.1/57/L.23 entitled
"Bilateral strategic nuclear arms reductions and
the new strategic framework" (item 66)

Mr. Chairman,

I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's vote on the resolution entitled "Bilateral strategic nuclear arms reductions and the new strategic framework" before the Committee. Pakistan is happy to support the resolution.

We, like others, had welcomed the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty, which, in our estimation, constitutes a salutary first step in the direction of reducing the immediate threat posed by deployed nuclear weapons. We also support the objective of the resolution that the Treaty would provide an opportunity to operationalize the joint determination of the two co-sponsors to work together and with other nations and international organizations to promote peace and economic well-being throughout the world. These are reassuring words, particularly, for those who seek security and progress within the multilateral framework.

Equally, Mr. Chairman, the construction of a new strategic relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation, proclaimed in preambular para 4 of the resolution, should elicit the support of the entire international community. The substitution of strategic confrontation by strategic cooperation between the two foremost militarily significant nations is clearly a matter of gratification for everyone.

I may, however, add a note of caution. The continued presence of large inventories of nuclear warheads, will continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Real threat reduction requires the destruction of nuclear weapons which should now materialize to be followed by their universal and complete elimination. It bears no reiteration that states in possession of the largest stockpiles of these deadly weapons carry the primary and the inescapable responsibility of safeguarding the human race from their fearsome destructive potential.
We would also like to emphasize that a mere change in the deployment status of nuclear warheads would not materially contribute towards the agreed goal of complete and general disarmament unless the nuclear-weapon States, particularly the two major nuclear powers, forswear the use and possession of nuclear weapons under international control. Only then would the commitment embodied in Article VI of the NPT, be considered to have been redeemed. Negotiations should, therefore, commence, at the earliest, on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament when it meets next year. The spirit of the resolution, as also its message, would seem to have been upheld if not validated by signalling our readiness to expeditiously open these negotiations in Geneva. It remains our hope that the principal protagonists of the text would contribute earnestly towards the realization of this shared historic objective and help galvanize global efforts to terminate the threat emanating from this singularly hideous instrument of mass destruction. In this spirit, Pakistan is happy to support the resolution.