the two existing drafts. We only suggest that such a right and obligation for the coastal State should be clearly spelt out. Any desire by another party to proceed with further verification must obviously be channelled through the coastal State and could only be undertaken with its co-operation.

57. If parts of the continental shelf adjacent to a coastal State extend beyond the twelve-mile limit of the maritime zone, some uncertainty undoubtedly remains as to the rights of verification on that outer shelf. The coastal State, according to existing international law, has sole rights of exploration and exploitation. Any installations in this area of the sea-bed must be presumed therefore to belong to the coastal State or to have been installed with its consent. Here the principle of free access meets a real test. In our opinion that principle ought to be upheld; but as a matter of international courtesy it would be normal for consultations to take place with the coastal State concerned. I wish to add that these difficulties should be considerably reduced, and risks of conflicts even more so, if revisions of the international legislation regarding the continental shelf were made so as to establish firm delimitations instead of the present open-ended situation.

58. Where the principle of free access is applicable without any limitation, of course, is in regard to the deep ocean floor proper as well as to sea-beds at any depth which are unconnected with continental shelves of particular coastal States — for instance so-called sea mountains and ridges. Many parts of the ocean are so shallow as to make the floor accessible already now by conventional capabilities for maritime exploration, which are in the possession of many States. These parts may also be the very ones to tempt nations to establish installations and structures. Exploration activities, which are permitted to all, must be open to the kind of verification envisaged in this treaty. In reality the principle of free access is but a corollary of the commonly-recognized principle of free exploration of the sea-bed invoked in the first preambular paragraph of the United States draft. It is also concomitant with the principle of the sea-bed and ocean floor being the common heritage of mankind, to be used in the interests of all and not subjected in any part to the national sovereignty of individual States.

59. This is the grand scheme which we all, as Members of the United Nations, are pursuing in regard to the positive task of utilizing the sea-bed for peaceful purposes. The demilitarization of the sea-bed is but the preliminary step towards avoiding obstacles and impediments to the fully free and common utilization of this, man's last frontier.

60. In conclusion, I wish to summarize as follows the ideas tentatively presented here in order to seek a compromise between the Soviet and the United States drafts on the demilitarization of the sea-bed.

61. We should retain, from the United States draft, the notion of prohibiting all nuclear weapons and installations for weapons of mass destruction beyond a three-mile zone adjacent to the coastlines.

62. A further prohibition in regard to all weapons, and to military bases and fortifications and other installations of a military nature, except some which are of a purely passive, defensive character — such as means of communication, navigation and supervision — should be valid beyond a twelve-mile maritime zone along the coastlines, as suggested in the Soviet draft.

63. Within the twelve-mile zone the coastal State should have the exclusive right of use and verification, the right of observation by all already being assured in international law. Beyond this maritime zone any installations on the sea-bed should be open to all parties for verification. A procedure for assistance or for verification by an appropriate international organization should be foreseen.