

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

MAY 11, 1961.

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*Chairman, Committee on Science and Astronautics,
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We have long been living in a shrinking world; now we are living in a shrinking universe. Outer space has been penetrated too recently for the development of international rules for its use. Aircraft, however, cross continents in a few hours and at altitudes thought impossible not many years ago. In spite of these technical advances, the rules for flight in the air—from which rules for the use of outer space will largely evolve—have not yet been assembled in one place and one language.

There is forwarded herewith for committee consideration a report entitled "Air Laws and Treaties of the World"—a compilation in English of the pertinent air laws and space laws of most of the principal nations, together with multilateral aviation treaties and agreements.

This report will fill a great and immediate need in the field of aviation law. Furthermore, there is a close technical, and hence legal, relationship between navigation in the air space and that in outer space. Indeed, air space and outer space are inseparable. The Congress recognized this relationship in the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, which authorizes the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to deal with problems "involved in the utilization of aeronautical and space activities." In the "Survey of Space Law" (H. Doc. No. 89, 86th Cong.), issued by the Committee on Science and Astronautics, the following questions were raised as to common legal problems in air and space activities:

1. What is the legal boundary between air space and outer space?
2. Do present international conventions for the regulation of civil aviation apply to space flight?
3. What is the relation to space flight of national aviation laws?
4. How can international agreement be reached on space jurisdiction and other basic matters of definition and classification?
5. What legal liabilities arise from injury or damage caused by space vehicles?
6. What provisions should be made for the ownership and commercial use of space resources and the legal incidents of space travel?

It is believed that the publication of national and international flight rules in a single language and a single document will promote the general knowledge and understanding of the air laws of other countries, encourage the adoption of more uniform laws, and eventually assist in accomplishing an international agreement on the peaceful uses of outer space.