The enormous growth during the last decade of outer space operations like direct broadcasting by satellite and the exploration of natural resources by remote sensing satellites have brought space law into dramatic prominence among the fields of international law. International, because the fundamental principle of space law since the cornerstone Outer Space Law of 1967 clearly requires that outer space and celestial bodies are free for exploration and use by all states in conformity with international law and are not subject to national appropriation. It is in light of the many new considerations now falling under the scope of international law because of their connection with space that this new edition of the best-known handbook in the field now appears.

Among the many salient issues the legal implications of which are covered in this third edition are the following:

- the boundary problem arising because state sovereignty can no longer be accepted as unlimited in its vertical projection;
- prior consent of states to whom information is transmitted or whose territories have been sensed by satellites;
- beneficial or adverse effects on the environment caused inter alia by solar power satellites;
- increasing commercialization and privatization of outer space;
- ‘space tourism’;
- development of liability regimes for eventual commercial spaceflights;
- space traffic management;
- the increasing use of orbits, particularly the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and the Geostationary Orbit (GSO);
- the need for specific definition of vague terms like ‘province of all mankind’ and ‘peaceful purposes’;
- search and rescue operations and the rescue and return of astronauts;
- liability for damage caused by space objects;
- purpose and functioning of spacecraft registration; and
- the Moon Agreement and ‘the common heritage of mankind’.

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