



Celebrating the Chicago Convention's 75th Anniversary

By Jeffrey Klang

Seventy-five years ago, during the height of World War II, the United States government invited representatives from 54 nations to attend the International Civil Aviation Conference in Chicago. The president of the United States and other world leaders knew the importance of international air commerce to get the world back on its feet after five years of war. More than 700 delegates gathered for five weeks in the Stevens Hotel. On December 7, 1944, the Chicago Convention was signed by representatives of 52 nations.

The importance of the Chicago conference cannot be overstated. The Chicago Convention established the legal framework for the development of international civil aviation as we know it today. The conference also established the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the body responsible for promulgating standards for international civil aviation. The Chicago Convention arguably is

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the most important aviation treaty of the past century.

This edition of *The Air & Space Lawyer* shines a spotlight on this historic event, and reflects on the past, present, and future of ICAO and the Chicago Convention. Jeffrey N. Shane, IATA general counsel, provides an excellent history of the events leading up to and during the Chicago conference. Ambassador Donald T. Bliss (ret.), U.S. Representative to ICAO from 2006 to 2009, provides his unique perspective on the viability and importance of ICAO today and into the future.

We conclude with interviews of three of ICAO's key leaders: Ambassador Thomas Carter, current U.S. Representative to ICAO, Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, President of the ICAO Council, and Dr. Fang Liu, Secretary General of ICAO. They provide valuable insights into the Chicago Convention's importance and ICAO's ability to evolve to face new challenges, as well as the U.S.'s top goals for ICAO and the measures ICAO should take to effectively advance safe, secure, and efficient international aviation.

On behalf of the editorial board, I hope you enjoy this special edition of *The Air & Space Lawyer*.